



PRESS RELEASE

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In March 2016, the Alabama Legislature established an Emergency Task Force on School Safety and Security, which released its report, "A New Culture of Safety" December 31 of that year. The report recognized that the presence of qualified first responders and law enforcement officers has proven to be the number one line of defense in providing a safe environment, and recommended that each Alabama school have a resource officer on location.

Briarwood Christian School, a ministry of Briarwood Presbyterian Church, is a Class 5A school with approximately 2,000 students and faculty located on two campuses in unincorporated Jefferson and Shelby County, Alabama. Briarwood is grateful for and enjoys a wonderful working relationship with the law enforcement agencies in the communities in which it resides: Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, Shelby County Sheriff's Department, and Vestavia Hills Police Department and desires to continue these partnerships. Briarwood also recognizes the State budgetary issues identified by the Emergency Task Force on School Safety and Security which coupled with the demand for APOST certified qualified first responders creates stress on our law enforcement departments. This can and does lead to full-time staffing issues for both campus locations.

Alabama Code 16-22-1 allows certain educational institutions to appoint and employ one or more suitable persons to act as police officers to keep off intruders and prevent trespass upon the institution property. The institutions currently provided the protection under this statute include a number that have less students than does Briarwood Christian School.

We are grateful to the governor and our elected officials for approving our request to be added to the existing Alabama Code 16-22-1.