



## Joint Press Release

### **Novato Unified School District and Novato Police Department Announce the Appointments of Two School Resource Officers**

The NPD and NUSD are pleased to announce the appointment of two new School Resource Officers (SRO) assigned to Novato Unified school campuses. The two officers will come from existing NPD resources and will begin their duties in the coming 2018/2019 school year. The City Council through the approval of the Fiscal Year 2018/2019 city budget also authorized the hiring of one additional police officer to enhance city-wide police service. The new SROs will primarily be assigned to Novato High and San Marin High Schools but will be active on all campuses.

Chief of Police Adam McGill and NUSD Superintendent Jim Hogeboom began discussing the return of the program more than a year ago. Since the end of the formalized program in 2008, analysis concluded that the volume of calls for service on NUSD campuses per year consumed the time equivalent of two full time police officers. The current response model caused officers assigned to neighborhoods to be taken away for complex school safety matters resulting in less neighborhood patrols and inconsistent responses from different officers. Returning to a more formal program, and adding two officers to the force, will keep patrol officers in neighborhoods and specially trained school officers directly assigned to NUSD campuses. The School Resource Officers will enhance the preventative programs and services already being provided on NUSD campuses by NUSD's contracted security company, North Bay Security Group. A Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Novato and the Novato Unified School District will clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of the School Resource Officers.

#### **Role of the School Resource Officer**

School Resource Officers serve as counselors, role models, and advocates for students, families, faculty, and staff, while bringing highly trained police officers to Novato Unified school campuses. School Resource Officers are a recognized and approachable resource for students and faculty during and after school, at school events, and during investigations that have a tie to school campuses and activities. This program will allow for School Resource Officers to be on campuses five days a week during the academic school year. By working closely with the students, SROs can build rapport with them and are often more approachable than other police officers, become a resource for questions and advice and help develop positive relationships. SROs will work with teachers, parents and school staff to share responsibilities for crafting solutions to problems other than arrests.

SROs like all NPD officers are highly trained to respond to acts of violence that could occur on school campuses. The SRO's will support and participate in all school safety planning to include emergency response drills and related activities. In addition, to being able to quickly respond to emergency situations, SROs are a valuable resource for students, parents, teachers and administration regarding law enforcement related issues. Enforcement is not the expectation of the School Resource Officers, in fact the main objective is to help the student avoid the criminal justice system by employing the principles of restorative justice. School Resource Officers will focus heavily in the area of prevention. On any given day you might find the officers giving presentations in a classroom or meeting and talking to students in the hallways. You will also find them during athletic events and school lunches. The SRO's

will make referrals and connect students to programs outside the school such as Camp Chance, the Squires Program, and programs administered through North Marin Community Services.

The School Resource Officer position is an integral part of building trust and relationships with our students and parents and will provide additional security for our school campuses. Our officers will work as a team with Novato Unified School administrators and North Bay Security Group using industry best practices to triage issues on campus. Using the principles of restorative justice, the SRO program aims to connect youth with services and provide an opportunity for youth to learn from mistakes rather than be penalized for them. The officers will be a consistent face of the department on campus and have an opportunity to build relationships with the students to break down the barriers between law enforcement and our community. The City of Novato and the Novato Unified School District are committed to the safety of all students, staff and faculty and hope to build lasting relationships with all on campus, especially students.

“The safety and security of our school campuses is our highest priority. I’m very pleased to have the Council’s support in returning this vital resource to NUSD campuses. NPD is committed to building lasting partnerships with students, faculty, and staff while serving as a strong partner with NUSD for student success,” said Chief Adam McGill.

“We thank the Novato City Council and Chief McGill for providing School Resource Officers to our district. The SROs will complement the invaluable work the North Bay Security Group has provided NUSD. This strong partnership with NPD will create safer school campuses as well as provide a resource for our students, parents and staff,” commented Superintendent Jim Hogeboom.

### **Meet Your School Resource Officers**



Officer Antonio Rodriguez was born and raised in Sonoma County and graduated from Windsor High School. He attended SRJC earned an Associates of Arts degree in Administration of Justice and a Children in The Justice System Certificate. Officer Rodriguez previously taught a writing course to incarcerated youth at the Marin County Juvenile Hall. Officer Rodriguez has quickly been recognized as a leader at community outreach events and is great at engaging our youth. Officer Rodriguez is bilingual and is an instructor for the Spanish Community Academy. Officer Rodriguez will be assigned to Novato High School.



Officer Nick Wagner was born and raised in Southern Marin. He attended Lynchburg College in Virginia for four years and studied abroad in Barcelona, Spain. Officer Wagner taught Physical Education and coached youth Lacrosse in Southern Marin prior to becoming a police officer. Officer Wagner is a Youth Camp and RADkids Instructor for the department and has a passion for teaching. Officer Wagner is looking forward to continuing his work with youth in Novato and building relationships in the community. Officer Wagner will be assigned to San Marin High School.