

Kenny Howell

Managing Editor

Wilson County School board members Bill Robinson and Greg Lasater shared their frustration with how school closings have been handled the last few weeks at the school board meeting Monday.

“This is not throwing anyone under the bus,” said Robinson. “When there’s any doubt, never put the child at risk.

Schools had closed Jan. 25, but only three schools closed after the tornado, and schools didn’t close for snow on Feb. 1.

Mt. Juliet Elementary, West Elementary and W.A. Wright Elementary closed after the tornado because of loss of power. However, W.A. Wright’s buses had already run and parents were dropping their kids off when the decision was made to close for the day.

“It’s a hard decision to make,” said Director of Schools Mike Davis. “In hindsight, we should have delayed schools two hours.”

“I was upset with the decision that was made,” said Lasater. “When the City Manager [Kenny Martin] says there is a propane tank in the middle of Highway 70 and a school bus could be coming toward it.”

Davis said he talked to plenty of people that morning, but never spoke to Martin. He said he received a text from him, but didn't get to read it until later in the morning. Martin said he contacted Deputy Director of Schools Mickey Hall to request at least a delay of schools until they could figure out all the possible damage from the tornado. He received word back that his request had been denied.

“When a patrol car can't get to it, a school bus can't get to it,” said Lasater. “Listen to the police, listen to the Sheriff, listen to WEMA.”

Davis also announced that School Resources Officers are now in every school because the county approved it. The program is headed by Scott Moore. The school board elected to approve the money for it at the meeting Monday.