



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Armed Officers in Public Schools**

### *Galveston County Sheriff's Office Keep Students Safe, Secure*

As the debate about gun control and safety in schools progresses, the thought of having armed officers in schools has been considered and reconsidered. Fortunately for students in Galveston County, officers are already involved in their everyday lives.

Clear Creek ISD, Friendswood ISD, Dickinson ISD, La Marque ISD, Texas City ISD, Sante Fe ISD, Galveston ISD, and Hitchcock ISD, all have armed officers on all of their campus's at all times throughout the day. The district pays their salary, benefits, and 100% of the equipment costs for each deputy. Providing a safe environment is overseen by the Department of Facility Services, who control security, liaison officers, background checks on employees, and crossing guards for schools. (The student's safety is of utmost importance to all school districts.)

In a recent interview with Deputy Chris Jones who serves Clear Lake High School, Deputy Jones and other officers described their duties in the school. An officer must receive the standard police academy training and "participate in an alert training where he and others act out possible scenarios where their services would be needed." When asked about the necessity for officers in elementary schools, Deputy Jones insisted "they would only be a good idea if the district's budget permits," seeing that most intermediate school officers already cover the elementary schools around the district as well.

As a student at Clear Lake High School, Ariana Katsigiannis shared "having the deputies in the halls and throughout the commons area reassures me I am in a safe environment and that I will be protected from harm if I'm ever put into a dangerous situation." The officers stand in various halls throughout the passing periods and oversee the building while classes are in session. Michael Dillon, of Friendswood High School also stated "there's no doubt that these officers would do anything and everything in their power to keep us safe, and I am very thankful that our district has already put their time and effort into making a decision to have officers in our schools."

Another advantage of having officers on campus is it increases the effectiveness of the program called Crime Stoppers. Students can now text crime stoppers anonymous tips about potential danger or wrongdoing on their campuses. The Crime Stoppers programs are under the umbrella coverage of the Galveston County Crime Stoppers Program, which began in 1976. Crime Stoppers is a valuable resource

for local and county law enforcement, and has even rewarded students for sending in information that might not have surfaced otherwise.

Others may want to explore the model Galveston County uses to see if it's an answer for a troubling question in their community.

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