



August 31, 2022

Dr. Diane Gullett
Superintendent of
Marion County Public Schools
512 SE 3rd St
Ocala, FL 34471

Dr. Gullett,

First, I would like to say thank you for your continued collaboration with my office and the support in which you give to ensure that the safety of every student in our great county is always a priority for you.

In the last several months, I have been looking to the future and how we can improve our school safety and collaboration. Now, this is not to suggest that we have any issues, or the system is broken but rather to take our school safety to the next level. You and I have two extremely important responsibilities and each of us have specific focuses. My responsibility and focus are the safety and security of this county and yours is the education of the students. Having said that I would like to make a proposal.

I have been reviewing the Juvenile Units for some of my fellow Sheriffs and their School Districts' agreements (Seminole County and Brevard County to be specific – see attached). Pursuant to Florida Statute, these Sheriffs have entered into an agreement with their School District in which the School District gave the Sheriff the Safe School responsibility for the Safe School Director and Safety Specialist as outlined in law and the security for their district.

By entering into this agreement, it has given back the focus on education to the Schools Districts and gave the safe school/security to the Sheriff who in turn has a bonded responsibility to the School District to ensure that school safety is accomplished at its highest level. Attached is an agreement tailored specifically for our county and my proposal.

Being mindful of the many doubts or questions regarding your current Safe School Specialist and Director, I wish to make it clear that the agreement outlines that these employees will not be shoved to the side but instead I am in full agreement of simply taking each of them apart from the secretary position which I believe would be more suited to remain in your hands. Also, in this agreement, I am not asking for any additional funding related to my employees' salaries and benefits.



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I am just asking you to pay 100% of what it currently costs you for those employees within your annual budget which was given to me by your staff (see attached).

Simply put, I will take these employees as a whole, and they will continue to perform the same duties and responsibilities that you have outlined within your job descriptions for their positions (see attached). They will be fully sworn Deputy Sheriffs and will be able to provide law enforcement capability security with full arrest powers at your School Board meetings and any other function that you deem necessary. The one Safety Specialist that has a Correctional Certificate I will send and pay for his cross-over training and certificate.

I am more than confident that there is and will be many questions from your staff and the School Board in which I will make myself available to you and the School Board to answer those questions and hopefully prevent any and all rumors that came out of this agreement.

Thank you again for the great partnership in which we have and for your continued support.

Sincerely

Sheriff Billy Woods