

Alabama to Add Resource Officers in Jefferson County Schools

An Alabama county plans to put a school resource officer in every county school as part of a new safety plan.

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[\(https://w](#)

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — An Alabama (/news/best-states/alabama) county plans to put a school resource officer in every county school as part of a new safety plan, local officials announced in a Thursday press conference.

Jefferson County Sheriff Mike Hale said there are currently 25 officers for the 56 schools in the county school system. He said they plan to hire enough contract deputies to cover all 56 county schools.

"We are committed to ensuring that our most precious resource, our children, have a safe environment to learn and grow up in," Hale said.

The plan to try to boost the number of trained police officers in schools was announced along with the creation of a new threat assessment team.

Hale said his department is interested in hiring retired law enforcement officers because of their experience, but he said additional training will be done for learning to work in a school environment.

The cost of the additional hires is an estimated \$1.2 million which will be split between the Jefferson County Board of Education. Hale told reporters that cost could go up to \$1.5 million with overtime.

"Can we afford this? The answer is we can't afford not to do it," Hale said.

The sheriff said a threat assessment team, comprised of an investigator, education official and mental health professional, will identify troubling behavior patterns and assist students.

Superintendent Craig Pouncey thanked the sheriff and the Jefferson County Commission for their support of the plan.

The announcement comes two days after a federal school safety commission met in Alabama.

The Federal Commission on School Safety met Tuesday at the Alabama Capitol for their final listening session on how to improve school safety. The group was created by President Donald Trump after 17 people were killed at a shooting at a Florida (/news/best-states/florida) high school in February.

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Ashley runs, plays basketball and competes in gymnastics. She was also born with symbrachydactyly.

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