

# BUCKS BULLETIN

## RISING CRIME THREATENS SAFETY OF BUCKS SCHOOLS

School Resource Officers, or SROs, are sworn law enforcement officers assigned to schools. They play a key role in preventing violence and averting targeted attacks by working to identify and address potential threats.

An ongoing threat to the school safety outlook, and to the community more broadly, is rising crime and inadequate resources to police crime in our region.

At the County's Salary Board meeting last November, Sheriff Fred Harran requested 8 additional deputies to enable the Sheriff's Office to better serve warrants and, as he explained, stop criminals from reoffending. At the time, there were 8,000 unserved warrants.



Bucks County Sheriff Fred Harran

In support of his request, Sheriff Harran presented a comparison of Bucks County crime statistics from the preceding year. His startling statistics included a 15% increase in major crime (homicide, kidnapping, rape) in Warrington, and a 50% increase in property crime in Bensalem.

Next door, the Sheriff noted, Philadelphia is the current murder and carjacking capital of the U.S., and spillover of city crime is an ongoing problem.

Unfortunately, Sheriff Harran's request was denied. Commissioner Diane Marseglia (D) dismissed the Sheriff's concerns and said he unnecessarily "scared everybody in (Bucks) County" with the statistics he shared.

While the Commissioner worries about how the community might react, the reality is that Bucks County continues to become more dangerous each year, under her leadership.

As crime continues to surge, ensuring the protection and security of our schools is more important than ever.

## VICE CHAIR: PROTECTING KIDS SHOULD HAVE BEEN AN EASY DECISION, BUT FOR DEMOCRATS, IT WASN'T

At last week's Central Bucks School Board meeting, Superintendent Abe Lucabaugh stated that Central Bucks Regional Police Commission (CBRPC) decided not to place a school resource officer (SRO) in CB West high school, even though the district had offered to pay 100% of the costs.



PAC Vice Chair Jana Rotunno

In March, Abe Lucabaugh, Tara Houser (Chief Operating Officer), Scott Arkinsinger (Director of Security and Kevin Spencer (Director of Operations) presented the SRO plan to the CBRPC. Brian Wallace, Chairman of the Police Commission, said he had to review the proposal with the commission and the three boroughs but stated, "This decision is not an easy one" and "It's going to be a lengthy discussion."

Why would protecting children be anything but an easy decision?

CBSD was able to negotiate SROs for CB South and CB East —why wouldn't we want all students to enjoy equal protection at school?

When I really reflect on this issue, the answer, it seems, is political. CBSD has dealt with ongoing politically motivated attacks stemming out of issues in CB West, including an ACLU complaint alleging bullying of transgender students, which a costly third party investigation found to be completely unfounded, and a disgraced teacher suing the district after he failed to report student incidents appropriately.

Amid complaints of bullying, how could the commission justify denying an SRO to CB West? One of the reasons they gave was that if the political makeup of the board changes in November, and Democrats take over CBSD, an SRO may not be supported.

Playing politics with our children's safety is unacceptable.

But unfortunately, the left is willing to do exactly that. Meanwhile, CBSD and the Republican-majority school board were willing to reach across the aisle to the Democrat-majority county commissioners to find a solution. On Wednesday, the county begrudgingly committed with the Sheriff's Office, under Fred Harran (R), to place an SRO at CB West. Unfortunately, even at that meeting, Commissioners Diane Marseglia (D) and Bob Harvie (D) took the opportunity to publicly criticize the CBSD Board instead of coming together on what should have been a bipartisan issue.

While it is fantastic that we got this done and kids' safety ultimately prevailed, it is disappointing to see that Doylestown Democrats are so obsessed with partisan politics, that they will even use school safety as a campaign tool, even while admitting they won't support SROs if they win.