



## Huntington Union Free School District

*"A Tradition of Excellence since 1657"*

James W. Polansky

Superintendent of Schools

September 14, 2017

Dear Members of the Huntington School District Family,

As you may know, on Wednesday, the Governor held a press conference in a neighboring school district for the purpose of announcing that state troopers would be deployed to ten schools in Suffolk County. Only two hours before the event did we receive an invitation, with no indication of the format or subject.

While we could not attend the event on such short notice, a press release immediately following, as well as several media sources, shared information on the aforesaid state trooper "initiative." We were shocked to learn in this manner that Huntington High School was on the list of ten.

Much of our dismay stems from the fact that at no point were we approached. At no point did any state official or otherwise reach out and ask what we need or don't need. At no point did anyone request a visit or invite a conversation of any sort. At no point have we received even fragments of information about the proposal. Upon questioning this with multiple state officials, the best we received was a thorough apology and an admission that the "ball was dropped."

To put it bluntly, we are deeply disappointed in the manner in which this initiative has been presented overall. It is not something that can or should simply be imposed on any school in a vacuum. In Huntington, we are always open to new ideas and appreciate any opportunity to break new educational ground. We are far from certain that this initiative qualifies.

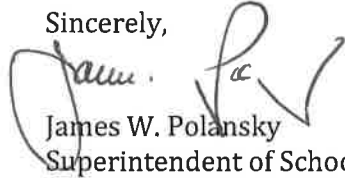
Over many years, we have taken proactive measures to ensure the safety of all school community members. All parties in Huntington schools work exceptionally hard to educate students, staff and community members in a manner that generates healthy discussion, understanding and collaboration. Unfortunately this attempt at program implementation on Long Island is devoid of all such components. This could not be more apparent in the Governor's broad statement that "this is a problem that the school system does not deal with." He is clearly misinformed and misguided about the role of educators in general and we can certainly speak for Huntington.

Huntington High School is an incredible place to learn. The opportunities provided are boundless. The strides made by students and staff in recent years are well documented. Student growth and achievement have soared. It is a place that celebrates diversity and promotes inclusivity in all regards. Its graduates are well prepared to tackle the challenges

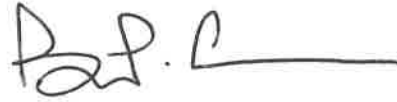
presented in post-secondary academia and beyond. In brief, yesterday's press conference served primarily to mischaracterize and, frankly, offend all members of the school community. In fact, numerous students were the first to point this out first thing this morning. Unfortunately we continue to witness that education and politics rarely prove to be a productive combination.

We will gladly extend an invitation to anyone who is interested in witnessing the environment at Huntington High School firsthand. There are countless reasons to take pride in all that occurs within its walls and within the walls of all district schools.

Sincerely,



James W. Polansky  
Superintendent of Schools



Brenden P. Cusack  
Huntington High School Principal