

Meet Steve Sciullo – Hampton High School Safety and Security Specialist

For 185 days out of the year, parents place the responsibility of not only their children’s education – but also their safety and security – in the hands of the Hampton Township School District.

HTSD takes this duty seriously, making it a priority to frequently review safety and security protocol to determine where enhancements or other adjustments can be implemented. For the last several months, the District has made changes in line with its mission to provide a safe and secure environment for all students and staff. Among the changes includes a new visitor registration system at all buildings, and the hiring of a Safety and Security Specialist at the High School.

The District already has a School Resource Officer, a program that has been in place since 1999 in cooperation with the Hampton Township Police. Officer Aaron Zola currently is serving in that position. The Safety and Security Specialist position is not intended to replace the School Resource Officer, but rather to work cooperatively with Officer Zola to enhance overall building security. The primary role of the position will be to work with students, staff and administration to prevent issues from occurring, to remain observant and vigilant in the building from a safety standpoint and to address safety issues as they surface.

In May, the School Board approved the hiring of Mr. Steven Sciullo to fill the new position. Mr. Sciullo is not a new face at Hampton High School. He previously worked as a paraprofessional with the District for nine years.

“Throughout his time as a paraprofessional, Mr. Sciullo’s ability to build relationships and rapport with students, and effectively communicate with all adults in the building, has helped him deter inappropriate behavior, gather necessary information during investigations and help maintain a safe environment,” said Dr. Marguerite Imbarlina, High School Principal. “His familiarity with our students will be a valuable tool in his new role.”

Mr. Sciullo said he is excited for the new position and looking forward to continuing to build on the relationships he already has established with staff and students. “This is such a tough time for kids for a number of reasons. They’re under a lot of pressure, not only to perform academically, but socially as well.”

He said his time supervising the students in the cafeteria as a paraprofessional provided him with valuable insight into how students act when not confined in a classroom setting. “It’s nice to see them in a different environment, where they get to be more themselves than they can be in the classroom.” Having the benefit of seeing students in a more social setting assists him with spotting problems before they occur.

Mr. Sciullo is known for engaging students who may need a little extra help making connections with other students with whom they have things in common. Pairing up students with others at lunch is one of his specialties; however, sometimes that may not be what some students need. “Sometimes kids don’t like the cafeteria at all and just don’t want to be in this environment, with or without others at a table, and for those kids, I can help them find another alternative.” He also will open the auxiliary gym for students toward the end of the lunch period and occasionally join them in a game of basketball. It’s a great way to get to know the students, their likes and dislikes “and just who they are as a person outside of being a student at this school.”

In his role as Safety and Security Specialist, Mr. Sciullo will be responsible for a number of daily activities, including:

- Checking the parking lot at the start of each day;
- Checking and securing the building in the morning, which involves monitoring students as they enter the building to ensure no one who does not belong in the building is attempting to enter;
- Securing the doors following morning arrival;
- Monitoring the hallways, classrooms and common areas of the building during the school day; and
- Monitoring and supervising lunch periods.

Mr. Sciullo said he also plans to reach out to his counterparts at neighboring school districts in an effort to explore best practices and ensure Hampton is staying ahead of the curve where safety and security is concerned.

Helping the students to feel accepted and safe is a tough job, but Mr. Sciullo said it's one he plans to tackle with 100 percent effort. "I have a motto, and it's pretty simple. Greet every kid, every day, with a smile and a hello, because you never know what kind of day they're having, or what they might be going through in life; that smile and hello may make all the difference."