



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**PRESS CONTACT:**

February 22, 2024  
Dr. Scott V. Nicol, Superintendent of Schools  
(860) 896-2300

## **Retiring Vernon Police Chief Joining Ellington Public Schools As Armed School Security Officer**

Town of Ellington and school district becoming a destination  
for retired police chiefs with three currently employed

**ELLINGTON, CT** – The Ellington Public Schools has hired retiring Vernon Police Chief John Kelley as an armed School Security Officer (SSO). Chief Kelley replaces Chris Dufresne who returned to full-time policing.

Chief Kelley has earned degrees from Roger Williams University and the University of Connecticut and graduated from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Academy in 2018. Receiving an honorable discharge from the United States Army Reserve in 1998, Chief Kelley joined the Vernon Police Department in 1999 serving in various ranks and positions such as K-9 Handler, Detective Sergeant, Detective Division Commander, Lieutenant, Captain, and Chief of Police.



The Town of Ellington and school district have become a destination for retired police chiefs. Walter Lee, Emergency & Risk Management Director for both the town and school district, was the former chief of the Connecticut State Capitol Police. Town Administrator Matthew Reed was the former chief of the South Windsor Police Department.

Town Administrator Matthew Reed commented on the hiring, *“I am pleased that Chief Kelley is joining the Ellington team. The town and school district’s partnership is strong and our first priority is always to ensure the safety and security of its employees, residents, and children.”*

In particular, the Ellington Public Schools (EPS) is a leader when it comes to safety and security. EPS is one of a handful of school districts in the State of Connecticut that employ armed School Security Officers (SSO), having three in total, all of whom are retired police officers. Additionally, the EPS security department includes a School Resource Officer (SRO) who is an active police officer for the Town of Ellington with the primary duty of servicing the school system.

*“I am honored to be a part of the team and to serve the staff and students of the Ellington Public Schools. For the better part of five decades, I have lived and worked in the Towns of Ellington and Vernon and I couldn’t be more pleased to continue my life’s journey here.”*

**-Chief John Kelley**

Chief Kelley is a Rockville High School graduate who currently lives in Ellington with his wife and two children who attend Crystal Lake Elementary School. He will start his official duties on March 25<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*