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Gov. Bill Lee Announces New Investment in School Safety
Legislative proposal prioritizes school resource officers, additional safety measures

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Today, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee announced a new investment in school safety to better protect teachers and students and prepare against the threat of violence.

“The safety of our children and teachers is a top priority for my administration, and this investment ensures that school districts will have the resources they need to better protect our schools,” said Lee.

Gov. Lee is proposing a \$40 million investment for the school safety grant fund. Legislation filed will provide additional changes to existing law to prioritize the distribution of these grants to school resource officers.

Approximately 500 Tennessee schools do not currently have SROs, and changes to the law will enable them to fill these positions. The proposal also accommodates underserved counties working to secure schools and fill SRO positions by adjusting limited match requirements to be proportional to districts’ fiscal capacity.

“Several members of the legislature have begun working on school safety measures,” said Lee. “We commend their efforts and look forward to working together to protect our students and teachers.”

The new funding plan also enables schools that currently have an SRO to pursue grants to fund other safety priorities such as implementing building security measures or developing innovative violence prevention programs.

“While we are providing resources for additional security measures for our schools, districts need to also consider programming that identifies students who are in need of intervention,” said Lee. “Security is paramount, but we must also double down on efforts to identify harmful situations before they arise.”

The Department of Safety and Homeland Security and the Department of Education will jointly oversee programming and grant funds while also providing threat assessment tools.

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