



Community and Police Partnership (CAPP) East Sector



Captain Michael Pacewicz
Lieutenant John Wachowski
Sergeant Kris Shockley
NRO Robert McKiernan

Louisa Conway
Elizabeth Champlin Geske
Kelly Genovese
Karen Harris

Holly Lorenzo
Duncan McHale
Jonathan Plissner, Vice Chairman
Natalie Queen

Sam Romeo, Chairman
Frank Trotta
Matt Trotta

David W. Woods
Cynthia Zizzi, Secretary

March 29, 2007

Dear [RTM Member]:

In March of 2006, the East Sector Community and Police Partnership (ECAPP) members unanimously agreed to take a positive position on the proposal to permanently place a Greenwich Police Officer at Greenwich High School. We endorsed the proposed program as described in the prepared report entitled "Greenwich Police Department School Resource Officer Report."

We represent a cross-section of adults of diverse backgrounds, professions and age groups residing in the East Sector of the Town of Greenwich. We also have several current Greenwich High School student committee members. We have read and discussed the merits of placing a Police Officer at Greenwich High School under a formal SRO program.

We took this position under the scope of our Mission and Purpose Statement based on the following criteria:

Multi-Agency Involvement
Quality of Life Issues
Neighborhood Issues

Significant Local Impact
Town Liability Issue
Can CAPP make a difference?

Consensus of Group
Priority Compared to Other Issues
Supporting Evidence

All of the above criteria elements were discussed for the positive and negative impacts. We continue to believe in the permanent placement of a Police Officer at the Greenwich High School Campus. This is an opportunity to develop a strong, positive image of the Police Department within the educational setting. We believe that it will also indicate to the community at large that student safety is a priority. Studies, historical data, and our neighbor, the City of Stamford, all provide ample proof of the positive effects of SRO programs nationwide. Negative concerns were addressed as well. There have been concerns over having an officer carrying a weapon in school. Members of the Police Department receive considerable training with weapons and their management, and while on duty at other school functions, they are required to be in full uniform, which includes carrying a weapon. We are assured that the Police Officer would be wearing a safety holster, and under most conditions, the weapon would be concealed. The possibility of the school's image being adversely affected was discussed, but we believe this would be offset by the positive impact of student safety. Any negative opinions of parents would be countered by education, accurate information, and the existing support of the High School student government and staff.

We, as members of the East Sector of CAPP, believe that this program should be put into effect immediately. The program will allow students to interact with the Police Department in a proactive rather than reactive way to a crisis situation filled with anger, tension and misunderstandings. Students and staff will be able to develop relationships and feel more comfortable with Police Department presence in the High School. The officers would not function solely as a crime-deterrent, but his/her duties would also allow students and staff to take advantage of educational opportunities never presented at Greenwich High School before. The officer would promote an "open-door" policy for students and staff to have candid conversations without fear of reprisal. The SRO report addresses the issue of the officer working in an environment, which regularly requires decisions for which there are no clear or established policies and/or procedures. The well-trained officer would be able to constantly maintain open lines of communication between the school and police administration.

We believe that students having a "go-to" person other than a parent, teacher or peer for guidance could alleviate many of the problems that may exist within a high school setting. The uniqueness of the SRO program can fill a much-needed gap in the high school community.

We appreciate the opportunity to present to you our thoughts and opinions on this very important issue. Again, we support the creation of the program unanimously.

Sincerely,

Sam Romeo, Chairman
East Sector CAPP Committee