



March 10, 2024

SUMMARY OF BILL: Authorizes local boards of education to adopt a policy authorizing retired law enforcement officers to serve as armed school security officers during regular school hours when children are present on the school's premises, as well as during school-sponsored events.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Other Fiscal Impact – To the extent that a school chooses to employ a retired law enforcement officer as an armed school security officer, there will be a permissive increase in local expenditures of approximately \$40,000 per armed school security officer beginning in FY24-25. However, a precise recurring increase in local expenditures cannot be reasonably determined.

Assumptions:

- Any such policy adopted must contain certain provisions including, but not limited to:
 - The types of firearms that may be carried by the retired officer on school premises;
 - Limitations on the role of the armed school security officer to that of maintaining safety in the school and prohibiting such officer from addressing issues that do not constitute crimes or that do not impact the health or safety of students or staff;
 - Procedures for communication among the LEA, security officers, school resource officers (SROs), and local law enforcement agencies;
 - A description of policies and procedures that must be followed when responding to an emergency on school grounds; and
 - The hours and wages of each armed school security officer assigned to a school in the LEA.
- A retired law enforcement officer hired to serve as an armed school security officer would be required to comply with laws governing individuals permitted to possess and carry a firearm on school grounds pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-815. The cost of any training shall be at the expense of the person seeking authorization and not the LEA.
- Public Chapter 418 of the 113th General Assembly allocated \$140,000,000 in recurring funding to establish a Statewide SRO Grant Program to place a trained, armed security guard at every public school.

- The program provides funding to local law enforcement entities to place one full-time SRO in each Kindergarten through 12 public school and public charter school in Tennessee.
- The Department of Safety has issued 152 contracts for SRO program grants totaling \$98,475,000 through January 2024.
- Eligibility to receive an SRO grant requires a memorandum of understanding between a local law enforcement agency and an LEA or public charter school; additionally, the SRO must be a commissioned officer to be eligible.
- Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-809(g), the use of armed school security officers shall be supplemental to, and shall not supplant, SROs.
- Since an armed school security officer is not an SRO, such person would not be eligible to receive the grant.
- There are approximately 1,868 schools in this state and the average cost of an SRO is estimated to be \$73,150.
- It is assumed that a retired law enforcement officer hired to serve as an armed school security officer will be paid less than a commissioned law enforcement officer employed as an SRO.
- If a school chooses to employ a retired officer as an armed school security officer, there will be a permissive, recurring increase in local expenditures of approximately \$40,000 per armed school security officer beginning in FY24-25. However, the extent of any permissive increase in local expenditures cannot be reasonably determined.

CERTIFICATION:

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



Krista Lee Carsner, Executive Director

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