



WSD 1 Budget Delegation
Board of Trustees Meeting
February 22nd, 2021

Re.: School Resource Officers:

Dear Board Chair and Trustees:

Thank you for your response to our February 11th, 2021 letter regarding our ongoing concerns with the School Resource Officer program. We have attached our letter to this submission as it details our concerns over the public engagement, a flawed survey, the division has done to date on this matter.

Primarily we wish to reiterate our recommendation that you suspend the program until a fair and fulsome evaluation has been completed. We must note that as flawed as the survey was, even those results are not yet known so a decision to continue spending much needed and ever scarcer funds on an unproven program just does not make sense. Especially when there are programs such as meal programs, child care, teaching assistants etc.. that are proven to be effective in assisting struggling children in our public education system.

As to the survey itself, for it to have been of any use at all, there needs to be a complete breakdown of the data. We would, of course, expect these findings to be made public. Specifically, we are interested in:

- Will the child/family, staff and SRO answers be presented separately? Amalgamating them would, of course, muddy the responses.
- Will the survey results to all the questions be released? If not, why not?
- Will the racial demographics of survey respondents be released, again with child/family, staff and SRO separated? If not, why not?
- Will the racial demographics of the entire division be released to provide proper context? If not, why not?
- Will the total number of survey respondents be compared to the total student/family, staff and SRO school populations be released? If not, why not?
- Will the survey answers be released by school, or at least neighbourhood so that the predominant socio-economic neighbourhood conditions can also be considered when weighing survey results? If not, why not?
- Will all comments submitted through the survey be made available to the public rather than a select few? If not, why not?

- Will the WSD 1 commit to a full and fair public engagement that actively seeks to consult with those who may not be adequately represented in the survey? If not, why not?
- If so, how will the WSD 1 achieve this?
- Finally, given that schools do not exist in a vacuum but must look to address the needs of their surrounding communities as that is where their students and caregivers come from, will the WSD 1 look to engage expert third party advice and research on the effectiveness or not of the SRO program when considering funding the program in the future? If not, why not?

We are also seeking clarity on the nature of the multi-year contract should your decision be to continue to fund the SRO program based on the information you have to date. Are you in fact able to cancel the contract on 30 days notice to the City , without penalty? If so, what mechanism would the public have to continue this discussion and what timelines would we need to consider?

In closing, we would just like to offer that other jurisdictions such as Toronto and Hamilton have discontinued these programs without any discernible negative impact. Unlike the WSD 1, there were no actual monetary savings from this move as funding for the SROs came directly from the police service. Here, this board has the opportunity to reallocate these funds to where they can do the most good.

We had hoped to appear in person tonight but the roster was already full. We wish you the best in your deliberations.

Sincerely,



Kate Kehler,
On behalf of PAC