

	<p>1200 Balmoral Street Thunder Bay ON P7B 5Z5 www.thunderbaypolice.ca</p>		<p>200 Lillie Street North Thunder Bay, ON P7C 5Y2 www.matawaeducation.com</p>
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MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, April 4, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THUNDER BAY POLICE SERVICE AND MATAWA EDUCATION AND CARE CENTRE PARTNER IN LAST QUARTER OF THE 2022/2023 SCHOOL YEAR IN DEDICATED SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER (SRO) PROGRAM

THUNDER BAY, ON: The Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS) and the Matawa Education and Care Centre (MECC) have jointly launched a new dedicated School Resource Officer (SRO) Program.

The TBPS and MECC began ongoing discussions about a possible dedicated SRO program in the fall of 2022. Through those conversations, a program was developed that would have a single TBPS officer dedicated to the MECC.

In an effort to address the specific and unique needs of the MECC, a new position was created. By creating the new position, the service was able to develop the core skillset an officer in that position would need to ensure the program's success.

Through an internal competition, Cst. Larry Baxter was named the successful candidate and became the new MECC School Resource Officer on March 20, 2023.

Larry Baxter is a 21-year veteran of the Thunder Bay Police Service and a Matawa member from Eabametoong First Nation. He began his policing career with the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service in 1998 and has served under a variety of units and branches including: Criminal Investigations, Uniform Patrol, Court Services, the former Beat Patrol, and Aboriginal Liaison Unit.

Funding for the dedicated SRO program is in place until August 31, 2023. Both the MECC and TBPS are hopeful the funding will continue and eventually become permanent.

QUOTES:

“We are excited about this unique partnership with Thunder Bay Police. We are looking forward to strengthening the relationship between the students and Thunder Bay Police service. We also hope this funding will become permanent as we believe it is an essential service for our students.”

- Brad Battiston, Principal of Matawa Education and Care Centre

“I am excited to be working as the new School Resource Officer for the Matawa Education and Care Centre. My main priority will be student safety and working with the different departments within the MECC including: the Mental Health Team, Youth Care Centre, Safe Sobering Site and the On-Call Service with policies and new strategies to keep student safe. I look at this secondment as a step in the right direction that will benefit both the TBPS and the students of the MECC. I want to thank the TBPS for thinking outside the box exploring new and innovative ways to keep Indigenous students safe while they attend school in Thunder Bay.”

- Cst. Larry Baxter, Thunder Bay Police Services

“We are thrilled with the partnership we have been able to form with the Matawa Education and Care Centre. The Thunder Bay Police Service believes this partnership will help further strengthen the relationship between this police service and the staff, students, and communities served by the MECC.”

- Insp. Gord Snyder, Thunder Bay Police Service

“Through the work of our existing School Resource and Indigenous Liaison Officers, who serve schools across the city of Thunder Bay, we are confident this dedicated SRO program will lead to positive results for the service, along with the staff and students of the MECC.”

- Insp. Derek West, Thunder Bay Police Service

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For more information, contact:

Scott Paradis

Thunder Bay Police Service Media Relations Coordinator

(807) 684-1200 ext. 2413

scott.paradis@thunderbaypolice.ca

Carol Audet

Matawa First Nations Management Communications Manager

(807)632-9663

caudet@matawa.on.ca