



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
PRESS CONTACT:

August 30, 2023  
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## Ellington Board of Education Approves Additional School Security Officer for the 2023-2024 School Year

Ellington Public Schools hired two new School Security Officers (SSO)  
and one new School Resource Officer (SRO) to complete the security team

ELLINGTON, CT – At a meeting on August 23, 2023, the Ellington Board of Education approved the hiring of an additional School Security Officer (SSO). Ellington's school security team is comprised of three SSOs and one School Resource Officer (SRO). The SRO is a uniformed police officer supervised by Sergeant Brian Santa of the Ellington Resident State Troopers. The SSOs are retired police officers employed by the Ellington Board of Education. Ellington is one of the few school districts in the State of Connecticut that allow SSOs to carry a firearm.

School Security Officer Michele Landry has been with the Ellington Schools for five years. This year she will assume additional coordinator duties. Chris Dufresne and Rich Ameral are newly hired SSOs, as is Jeff Duda who joins the team as an SRO.

*"The Ellington Board of Education greatly values school safety and the role that law enforcement plays in society overall, especially schools. They believe in armed school security and resource officers understanding the importance of the EPS security team to build positive relationships with staff, students, and their families,"* stated Dr. Scott Nicol, Superintendent of Schools.

*"The Board has been persistent over many years to build this security team, to ensure they are armed and capable in addition to building relationships with the Ellington Family. This community highly values law enforcement both within and outside of the schools' borders – especially recognizing today's societal challenges. Educating our children is important, yet – ensuring our children return home safely is everything"*

**-Kerry Socha, Board Member / Operations Committee Chair**

*Jeff Duda retired from the Connecticut State Police in 2021 after serving for 20 years, where he worked as a Sergeant covering the Towns in Tolland County. He has worked as an Officer in the Town of Ellington and an SRO for the Town of Tolland for the past year, before accepting the position of Ellington School Resource Officer. He earned a B.S. in Psychology from Springfield College. He is excited to join the Ellington Public School community and is committed to developing positive relationships within the community.*



Jeff Duda  
School Resource Officer



Michelle Landry  
School Security Officer/Coordinator

*Michelle is a retired Police Officer with 20 years of experience working with the Vernon Police Department. In Vernon, Ms. Landry was certified to teach DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and taught in all of their elementary schools. Upon retiring in 2018, she joined the Ellington Public Schools to enhance its security program. For the past 5 years, Ms. Landry has been working at EHS. She has 2 daughters – a freshman in college and a junior in high school. She enjoys staying active and loves to run. Ms. Landry was a goalie in college and has utilized that knowledge to assist the EHS girls' soccer team by training their goalies. She has found the Ellington Community to be very welcoming, and looks forward to continuing her career within the Ellington Public Schools while maintaining a safe environment that is conducive to learning.*

*Chris is excited to start his first year as a School Security Officer in Ellington. Prior to his recent retirement, he was a police officer for 25 years. For many of those years, Chris was a K9 handler. When he retired he was able to keep his partner, who now lives with his family. In his free time, Chris enjoys running, swimming, biking, boating, and spending time with his family. He is looking forward to the school year, meeting the students, and working with school staff.*



Chris Dufresne  
School Security Officer



Rich Ameral  
School Security Officer

*Rich has been in the public security sector for over 25 years. Originally from Arlington, Massachusetts, he attended The University of Massachusetts Boston, where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice. Rich is an Army veteran and a retired Connecticut State Trooper. He is also an Ellington resident and an EHS parent. In his free time, Rich enjoys spending time with family and friends. Rich is excited to start his new career working for the Ellington Public Schools security team.*

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