



WALTER POWNALL SERVICE CENTER  
11111 S Belcher Road  
Largo, FL 33773  
(727) 541-3526

SCHOOL BOARD OF  
PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA

Chairperson  
Janet R. Clark

Vice Chairperson  
Carol J. Cook

Mary L. Tyus Brown  
Nina Hayden  
Linda S. Lerner  
Peggy L. O'Shea  
Robin L. Wike

Superintendent  
Julie M. Janssen, Ed.D.

September 14, 2010

President Keith Stripling  
Florida Crime Prevention Association  
c/o Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office  
Post Office Drawer 1397  
Okeechobee, Florida 34973-1397

Dear President Stripling and Nominating Committee:

It is an honor to provide my sincere comments and recommendation to you regarding Police Chief Tom Gavin's nomination for the Florida Crime Prevention Association's "President's Award." Due to his outstanding credentials and excellent relationship with our schools over the last two decades, we were very fortunate that he became our Chief of Police eight years ago. He has worked tirelessly and made improvements in many facets of the department; including and most importantly, their "service" to our schools. Due to his crime prevention efforts, he has in effect placed the Pinellas County Schools Police Department on the map as a professional police department in the Tampa Bay Area. With their improved and professional appearance, the School Police vehicles and officers are readily observed and recognizable at various schools throughout Pinellas County.

There are too many improvements to mention them all. To ensure the highest quality of service, Chief Gavin has ensured that the officers interact with teachers and students always promoting school safety with one on one intervention with students and/or parents. In addition, Chief Gavin has developed liaisons with other law enforcement agencies and social service providers to provide a variety of crime prevention programs to our students and schools. School administrators were provided with Incident Command Training in the event of a disaster. As we all know, one can never be prepared enough during these times, but keeping our children and schools safe is Chief Gavin's highest priority.

Last year, Chief Gavin was able to add two officers to the police department specifically assigned to gang intervention. This has been a very successful initiative. Their main goal was to take a multi-faceted approach to preventing gang problems within our schools. Initially, the two officers set out to heighten the awareness and gather gang intelligence in our schools. During the last year, the two officers have conducted numerous presentations and made hundreds of visits to schools, interacting with students, parents, administrators, school staff, and other SRO's.

Additionally, Chief Gavin stays extremely busy due to his work ethic and philosophy of always being accessible and available to administrators, principals, and other employees throughout the district for these and any other concerns that may arise. It is easy to recognize that Chief Gavin is a valued member of the Pinellas County School Board's management team and I highly recommend him for this prestigious award.

Sincerely,

Michael Bessette  
Associate Superintendent  
Facilities, Operations, Safety and Security

# BIOGRAPHY

## CHIEF THOMAS GAVIN

Chief Thomas Gavin has been the Chief of Police for the Pinellas County Schools Police Department for the last eight (8) years. The police department consists of 34 officers and support personnel and oversees the law enforcement functions of all Pinellas County Schools and school centers. Chief Gavin has been in law enforcement since 1974. Tom rose through the ranks of the St. Petersburg Police Department and served as an SRO, Detective, Sergeant, Lieutenant, and upon his retirement, he held the rank of Major. Tom's last assignment was as the Commander of the department's Youth Resources Division which consisted of 33 detectives/officers and 4 sergeants and included the SRO, DARE, and GREAT programs, the gang unit, and detectives responsible for the investigation of child abuse.

Chief Gavin holds a B.A. in Political Science and M.A. in Criminology from the University of South Florida. He has served on several state and national initiatives involving school safety and School Resource Officer Programs and has previously served as an adjunct instructor at the University of South Florida. Chief Gavin's literary contributions have been published in School Safety, The FBI Bulletin, the American School Board Journal, School Safety Update, Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice, and The Police Chief. Tom is a major contributor to the US Justice Department's "Cops in Schools" Training initiative, has served on a U.S. State Department technical assistance team to the government of the Czech Republic.

Tom and his wife Cindy, a guidance counselor at Madeira Beach Middle School, live in St. Petersburg.