



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

## Senator Gallivan Hosts Roundtable with Superintendents and School Resource Officer

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Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) convened a meeting Wednesday of school superintendents and representatives of the Erie County Sheriff's Office to discuss the continued presence of a school resource officer (SRO) in several local districts. The SRO program provides a uniformed officer in schools as a way to promote student safety, conflict resolution and anti-bullying initiatives.

"With a new school year starting in just a few weeks, I thought it was important to get an update on the SRO program and discuss the role law enforcement is playing in some of our schools," Gallivan said. "As a former state trooper and Erie County Sheriff, I believe strongly in the SRO program as a way to build a positive relationship between officers and students."

Once again this year, Erie County Sheriff's Deputy Ashley Vogl will serve as an SRO in the Alden, Holland, Springville and North Collins school districts, spending most of her time in the districts' high schools.

"Our School Resource Officer is truly a partner in a student's education and provides security and mentoring throughout the districts," said Erie County Sheriff Timothy Howard. "I have received nothing but positive reports and I believe the SRO program is a valuable resource for the communities and the school districts involved."

According to Deputy Vogl, she had over 4,000 student interactions, over 1,000 student meetings and mentoring sessions and over 300 parent contacts between January 2015 and June 2016. She also works closely with school administrators, faculty and staff on school safety plans and assists in required safety audits of all school buildings.

Deputy Vogl also visits classrooms and coordinates with teachers to present information on internet and social media safety, drug and alcohol abuse, heroin and opioid use and personal safety tips.

"One of my goals is to reinforce and show our youth that police officers are friendly and approachable people and we are here to help," Deputy Vogl said. "Small children are often intimidated by police officers and older kids sometimes have negative opinions of what police officers do, however, the SRO program is vital in connecting police and our community."

Over the past four years, Senator Gallivan has secured state funding to support the SRO program in several school districts in Erie and Wyoming counties. He will continue to work with school administrators, boards of education and law enforcement agencies in hopes of expanding the program in the future.

In addition to Deputy Vogl, those who attended Wednesday's meeting at Holland Central School included Superintendent Cathy Fabiatos of Holland Central, Superintendent Scott Taylor of North Collins Central, Superintendent Kimberly Moritz of Springville-Griffith and Chief Scott Joslyn of the Erie County Sheriff's Office.