

For nearly 25 years, the Greece Central School District has partnered with the Town of Greece and the Greece Police Department (GPD) to facilitate the placement of police officers in our schools. This relationship has helped to prevent school violence, lead to important community service connections, and helped to foster a positive relationship among the police and the town's youngest and most vulnerable constituents.

Nationwide, school violence hit record highs last year, underscoring the importance of maintaining the genuine connection between Greece Police and Greece schools. School safety is our number one priority and we place a high value on our relationship with the officers who protect our community and, together with our school security team, safeguard our schools.

That is why this year, when it came time to renew our School Resource Officer (SRO) contract with Town officials, district leaders put forth a proposal to increase coverage from four days a week to five days a week. We feel it is important to have two SROs in our buildings on every day that school is in session. Our proposal included monetary adjustments to cover the estimated 40 additional days of coverage plus contractual salary increases. The total compensation for two officers was raised from our current contractual rate of \$190,000 to \$240,000 for 10 months of coverage.

Without negotiation or prior notice, we were informed this week that Town leaders would accept no less than \$350,000 for two SROs. That price includes some additional coverage over the summer - something we do not need, nor did we request. We have done everything possible to resolve this issue behind the scenes, including agreeing to raise our contribution to \$280,000, but we cannot in good faith move forward with the contract as it stands. The \$350,000 price tag proposed by Town leaders is \$100,000 more than any other school district in our region pays for the same SRO coverage.

District leaders are committed to providing a SRO-equivalent level of support in our schools and have begun conversations with the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and outside security contractors to provide these services if necessary. I want to be clear, the Greece Central School District does not want to sever its relationship with the Greece Police. They deeply care for our students and contribute to our school community in so many positive ways. GPD, too, sees the value in expanding our partnership and this top-down decision by Town leaders threatens to disrupt the good work Greece Police are doing to connect with students and keep them safe.

The Town of Greece also bears a responsibility to help safeguard the children of this community. We hope they will reconsider by either accepting our proposal or negotiating a reasonable compromise. Surely, a partnership like the one forged between the Greece Central School District and the Greece Police Department has a value that is more than monetary. We encourage parents, staff and community members who would like to see Greece SROs continue serving in our schools to call the Town of Greece at 225-2000 and share their opinions