



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ortt Announces New School Resource Officer for North Tonawanda School District

ROBERT G. ORTT May 11, 2018

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Today, Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I,Ref-North Tonawanda) announced his acquisition of \$50,000 in state funds for the North Tonawanda School District's use toward a School Resource Officer (SRO). Joining Sen. Ortt at the announcement was North Tonawanda Superintendent, Gregory Woytila, Chief of the North Tonawanda Police Department, Roger Zgolak and Mayor of the City of North Tonawanda, Arthur Pappas. Thanks to an initial \$50,000 secured from the state by Sen. Ortt, the North Tonawanda School District, North Tonawanda Police Department and City of North Tonawanda will combine efforts to cover the remaining cost of hiring a new officer.

"Time and time again, we have seen the lifesaving impact that a resource officer can have on school grounds," said Sen. Ortt. "Providing a safe environment where our children learn and our educators can teach continues to be of the utmost importance, which is why I am so pleased to have secured \$50,000 in funding for the North Tonawanda School District. Not only will this SRO be available to respond quickly in case of an emergency, but they will also be available to help in the day to day issues every high school student faces and prevent an incident from ever transpiring."

While funding for various school safety initiatives such as SROs, safe school infrastructure improvements, and school-based mental health services were included by Republicans in the State Senate's one-house budget, the Governor and Assembly Democrats failed to include these items in their respective budgets. Funds for SROs across the state did not make it into the final State Budget, however, Sen. Ortt was able to secure \$50,000 in the 2018-2019 State Budget through state education funding.

Gregory Woytila, North Tonawanda School District Superintendent said, "North Tonawanda is thrilled to expand its security with the addition of a full-time resource officer. This will be an enhancement to our current security and will provide an academic piece to the safety and security that is being provided. We look forward to this opportunity and thank Senator Ortt for starting this process with us over the past year. The ability to put all these plans into motion this fall is due to a number of people working together for a common goal. We thank everyone for their support."

Roger Zgolak, Chief of North Tonawanda Police Department said, "Manpower and funding for a School Resource Officer position have been two of the stumbling blocks to creating and filling this vital position within the North Tonawanda School District. Senator Ortt's effort to secure funding is greatly appreciated as it helps overcome one of those hurdles. Work still needs to be done to accomplish this goal for the start of the 2018-2019 school year, but a collaborative effort between School Superintendent Woytila, myself and the City of North Tonawanda to fulfill this goal will continue."

Arthur Pappas, City of North Tonawanda Mayor said, "Thanks to the efforts of Senator Ortt, the North Tonawanda School District will now be able to provide an additional layer of security to our schools and an even safer environment for our children to learn in. While we all hope that an emergency situation involving a School Resource Officer never arises, it is always better to be safe than sorry. I look forward to working with Senator Ortt, the North

Tonawanda School District and the North Tonawanda Police Department to make sure this resource is available for next September.”

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