

By SABRINA GARRETT

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Wilson County Sheriff Robert Bryan is pleased with the County Commission's commitment to do whatever necessary to ensure the safety of local students.

"The county has taken proactive steps over the years. We were one of the first ones in the state to establish an SRO (School Resource Officer) program originally," he said. "We started off with just a few and now we have them in the majority of schools. Other counties are looking to hire a whole lot more – 25 to 30 officers."

Meanwhile, the county is looking at a number closer to 12 because the program is already established, he said, adding that most of the program is funded through the county. "The school system supplies some of it."

Bryan said the Sheriff's Department has already stepped up patrols in school areas.

"The Director of Schools Mike Davis has said this and I agree, every level of security you can (have) between the street and the student, the better of you are," he said.

Bryan added that the Mt. Juliet City Commission did pass a resolution for the Police Department to waive fees for teachers desiring to take a handgun safety course. "I am 100 percent for them getting their handgun carry permit – but the state law still is that it is illegal to have a firearm on school property," he noted.

Following the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Conn., state leaders have discussed the possibility of upping school security by designating a teacher to carry a firearm in schools lacking a school resource officer. However, no decisions have been made.

"We have to wait and see what the state is going to say on this," Bryan said.

Wilson County School Resource Officers are trained police officers who go through the police academy and special SRO training prior to being placed in a school.

“You never know what is going to happen anymore or what people are thinking. The unknown bothers me,” Bryan said. “We do everything we can to keep schools safe.”

Staff Writer Sabrina Garrett may be contacted at sgarrett@wilsonpost.com .