

Kent ISD Board Members,

I would like to recognize School Resource Officer (SRO) Deputy Sheriff Steve Toonstra for responding to a crisis on October 30, 2024. Through his quick thinking, compassion, and dedication to our student's safety, SRO Toonstra prevented a potentially tragic situation and saved a young life.

That afternoon, SRO Toonstra responded to a crisis involving a student who had left the KEC-Beltline campus. Drawing upon his previous experience and knowledge of this particular student, SRO Toonstra correctly anticipated the student's location and found the child on Knapp Street near the I-96 overpass.

What happened next demonstrated SRO Toonstra's exceptional crisis intervention skills. Upon discovering the student had climbed over the guard rail onto a highway sign above I-96, SRO Toonstra:

- Immediately engaged with the student
- Utilized his established rapport to build trust in a critical moment
- Demonstrated remarkable patience, continuing to communicate even without an initial verbal response
- Successfully de-escalated the situation through careful communication
- Safely assisted the student back over the guard rail
- Ensured proper follow-up care by facilitating a reunion with the student's mother and subsequent medical evaluation

This incident highlights several crucial aspects of SRO Toonstra's service to our school community:

1. The importance of building relationships with students;
2. The value of having an experienced SRO who knows our students personally;
3. The critical role of proper crisis intervention training; and
4. The life-saving impact of quick, professional responses.

I want to ask the Board for formal recognition of Deputy Sheriff Steve Toonstra for his exemplary service and life-saving actions on behalf of our students and community.

Sean Burns
Director of Safety & Security
Kent ISD