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Dear Parents and Guardians:

The safety and security of our students and staff is and always will be of paramount importance to me and the New York Mills Board of Education. I write this letter to share with you a change in staffing, although not a change in the safety and security of our school.

The County Executive, recognizing that school safety has been a top priority for some time, was seeking a way to support school districts given that the state has not stepped in to provide any financial support for the School Resource Officer (SRO) program. The proposal, from the County Executive is to assist with the costs of a Special Patrol Officer (SPO) for school districts.

Special Patrol Officers will be working under the Sheriff's office with the same uniform and equipment currently assigned to the deputies. The difference is that these armed SPO's are retired troopers, police officers, and/or sheriff deputies who, although cannot make arrests, can do everything that we had our SRO do.

A number of surrounding districts have moved to this model. Whitesboro has been using SPOs for several years. Some districts, with multiple buildings are using an SRO in one building and SPOs in other buildings.

After meeting with Sheriff Maciol to discuss our current needs, I feel that this is a strong program that has our students' and staff's safety as a priority. Given that these officers are retired, they will not be pulled for emergency duties in other parts of the county, guaranteeing us someone everyday who can patrol recess, cafeterias, and the hallways.

School safety starts at home and if we continue to work together our students, our school, and our community will be the better for our collaboration. If you have any questions about this program, or any other questions or concerns, please call me at (315) 768-8127.

Respectfully,

Joanne Shelmidine, Ed.D.