



## TOWN OF WOODBURY

### Selectmen's Office

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School Safety Committee  
State of Connecticut

Dear School Safety Committee Members

As a member of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments - School Safety Committee, as the Chief Elected Official for the Town of Woodbury, and a business owner who has been designing security access control systems for the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security and the Transportation Security Administration for the past fifteen years. I feel I am qualified to express my professional opinions regarding school safety issues.

In 2009 when I was elected as to the CEO for the Town of Woodbury, I met with then Principal Dawn Hochsprung regarding her writing a grant for security upgrades at Mitchell Elementary School. I questioned at the time, why were school administrators applying for and ultimately setting up security measures for their respected schools. Without possessing the necessary background in the fields of security and safety, I wondered if this was the most logical way of protecting our schools. Upon further investigation it was revealed to me that not only were administrators responsible for this activity, but that school maintenance workers, janitors, teachers and school administrators were responsible for these safety controls. Questionable decisions at best.

I worked with Dawn Hochsprung on writing a successful grant and assisted her with the proper application and installations of these security controls for her school. Additionally, Dawn Hochsprung and I formed a relationship whereas we discussed on numerous occasions, what would need to be done should a shooter breach the school security, forcibly entering the school, and open firing once entered. Our discussions led to "trying to buy time" to "notify school teachers, staff and students that eminent danger was in their school". Dawn and I even had discussions regarding "giving up your life" should it be necessary to protect her school and her children. She stated, "NOT ON MY WATCH", would anyone be able to enter her school to conduct an act of violence against her school.

Needless to say dawn left our school system in 2010 to take the position of Principal of Sandy Hook Elementary School. Dawn gave up her life for her children on December 14, 2012. It is my belief that Dawn Hochsprung did everything right on that day. The lack of

necessary safety precautions and access control measures at that school allowed the perpetrator to break into and enter the school and conduct an unthinkable act against Sandy Hook Elementary School and its children.

Of the schools 169 towns and cities in the State of Connecticut there are no two schools alike. There is no “ONE FIX” that will solve all of the safety and security issues. Here in Region 14, we are conducting a PROFILE of each of the schools. These Profiles will include driveway accesses, assessment of grounds, reviewing access controls for students during school morning entry. Profiling and reviewing procedures for parents, teachers and vendors needing to access the school during the normal school hours. Profiling and reviewing the buildings access controls, or lack thereof. Profiling and reviewing camera imaging. Reviewing all safety and security measures, in preparing for emergency lockdown procedures and lastly developing a well thought out plan to implement new technologies, technics, policies and procedures in a fiscally responsible manner. Region 14 and the Town of Woodbury are in it for the long haul. These school profiles are working, living documents, that will allow us to set forth, review, critique and amend our strategies and policies and to implement new technologies.

We must never lose that fact that our schools are for our children’s leaning. We must provide safety and security, while still maintaining a learning environment for our children. While I am involved with the security and safety of our communities, anything less than this is unacceptable, and “NOT ON MY WATCH”.

I thank the committee for letting me speak in these regards. Your efforts on our behalf are greatly appreciated.

Best wishes,

Gerald D. Stomski  
First Selectman  
Town of Woodbury

