

THE BOARD OF GARRETT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

203 South Fourth Street - Courthouse - Room 207 Oakland, Maryland 21550

www.garrettcounty.org countycommissioners@garrettcounty.org

301-334-8970

301-895-3188

FAX 301-334-5000

Board of Commissioners

Gregan T. Crawford
Robert G. Gatto
James M. Raley

County Administrator

R. Lamont Pagenhardt

County Attorney

Gorman E. Getty III

PRESS RELEASE

Contact Person: R. Lamont Pagenhardt
County Administrator

Date: February 13, 2013

Re: School Resource Law Enforcement Officers

County Administrator Monty Pagenhardt has announced that the Board of Garrett County Commissioners will provide funds that will be directed to the placement of 2 School Resource Law Enforcement Officers (SROs) in the Garrett County Public Schools. One officer will be assigned to the Northern Garrett High/Middle School Complex and one officer will be placed at Southern Garrett High School. The Governor's Budget for Fiscal Year 2014 has proposed that grant funding be appropriated to local jurisdictions for the purpose of public school security and if funds are approved, a third officer will be assigned to Southern Garrett Middle School. Commissioner Gregan Crawford, who serves as Ex-Officio Member on the Garrett County Board of Education, stated that "I'd like to thank Sheriff Corley, County Administrator Pagenhardt, and Superintendent Wilson for quickly working to address security needs in the wake of the Newtown tragedy. Through their efforts, the presence of SROs and implementation of additional security measures that they have identified, parents of school aged children, including myself, can be reassured that concerns are being addressed to make our schools safer. I support their recommendations and will work to see that they are funded and implemented."

Sheriff Rob Corley provided his thoughts by saying that "as a Deputy, drug education officer, and now the Sheriff of Garrett County, I know firsthand the effect of positive police interaction with students as well as all youth. The decision by County Government and the Board of Education to place School Resource Officers in the Garrett County School system is an instrumental step in keeping our students safe. Our children are our most valuable resource. They are future sheriffs, teachers, community leaders, and sports heroes. The SROs will not only serve as a safety net for the schools but more importantly serve as role models and mentors. I look forward to working with the Board of Education and my staff in creating the most effective School Resource Officer Program that we can."

"I have worked with School Resource Officers for the past 7 years as a Pupil Personnel Worker in Allegany County. Along with many other people, I originally questioned the need for police within the school building, but have changed my opinion as I became familiar with their role in the total school environment. Their unique training focuses on School Law, school safety and de-escalating potential crisis situations. Creating a rapport with our students and even helping with lessons in the classroom allow our students to see the Officers as a positive influence in the community," said Cynthia Downton, the President of the Board of Education. Thomas Carr, a Member of the Board of Education stated, "During the time I served as president of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education, I learned from my counterparts in other counties what a positive influence School Resource Officers have on school communities. They are not only helpful in the day-to-day running of the school, but students learn to trust them, and this trust often helps diffuse bad or even dangerous situations before they happen."

"I look forward to working collaboratively with Sheriff Corley and his staff to develop this program which will add an additional tool in our quest to provide a safe learning environment for our students and school communities," stated school superintendent, Dr. Janet Wilson.