



## Legislation Text

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Presentation Prepared By The School Safety Workgroup Appointed By Sheriff Sadie Darnell, Chief Tony Jones and Superintendent Dan Boyd (B)

This is to request that the City Commission Hear a Presentation on School Safety

The events of recent shooting incidents and more specifically the Sandy Hook Elementary School Mass Murders incident in Newtown, Connecticut has caused communities nationwide to take inventory of school safety. Most communities are attempting to balance safety concerns with the harsh realities of the budgetary constraints facing all levels of government nationwide in the United States. Nevertheless, the local law enforcement community of the Gainesville Police Department (GPD), Alachua County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) and Alachua Police Department (APD) have partnered with the School Board of Alachua County to conduct a review of school safety in Alachua County. A workgroup was formed and tasked with examining existing safety measures, developing recommendations to improve overall school safety, and to foster a positive rapport with the elementary students, their staff, and parents.

Each of the above listed partners independently reviewed current school safety measures and identified shortcomings. Upon meeting as a workgroup it was quickly identified that some immediate steps should be undertaken in part to allay the fears of students, parents and school board employees. Consequently, the ACSO and the GPD temporarily reassigned personnel to provide law enforcement coverage to elementary schools.

The workgroup developed an Action Plan that was unanimously approved by the representative partners. The workgroup believed that it was imperative that local legislative bodies receive the recommended Action Plan for future consideration.

Also at this time, the Office of Community Oriented Policing has released a request for proposal for 2013. Special emphasis is being placed on hiring full-time sworn law enforcement officers to serve as School Resource Officers. The Gainesville Police Department is participating in the COPS hiring program application and is requesting the addition of two full-time sworn law enforcement officers to serve city elementary schools in this capacity.

The Office of Community oriented Policing Services (COPS) has announced the availability of funding under the 2013 COPS Hiring Program. The COPS Hiring program provides funding directly to law enforcement agencies to hire law enforcement officers in an effort to increase their community policing capacity and crime prevention efforts. The 2013 COPS Hiring Program will provide up to 75 percent of the approved entry-level salary and fringe benefits of each newly-hired full-time sworn career law enforcement officer of the three-year (36 month) grant period.

The Gainesville Police Department seeks to hire two full-time law enforcement officers who will increase the School Resource Officer presence in the City of Gainesville schools. These officers will be assigned 100

percent of their time to supporting youth-related activities in area schools. If funded, these positions will expand the School Resource Officer force by two in the agency's jurisdiction.

The Federal grant will provide up to 75 percent funding for the approved entry-level salaries and benefits for three years. At the conclusion of the third year the City of Gainesville would be responsible for all salary and benefits for each officer hired under the 2013 COPS Hiring Program. Cost associated with funding salary and fringe benefits for two full-time law enforcement officers for three years is \$181,168. The total requested from the 2013 COPS Hiring Program for two full-time law enforcement officers for three years is \$250,000. The total project is \$431,168.

The City Commission 1) hear a presentation from the School Safety Workgroup; and 2) authorize the City Manager to apply for the 2013 COPS Hiring Program Grant, and execute all the required documents subject to approval by the City Attorney as to form and legality. The funding will be used for the express purpose of funding two full-time sworn law enforcement officers to augment the Gainesville Police Department's School Resource Officer force.

The City Commission discuss the option of assuming the cost of adding two full-time sworn law enforcement officers to serve as School Resource Officers in city elementary schools.