

PBC School Board Meeting Speech. October 21st, 2009.

While writing this speech I remembered Mrs. Coleman my speech teacher in high school. "Stay focused. What is the point you're trying to make?" Well after looking at the size of this crowd, talking with people here etc. the focus is obvious. It's not about you sir, the board, the teachers or the cops. Tonight all of us are unified and this is about our most precious commodity we have. The children of Palm Beach County.

The brave and dedicated Officers of the School District Police Department have brought their talents, abilities and expertise here to protect our children and ensure a safe and secure educational environment. Our Officers train and have dedicated themselves to that most noble mission of protecting our children. Unfortunately decisions by you and others have become a hindrance and a stumbling block to that mission.

I did some research and found a department roster from 2004. At that time we 157 sworn Officers from the chief on down. Last year we had 161 sworn Officers. In October 2009 we have 151 sworn Officers. We have six less Officers than we did in 2004! Ten less than last year! The district went through tremendous growth during that time. We have more students, teachers and employees than 2004 but less cops! Tell us that makes sense!

The district's reply to the news story about our radios was; "Our police radios are very effective for our needs and the system is continually being updated." Who is "Our"? You? Our Officers don't carry radios to meet your needs. We carry radios to meet our needs! Where do you needs come into play with our radios? It's not about you!

How can you attempt to spend 4.5 million dollars on WXEL and not repair our radios or replace empty and very much needed Officer positions? Where are your priorities?

How can you look a parent or a student in the eye and say that there is no money in the district to replace or keep cops but you need, and this no reflection against Ms. Killets, it's the position, a chief of staff that makes more money than Rohm Emmanuel the chief of staff to the President of the United States! Why do you need a chief of staff but a school doesn't need a cop? Why do your needs supersede the safety needs of children in our schools? It's not about you sir!

To believe that a Columbine or Beslan style attack couldn't occur here in Palm Beach County is unrealistic and foolhardy. Your lack of priorities regarding student safety have eroded this department to dangerous levels. And now that we're in this grave position you waive a dismissive hand and expect us to simply lie down and accept it. NO! We're trained and dedicated professionals, we're cops and we don't lie down for anybody! You have a legal and moral obligation to fund our department adequately and ensure student safety. I implore you sir and the board members to change course and right this ship! Our Officers are prepared to do whatever it takes to keep our children all we ask is that you do the same.