



MEDIA RELEASE

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919 N Broad Street • Brooksville, FL 34601

Hernando School District Unveils Plan for School Guardians

Brooksville - Last fall, when 62% of Hernando voters approved a referendum to increase property taxes for schools, their support was informed by the school district's commitment to spend those funds to improve salaries, expand programs and resources for students, and increase campus safety. Those millage funds will start to flow to the school district in January 2022 and voters will first see the impact of those dollars in the area of increasing school safety.

At its October 12th regular meeting, the Hernando School Board unanimously voted to approve Resolution No. R22-004, establishing a school guardian program. "When you consider a campus of 50 or 60 acres, having two trained individuals helping to secure the school is certainly a better ratio," said the district's Director of Safe Schools, Jill Renihan, in her presentation at the board workshop. "The more good guys, the better."

Currently, the school district has a full-time School Resource Officer (SRO) at all school campuses. The district's school guardian plan will add one guardian at each of the five high schools. "To be clear, we have no intentions of replacing the SROs with guardians," underscored Superintendent John Stratton. "These are new staff who will be an addition to our current school safety initiatives."

Pending final board approval on October 26th, the district will open applications immediately for interested and qualified candidates. To qualify for consideration, applicants must pass extensive background checks and screenings prior to being considered for the 144 hours of specialized training provided by HCSO. Renihan acknowledged, "To pass this level of rigor and become certified as a guardian, we anticipate that most successful candidates will be retired law enforcement officers or come from a career in law enforcement."

Starting in January, guardians will complete all required training and will be placed in high schools in March. However, during the 2022-23 school year, the district plans to add guardians at middle and K-8 schools with large enrollment. "We can afford to add these highly-trained and qualified guardians at our schools because of the support and trust of our community," said Stratton. "It remains our priority to keep our schools safe."

[Link to Information Sheet and FAQ](#)

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