

Dear Governor DeSantis,

We, the parents of children in Palm Beach County Schools have been working together with the Police Officers of the Palm Beach County School District Police Department to identify issues of safety that are currently placing our children in what we see to be an unsafe environment.

Unfortunately, the Palm Beach County School District Police Department after almost five years still cannot meet the Governor's office order for placement of a Police Officer in every school including charter schools within Palm Beach County. This letter is written to update you on the exact status of the District's Police Department.

Currently there are 45 schools within the county that the school district Police Department is not able to cover with Officer's within their own Police Department. There are multiple reasons why they are in this situation. The main and most important is lack of retention. When Officers are hired they are given promises of take-home vehicle's and patrol rifles along with a none stressful work schedule and a competent administration running the agency. Once the Officers are assigned to a school they realize that the promised equipment isn't coming, the Officer's pay is not a livable wage and the organization as a whole is dysfunctional.

Then from there they find that the training and training equipment is lacking and school safety is questionable. One of the other safety concerns is the radio communication issue. Officers have been dealing with a radio system over more than several years that is leaving many school Officer's without communication with their dispatch due to an inadequate radio communication system. After they realize that their safety concerns were falling on deaf ears Officers leave the school Police department for other local Police agencies that offer better benefits, salary, training and equipment.

The PBC School District, Superintendent Mike Burke and the School Board members have been made aware of these downfalls in previous letters that have been emailed directly to them and have also been read to them at public board meetings. Some of the Board members have found that the schools safety concerns are valid and there is a need to take a different course of action if the school district can't or won't correct the issues. Other Board members along with Mr. Burke continue with the same response, that the schools are covered and safe.

Our response to them is this. The schools are only covered because they are paying 45 Police Officer's from other local Police agencies \$100 an hour, eight hours a day, five days a week for the entire school year at a cost to the District of millions of dollars. This is a contract detail that Officer's on their non-duty day agree to work. Although their assistance is greatly appreciated, what the district has arranged is that in each of the 45 schools the assigned overtime Officer is a different person each and every day. At no fault of the contracted Officer's this situation of a new Officer in the school everyday doesn't build a relationship with the students and staff and leaves them with a feeling of concern for the school's safety. The bond between a permanently assigned school Police Officer and the students and staff is a building process and can not be replicated with an Officer on a one day eight-hour assignment.

The blame for these safety concerns is not to be placed onto the School District Police Department, the Police Chief(s) or the Police Officer's of the School District. They are in the current situation because of the School District, a group of educators who have the credentials to lead and advise on educational matters but they do not have the credentials or background to run a Police Department whose main function is to protect our children from any type of threat so they can focus on their studies without having to worry about their safety.

The School District is ignoring the safety concerns we have raised because of one thing and one thing only, "Control". They no matter what risk they are taking over the safety of our children they will not relinquish their control over the Police Department and the Police Chief. One of the main reasons for this is so they can dictate what is reported as a crime and what is investigated, including Baker Acts.

The safety of our children is at risk. The District, specifically Superintendent Mike Burke refuses to listen to the Officer's of the School Police Department, meaning the men and women assigned to the schools and unfortunately has continued with the districts way of leading by intimidation which leaves those close to him unable to be completely honest with the dire situation the School District Police Department has been and is currently in which is a failing situation that's created a safety issue for our children in Palm Beach County Schools.

We, the concerned parents and Police Officers of the Palm Beach County School District Police Department are pleading with you to remove the authority of student safety from the Palm Beach County School District and place that authority under Sheriff Bradshaw of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office is better equipped and trained to serve as the guardian of our children's safety. We are tired of politics being played with the lives of our children.

The Palm Beach County School District's main function and top priority should be the education of our future generation. Education is their area of expertise not school safety and law enforcement.

This letter has been generated with the assistance of the Police Officer's of the Palm Beach County School District Police Department. If you need additional information please communicate that to the sender of this letter. We would be happy to cooperate with your office but for fear of retaliation we ask it to be under the condition of anonymity. Thank you for your attention into this serious failing situation that our School District leaders have been ignoring for far too many years.

