

# **INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS & REVENUE**

## **Budget Review Subcommittee on Education**

### **Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the 2022 Interim**

**September 21, 2022**

#### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The 3rd meeting of the Budget Review Subcommittee on Education of the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations & Revenue was held on Wednesday, September 21, 2022, at 10:00 AM, in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Steve Riley, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Stephen West, Co-Chair; Representatives James Tipton, Co-Chair, and Steve Riley, Co-Chair; Representatives Kim Banta, Tina Bojanowski, Ken Fleming, Bobby McCool, and Charles Miller.

Guests: Benjamin Wilcox, State School Security Marshal, Department of Criminal Justice Training.

LRC Staff: Seth Dawson, Liz Columbia, and Amie Elam.

#### **School Safety**

Benjamin Wilcox, State School Security Marshal, spoke to the committee regarding School Resource Officer (SRO) coverage across the Commonwealth and school district compliance with the SRO requirements addressed in 2022 Regular Session House Bill 63.

In response to a question from Senator West, Mr. Wilcox said that the \$25 million accounts for an SRO at every campus that does not currently have one.

In response to a question from Chair Riley, Mr. Wilcox said the total cost to have an SRO at every campus is approximately \$55 million.

In response to a question from Representative Tipton, Mr. Wilcox clarified that the \$55 million only accounts for a base salary and does not include benefits. He added that

responsibility for the cost of partnering with local police departments to provide SROs varies among districts.

In response to a question from Representative Bojanowski, Mr. Wilcox said that when asked, districts said that the two main issues in meeting SRO requirements were a lack of personnel and funding.

In response to a question from Chair Riley, Mr. Wilcox said that both rural and urban settings are struggling with finding available personnel.

In response to a question from Representative Miller, Mr. Wilcox said in order to be an SRO one must be Peace Office Professional Standards Act (POPS) certified and start the 120-hour training required by the Department of Criminal Justice Training (DOCJT). He added that SROs have three years to complete the DOCJT certification.

In response to a question from Senator West, Mr. Wilcox said there is a backlog at training academies, but the state is prepared to train additional SROs.

In response to a question from Representative McCool, Mr. Wilcox stated that SRO training is a very specialized unit with comprehensive training requirements.

In response to a question from Chair Riley, Mr. Wilcox said that the 120-hour training required by DOCJT is physical. He said that it involves firing ranges and active shooter training.

In response to a question from Representative Banta, Mr. Wilcox said that 117 districts need at least one SRO. 57 districts have an SRO on every campus.

In response to a question from Representative Tipton, Mr. Wilcox answered that employment contracts vary between agencies and districts. He added that nothing prevents a law enforcement agency from contracting with an officer for a specific amount of time during the year to serve as an SRO.

In response to a question from Representative Bojanowski, Mr. Wilcox said that SROs in Kentucky are directed to immediately engage with an active shooter. He added that training does include single-officer response training.

In response to a question from Representative Tipton, Mr. Wilcox said that he does not have data on which districts have additional safety measures, including secure vestibules and safety glass.

In response to a question from Representative Fleming, Mr. Wilcox answered that during training, experts are brought in to prepare SROs to work with individuals with mental health needs or those experiencing a mental health crisis.

In response to a question from Representative McCool, Mr. Wilcox said that during an emergency, the individual who responds first and has the most knowledge of the ongoing situation would take the lead for those officers arriving to provide backup.

There being no further business before the subcommittee, the meeting adjourned at 11:16 a.m.