



Community Partners for Public Safety

February 2011

Dear Mr. Leggett, County Council Members, Chief Manger, Dr. Weast and Members of the Board:

The signers of this letter have united in support of the School Resource Officers (SRO) program. Collectively we represent a large number of your constituents across a wide range of community-based organizations.

Together we are advocating for the assignment of a dedicated School Resource Officer to *every* high school in Montgomery County and for support being provided to middle and elementary schools as needed. Further, we must have improved coordination and support between the Montgomery County Police Department and Montgomery County Public Schools in order to ensure the safety of students, staff and the communities surrounding our schools.

This program must not be eliminated in the next fiscal year.

We are especially concerned that Montgomery County is the only jurisdiction in our region that apparently does not recognize the immeasurable value of the program—other police jurisdictions are either maintaining or increasing funding for these programs in their districts. We will be pleased to provide the data we have collected from our surrounding county governments on their SRO programs. We are sincerely concerned that only a tragedy in one of our schools, exactly like those that have been prevented in recent years by our own Montgomery County SROs, as well as recent school shootings across the country, will open the eyes of our county officials as to the need for regularly assigned police officers in our schools. These officers not only play a preventive public safety role in the schools, but they also play a proactive role in by building positive relationships with the students and staff in the buildings where they serve, thereby facilitating the flow of information to promote safety in our communities. In addition, they provide direct prevention, intervention, and outreach services to students.

We believe that a strong partnership between school-based officers, school administrators, and community-based officers will lead to a safer community for all, both within the school and the surrounding community. The SRO presence in school buildings eliminates the need for multiple beat officers to respond to calls for service in the schools and actually *increases* the efficiency of the



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department - keeping beat officers on the street, minimizing the need for multiple officers to respond to school calls.

School Resource Officers are not a luxury in our society - they are a public safety **necessity** in this changing world, protecting the students and all within the school community. With an already lean police department, public safety funding must not be cut any further, and a fully staffed School Resource Officer Program must remain a budget priority. We want to see political will for this program and look forward to working with you to ensure this critical public safety necessity continues.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Parent-Teacher Associations (MCCPTA)



Jon E. Carrier, President
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