



**The Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
Education Policy and Directions Committee Meeting**

AGENDA

Broadcasted via YouTube <https://bit.ly/3czx8bA>

Monday, May 1, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Chair Mahbobi

A. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

A.1. Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories we live, we learn, and we do our work.

A.2. Approval of the Agenda

Recommended Motion:

That the May 1, 2023 agenda be approved.

A.3. Approval of the Minutes

Recommended Motion:

That the April 3, 2023 Education Policy and Directions Committee meeting minutes be approved.

A.4. Business Arising from Minutes

B. PRESENTATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE

B.1. School Police Liaison Officer Program – Boma, Support Network for Indigenous Women and Women of Colour

B.2. School Police Liaison Review Committee Recommendations – Matt Christie

B.3. School Police Liaison Officer Program – Kelli Kraft

B.4. School Police Liaison Officer Program – Cole Brewer

C. NEW BUSINESS

C.1. Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL) Memo and Presentation – Deputy Superintendent Caldwell

District Goal / Priority Students – District Principals McCartney and Hovis

C.2. Policy Sub-Committee

Draft Policy XXXX Sanctuary Schools

C.3. School Police Liaison Officer Committee Recommendations – Trustee Duncan

D. NOTICE OF MOTION

E. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

F. ADJOURNMENT

Recommended Motion:
That the meeting adjourn.

Note: This meeting is being audio and video recorded. The video can be viewed on the District website.



The Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
Education Policy and Directions Committee Meeting
REGULAR MINUTES
Monday, April 3, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Trustees Present: **Education Policy and Directions members:** Emily Mahbobi (Chair), Nicole Duncan, Mavis David

Operations Policy and Planning members: Nicole Duncan, Rob Paynter, Karin Kwan

Trustee Regrets: Diane McNally, Natalie Baillaut, Derek Gagnon, Angela Carmichael

Administration: Deb Whitten, Superintendent of Schools, Katrina Stride, Secretary-Treasurer, Harold Caldwell, Deputy Superintendent, Tom Aerts, Associate Superintendent, Dr. Shelly Niemi, Director of Indigenous Education, Andy Canty, Director, Information Technology for Learning

Partners: Lena Palmero, GVTA, Brenna O'Connor, VPVPA

A. COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

A.1. Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories

Chair Mahbobi recognized and acknowledged the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories we live, we learn, and we do our work.

A.2. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by Trustee Duncan

That the April 3, 2023 agenda be approved.

Motion Carried Unanimously

A.3. Approval of the Minutes

Moved by Trustee Duncan

That the March 6, 2023 Combined Education Policy and Directions and Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting minutes, be approved, as pertaining to the Education Policy and Directions Committee meeting.

Motion Carried Unanimously

A.4. Business Arising from Minutes

None.

B. PRESENTATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE

- B.1.** Sheila Flood and Michelle Desreux presented on Global Solutions for Peace, Equality and Sustainability.

Trustees provided thanks for the presentation.

C. NEW BUSINESS

- C.1.** Deputy Superintendent Caldwell presented the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL) Memo. Director of Indigenous Education Dr. Niemi presented on Indigenous Support and Wellness Framework.

The 4 Quadrants:

BEAR – Engagement and Location

WOLF – Social and Emotional Support

SALMON – Belonging, Transitions and Connection

RAVEN – Learning and Academic Support

Trustees thanked staff for the presentation and had questions of clarification.

D. NOTICE OF MOTION

None.

E. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

F. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Duncan

That the meeting adjourn.

Motion Carried Unanimously

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Chair	Secretary-Treasurer
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Office of the Deputy Superintendent

Harold W Caldwell – Deputy Superintendent

To: Education Policy and Directions Committee

From: Harold W Caldwell, Deputy Superintendent

Date: May 1, 2023

RE: District Team Goal – Priority Students

Background:

District Team Goal ~ Priority Students

To support schools in feeling confident and capable in re-engaging priority students so they can say: I belong, I have purpose, I matter.

For the 2022-23 school year, the District Team worked collaboratively to identify this shared goal to guide the work that operationalizes the Strategic Plan strategies of further closing the equity gap for student access, opportunity and success. While we have always talked about ways to support priority students, as we learn more about culturally responsive systems, our focus is narrowing on student voice and surfacing the story of the student learning experience. In the presentation, we will provide an overview of how we have approached defining and identifying priority students.

The focused work of the District Team goal aligns with aspects of the Ministry's Vision for Student Success and a guiding principle of student-centred learning. It also connects to various components from the 2022 FESL Report, most specifically pages 22-24, Educational Outcome 3 and the support strategies. Finally, a few of the examples shared are connected to the ongoing work supporting Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan.

One example of such current work relates to improved support for Children and Youth in Care. As outlined on page 4 in the 2022 FESL Report, we have fully implemented the Children and Youth in Care Standard of Practice with a centralized digital tool that captures input from school teams multiple times per year, including personalized plans for each identified student in care. In addition to this, members of the District Team (including Indigenous Education Department colleagues) meet regularly with MCFD and Indigenous delegated agency partners to improve communication and shared services, and to co-plan opportunities for stronger networking and collaboration between school teams and community agencies.

The presentation slides will focus on a few additional examples of current work from across the District related to the District Team goal:

- District support referrals
 - Collaborative problem-solving with members of District Team
 - 206 referrals to date (April 25) - increase from 2021-22
 - Responses focused on student-centered planning, student voice
- SJ Burnside Alternative Education program for priority students includes programs such as ACCESS, Junior Academics, & The Link at Lambrick Park

Secondary School. These alternative learning environments serve priority students who benefit from flexible and personalized opportunities.

- In September 2022, we launched a centralized Welcome Centre & Learning Centre. The following services are provided for newcomers to Canada and their receiving catchment schools:
 - Registration
 - A District Welcome & Learning classroom
 - Connections to community partners / agencies
 - Support for schools and educators (pro-d, translation, transition planning, etc)

Framework for Enhancing Student Learning 2022-2023 Education Policy and Directions Committee Meetings

SEPTEMBER	12	DISTRICT PRINCIPAL TAMMY RENYARD	Overview (of year) FESL (new FESL and feedback)
OCTOBER	03	DISTRICT PRINCIPAL SEAN POWELL PRINCIPAL NADINE NAUGHTON	School Goals - Connections to FESL
NOVEMBER	14	DIRECTOR OF INDIGENOUS EDUCATION DR. SHELLY NIEMI DISTRICT PRINCIPAL TAMMY RENYARD	Educated Citizen - Three areas of FESL Ministry Changes
DECEMBER	05	ACTING DISTRICT PRINCIPAL CHARMAINE SHORTT	Early Learning & Childcare
JANUARY	09	DISTRICT PRINCIPAL TAMMY RENYARD ACTING DISTRICT PRINCIPAL CHARMAINE SHORTT DISTRICT PRINCIPAL DAVID HOVIS	Literacy Framework and K-12 Plan
FEBRUARY	06	DISTRICT VICE-PRINCIPAL LINDSAY JOHNSON	Careers/Transitions
MARCH	06	DISTRICT PRINCIPAL SEAN MCCARTNEY DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES MARNI VISTISEN-HARWOOD	Inclusion for Learning Strategy
APRIL	03	DIRECTOR OF INDIGENOUS EDUCATION DR. SHELLY NIEMI SCHOOL BASED PRINCIPALS	Indigenous Education: Four Agreements School Goals
MAY	01	DISTRICT PRINCIPAL SEAN MCCARTNEY DISTRICT PRINCIPAL DAVID HOVIS	District Goal - Priority Students
JUNE	05	DISTRICT PRINCIPAL TAMMY RENYARD	Review of Data/FESL (Draft FESL 2023-24)

Priority Students

District Team

District Team Goal

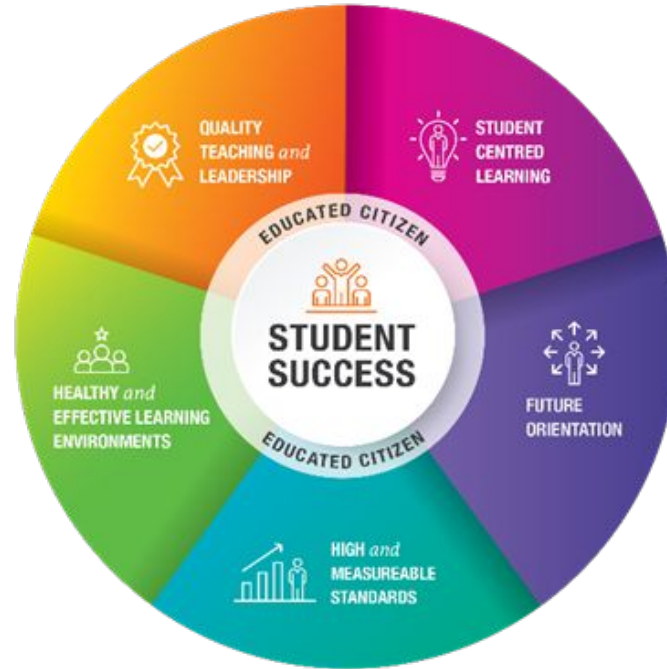


*To support schools in feeling confident and capable in re-engaging priority students so they can say:
I belong, I have purpose, I matter.*

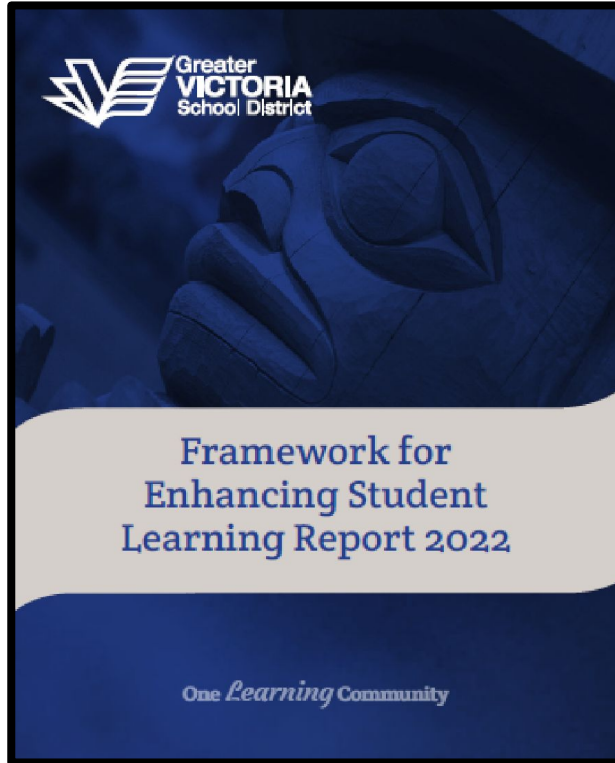
Ministry Vision for Student Success



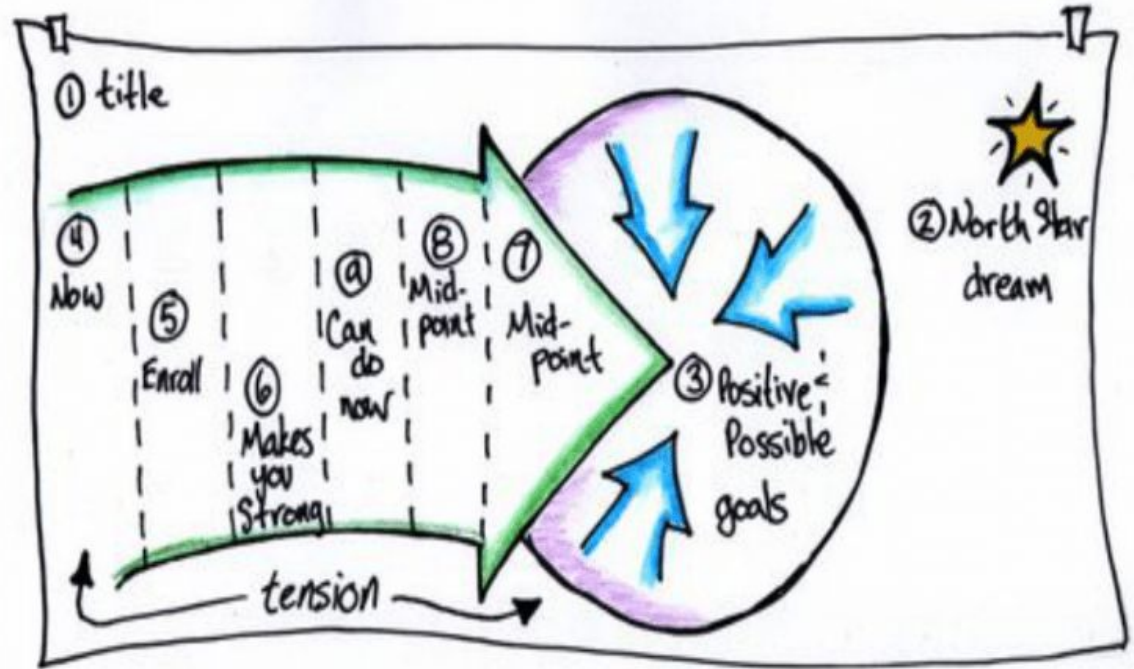
Ministry of
Education and
Child Care



FESL & Strategic Plan Connections



District Support Referrals & Person-Centred Planning



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The GVSD's Alternative Education Program

@ SJ Burnside Education Centre



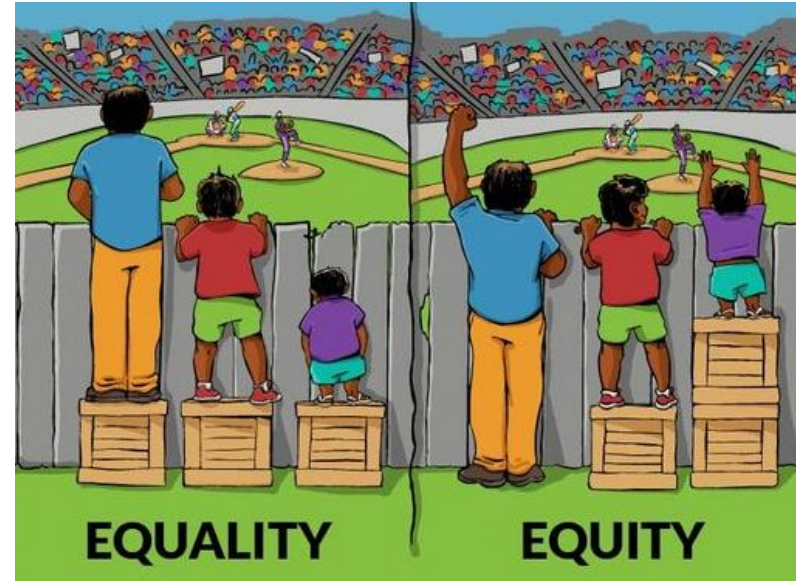
ACCESS

Educational Programs Offered at SJB:

Junior Academics

The Link @ Lambrick





Greater Victoria School District's Welcome Centre Supporting New Families to Canada

Connections with Community Supports & Partners

- QA
- Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria
- VIRCS
- VICCIRS
- Ukrainian Canadian Cultural Society
- Post-secondary institutions
- Other school districts

District K-12 Welcome & Learning Class

- Monday–Friday (K–12)
- New immigrants and refugees
- Consideration for all new English language learners

SD61 Welcome Centre for Students and Their Families

Multilingual Learner (MLL) Teacher Supports

- AIPs
- Assessments
- Observation notes
- Consultation
- Pro-D
- Newsletters
- Audits

Family Connections

- Establish strong partnerships between schools/district and families
- Translation services
- Family education, information and dinner celebrations
- Online resources

Registration & Information

- First point of contact for new permanent residents and refugees
- Provide ease of transition and support of registration process to schools

School Supports

- Anti-racism initiatives
- Diversification of library collections
- Multi-cultural calendar (2023/2024)

SD61 Welcome & Learning Centre Classroom



One *Learning* Community

Education Policy and Directions Committee Meeting May 1, 2023



Supporting New Families...



Moving Forward:



*To support schools in feeling confident and capable in re-engaging priority students so they can say:
I belong, I have purpose, I matter.*

Office of the Secretary-Treasurer

School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
556 Boleskine Road, Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8
Phone (250) 475-4117 Fax (250) 475-4112

Katrina Stride – Secretary-Treasurer

TO: Education Policy and Directions Committee

FROM: Katrina Stride, Secretary-Treasurer

DATE: May 1, 2023

RE: **Policy Sub-Committee Report – April 13, 2023 and April 25, 2023 Meetings**

Background:

The Policy Sub-Committee held meetings on April 13, 2023 and April 25, 2023. New business at the April 13, 2023 meeting included prioritizing the order of the March 13, 2023 Board motions which directed the Policy Sub-Committee to create and review three separate policies and regulations. New Business at the April 25, 2023 meeting included reviewing the draft Sanctuary Schools policy.

There is one recommendation to the Board from the Policy Sub-Committee.

Recommendation:

Policy xxxx – Sanctuary Schools

Superintendent Whitten and Trustee Mahbobi provided a draft Sanctuary Schools policy to the Policy Sub-Committee for review. The Committee reviewed and made two amendments. Trustees recommended that the Board review the draft Sanctuary Schools policy and provide input and direction to the Policy Sub-Committee in compliance with Bylaw 9210 The Development of Policy.

That the Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria) review the draft Sanctuary Schools policy and provide input and direction to the Policy Sub-Committee in compliance with Bylaw 9210 The Development of Policy.

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

POLICY 5150 (New)

SANCTUARY SCHOOLS

Adopted:

Revised:

Frequency of Review:

1.0 RATIONALE

- 1.1 The Greater Victoria School District is committed to providing a safe, caring, and welcoming learning environment for all students and families.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 All school age children who are ordinarily resident in the school district, including those with precarious immigration status or no immigration status in Canada, are entitled to register for school in the Greater Victoria School District.
- 3.2 All relevant enrolment procedures will align with this Board Policy's direction.
- 3.3 The personal information of enrolled students or their families shall not be shared with federal immigration authorities unless required by law.
- 3.4 The Board of Education shall not permit Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officials or immigration authorities to enter schools or Board facilities unless required by law.
- 3.5 All public school employees and volunteers shall be informed of this policy annually, and it will be communicated to requisite stakeholders.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The **Board of Education** will provide orientation and training for all staff regarding this policy in order to promote culturally responsive knowledge and a safe learning environment that meets the needs of students with precarious, or no immigration status in Canada.
- 4.2 The **Board of Education** is responsible to ensure compliance with the *School Act* and Ministry policies.

5.0 REFERENCES

School Act S.75 Provision of education program

Office of Trustee Duncan

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Trustee Duncan, Chair, School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee

RE: School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee Report

DATE: May 1, 2023

The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the work of the School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee's (the "Committee") leading up to the report which contains recommendations for the Board of Education's consideration.

Background

The School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee was established by the Board of Education to undertake discussions with members of the school community, including, but not limited to racialized, Indigenous and LGBTQ+ staff, parents and students to:

1. *Determine what, if any, concerns there may be regarding the District's School Police Liaison Officer program; and*
2. *Develop recommendations, as required, on what changes should be made to the program to improve its value to the school community including consideration of cessation of the program.*

Update

The Committee met on 26 November 2020, 7 January 2021, 4 February 2021, 1 April 2021, 6 May 2021, 1 June 2021, 17 June 2021, 16 September 2021, 28 October 2021, 2 December 2021, 13 January 2022, 27 January 2022, 16 February 2022, 11 January 2023 and 16 March 2023.

The Committee has 21 members, including four student representatives, one representative from the Esquimalt Nation, two representatives from GVTA, two representatives from CUPE, two representatives from VCPAC, one representative from Victoria Police Department and one representative from Saanich Police Department (with an alternate), two members of the Senior Leadership Team, two School Administrators, one School District Communications staff member, and two Trustees.

Topics of discussion at the Committee meetings included: the Committee's Terms of Reference (specifically the purpose and deliverables), the timeline for the Committee work, the role of the School Police Liaison Officers, the importance of student and parent voice, the importance of considering the program through the lens of racism and discrimination and possible recommendations pertaining to changes required or related to the cessation of the program. To support this work, Committee members were invited to participate in an anti-racism workshop provided by Dr. Moussa Magassa.

The Committee received a Communications Plan developed by the Manager of Communications & Community Engagement for SD61 which set out a process for consultation and a timeline to guide the work of the Committee. The Committee conducted a public survey which is summarized in the attached engagement report. The Committee also conducted a monthly Speakers Series open to anyone wishing to make a presentation to the Committee. During the Speaker Series a number of presentations were received from, for instance, the Greater Victoria Teachers Association (GVTA), Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) and the Crime Reduction & Exploitation Diversion Coordinator, Pacific Centre Family Services Association (MYST).

The Committee also invited feedback from the following stakeholders:

- ICA
- Inclusion BC
- Native Friendship Centre
- Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society
- Pacific People's Partnership
- International Institute for Child Rights and Development (ties with Royal Roads)
- Hulitan Family and Community Services Society
- UVIC – Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement
- Camosun – Centre for Indigenous Education and Community Connections
- Resilience BC
- Mothers Against Racism
- The Support Network for Indigenous Women and Women of Colour
- Urban Native Youth Association
- Mosaic BC
- Out on Screen
- BC Community Alliance
- Black Lives Matter Vancouver
- BC Black History Awareness Society
- Metis Nation of British Columbia
- First Nations Health Authority
- UVIC Academic Advisory Committee on Equity and Diversity
- Jamaican Community Victoria Association
- Binkadi Community Association
- African Heritage Association of Vancouver Island

Having completed the public engagement phase, in early 2022, the Committee started to consider possible recommendations. The work of the Committee was then put on hold as key stakeholders withdrew their participation at all Board tables at the time. By January 2023, with all stakeholders back at the table the Committee resumed its consideration of possible recommendations.

The Committee's report includes the information that was received by the Committee. In addition, attached to the Committee's report is a letter from the BC Human Rights Commissioner dated 24 November 2022 to all school districts across British Columbia. In that letter the BC Human Rights Commissioner states, "Out of respect for the rights of students, I strongly recommend that all school districts end the use of SLOs until the impact of these programs can be established empirically." The BC Human Rights Commissioner adds that, "For school boards who choose not to take this step, it is incumbent on you to produce independent evidence of a need for SLOs that cannot be met through civilian alternatives and to explain the actions you are taking to address the concerns raised by Indigenous, Black and other marginalized communities."

As per the Committee's Terms of Reference (which were approved by the Board of Education) recommendations for consideration by the Board of Education are to be made by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, multiple options will be reported. The Committee was not able to reach consensus regarding the option(s) to recommend to the Board of Education. As such, all recommendations arising from the Committee have been included for the Board of Education's consideration.

Recommended Motion:

That the Board of Education of School District 61 (Greater Victoria) accept the School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee report.

**The Board of Education of School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
School Police Liaison Officer (SPLO) Program Review Ad Hoc Committee**

Recommendations

Keep with Changes

- Model the GVTDAC for school advisory council
- Consider a School District budget to support the School Police Liaison Officer (SPLO) program
- Cops for Cancer in September - be mindful of timing, have Police join and support
- Keep students at the center of all SPLO programs
- Align job descriptions across all Municipalities and SPLOs and have structured goals each year – consistency
- Relationship building is the key to all SPLO interactions
- Investigations should be conducted by someone other than the SPLO- make that clear
- Advocacy to have Victoria Police Department in SPLO program
- SPLO to wear plainclothes and be identifiable as a Police Officer – i.e. golf shirt*
- Consistency of training – cultural sensitivity and trauma informed training must occur and be expected by the School District and Board of Education.
- Partner with Indigenous Education Department to plan the year
- Project based year to year partnerships accessibility – student connection
- Opportunities to interact through play and other non-curricular experiences and career explorations
- Bring back Police Camp
- SPLO – District meeting – should be open to others – Rightsholders and stakeholders
- Process for SPLO continuous improvement reporting mechanism
- Be aware of balance of power – must provide safe spaces, sit in circle, restorative, THINK DIFFERENTLY
- Infrastructure – structure and representatives, sub group, to move the recommendation forward
- Review annually or have a sub group with community/experts about implementation plan – point person.
- Expectations for all police working in schools - both SPLO and regular patrol
- Consistent values based – Principal and Vice Principal role in meetings and work with SPLO

*Note it may not be possible to have Police Officers wear plainclothes and not carry guns.

- Relationships with schools and students
- School introduction at the start of every school year
- Feedback from current and past SPLO
- Extra connections and supports for students at risk
- MYST connection
- Training to address C.G youth and marginalized groups – connect with youth to hear their thoughts and recommendations and report back to School Board
- Have an approved list of community facilitators to engage with youth and SPLO
- Put in the recommendations to School Board: timeline, reporting mechanism, accountability and person responsible
- School District should address variation in the way that administrators use SPLOs to reduce risk of inequity and a lack of clarity regarding best practice.
- Set standards for administrators regarding when and how to utilize SPLO and or police services.
- Review process for how to handle complaints about SPLO, or administrator and recommend improvements.
- Provide all SPLO and all administrator's with trauma informed practice training, child and youth development, anti-racism and other relevant training that supports their ability to exercise difficult judgements about how to support students and whether to involve SPLO or Police Patrol Services.
- Identify more appropriate preventative supports available to support students experiencing difficulty, a mental health crisis or other hardship.
- Address lack of consistent school based resources available to regularly support students such as Education Assistants and Youth and Family Counseling supports.
- Invest more on targeted preventative wrap-around student supports such as the Individual Education Plan (IEP), non-violent crisis prevention plan and school based team planning. Standardize SPLO job descriptions for all Police forces and the RCMP.
- Review whether all services should continue to be provided by SPLO's; consider the other options for service delivery and the impacts on the service recipients.
- SPLOs should not be armed when providing services in SD61.
- Consider providing SPLO services using retired members of the Police.
- Adopt alternate uniform that identifies SPLO as Police.
- SPLO's must be required to inform all students that they are not providing counselling services.

*Note it may not be possible to have Police Officers wear plainclothes and not carry guns.

- Must establish sufficient policies and procedures to govern the operation of SPLO programs, including an independent complaint process to address SPLO behavior and ensure trauma informed practice.
- School District needs to lead the development of comprehensive training and qualification requirements for SPLO's with input from SPLO's.
- School District should review what skills and training is needed to support school administrator as they exercise difficult judgements/discretion regarding their use of Police.
- School District needs to establish clear rules regarding who can interact with students and in what context (i.e. counselling is provided by qualified counsellors not Police).
- Police should not be left to provide learning or counselling type services to students.
- The role of Police as law enforcement officers should be made clear and student legal rights should be protected.
- Establish accountability mechanisms that apply to all Police in all schools and administrators/staff.
- School District must establish a comprehensive and regular review process including ongoing and appropriate data collection as part of that ongoing accountability and review of the SPLO Program, including transparent public annual reporting.
- Uniform job description that applies for all Police in all schools including the specifics of the role and the training required.
- Establish a memorandum of understanding between Police and the School District.
- School District to write to police services advocating for greater diversity and inclusion in police services.
- Have SPLO in all schools in the School District and ensure that the difference between a SPLO and regular Police Patrol is clear to all.
- Keep students at the center of all SPLO programs
- Align job descriptions across all Municipalities and SPLOs and have structured goals each year – consistency
- SPLO to wear plainclothes and identifiable as a Police Officer – ie. Golf shirt*
- Consistency of training – cultural sensitivity and trauma informed training must occur and be expected by the School District/Board of Education
- Partner with IED to plan the year
- LGBTQ2 focus
- SPLO – District meeting – should be open to others – Rightsholders and stakeholders
- Process for SPLO continuous improvement reporting mechanism

*Note it may not be possible to have Police Officers wear plainclothes and not carry guns.

- Review SPLO program annually or have a sub group with community/experts about implementation plan – point person.
- Expectations for all Police working in schools - both SPLO and regular patrol
- Consistent values based – Principals and Vice Principals role in meetings and work with SPLO
- Relationships with schools and students
- Have an approved list of community facilitators to engage with youth and SPLO
- Put in the recommendations to Board: Expect clarity regarding the timeline for a decision, reporting mechanism, accountability and person(s) responsible
- Advocate for all schools to have a SPLO where SPLO has been defunded by municipality or Police.
- Provide clear and detailed public explanation for why the decision to keep the program was made.
- That RCMP are not permitted to act as School Liaison Officers due to their specific history and role in settler colonialism.
- Implement sufficient policy to govern Police in schools.
- Establish thorough and sufficient policy to govern actions of SPLO programs which includes a complaints process.
- A substantial and impartial complaints process specifically referring to Police should be established along with a dedicated ombudsperson at each school who will assist students and families with the process.
- The complaints process should be made clear to families during each school year (i.e. principal letter, school assembly, Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meetings, etc.) and to students in their classroom (by teacher).
- Include the School District complaint process in the school start up packages sent to parents and a link to the PAC webpages that the School District oversees.
- Offer the School District complaint process in multiple languages.
- All schools in the School District should offer social justice subject matter courses regardless of whether the SPLO program continues.
- Develop discipline and behaviour management procedures that are based in trauma-informed research on impacts on IBPoC students.
- Develop a School District policy that Police not be used in instances of student behaviour management and that the School District invest appropriately in school and mental health supports for situations that require intensive intervention.

*Note it may not be possible to have Police Officers wear plainclothes and not carry guns.

- Invest in creating safer schools without Police by utilizing models transformative and/or restorative justice models and utilizing approaches outlined in alternative approaches to discipline (see overview- <https://mje.mcgill.ca/article/view/9547/7381>).
- Collect data on race, ethnicity, ability, gender expression of students disciplined, and whether Police are involved in any services provided to these students, families should be contacted within a month of receiving services to provide anonymous feedback on the experience of the process.
- Student Rights-The School District should take an active stance against criminalization of youth specifically with respect to the Youth Criminal Justice Act.
- That the School District adopt a restorative or transformational justice model for dealing with school related offences.
- SPLO's should not be used in the surveillance of students, nor have the power to arrest, detain, interrogate, question, fine or ticket students on municipal code, juvenile, criminal or immigration-related matters.
- On those rare occasions when it is appropriate for law enforcement to enter a school building, there should be agreements with Police departments that limit the cases when law enforcement can be called in to a school, with particular safeguards in place to ensure students' rights to education and dignity are protected, in addition to their constitutional rights to counsel and due process.
- SPLO's should not be permitted to perform well-being checks on students attending or not attending school.
- An independent Ombudsperson should be appointed at each school to assist students navigate the criminal justice system and any multi-jurisdictional aspects of those services that are required.
- Staff Training-All School District staff should be provided with current, research-based information on the impacts of policing on IBPoC students.
- All School District staff are provided in service training on identifying personal implicit bias, anti-racist training.
- All School District staff receive in-service training in trauma-informed/antiracist approaches to behaviour management.
- Police must not be armed and uniformed in schools.*
- Police must be clearly identifiable as students and staff have a right to know when they are speaking with Police.
- SPLO's should not be permitted to attend community events.
- SPLO's should not mentor individual students.
- SPLO's should not attend school functions particularly for events where their presence may be triggering for IBPoC people such as Orange Shirt Day, Rainbow Day and Pink Shirt Day.

*Note it may not be possible to have Police Officers wear plainclothes and not carry guns.

- The School District acknowledge the need for a diversity of people and perspectives to be brought into the classroom; the School District should limit the amount of times an SPLO can be brought into deliver programming each year and ensure there is funding and availability for members from other community groups and organizations to present programming, with a special attention to IBPoC groups.
- Provide outlines of what services SPLO's can offer in terms of educational programs and that those be constructed in partnership with trained teaching professional with an anti-oppressive lens.
- SPLO's should be required to obtain the equivalent of 5 university level courses in the field of education specifically with respect to child development, behaviour management, Indigenous education, abnormal psychological development and social emotional learning.
- SPLO's should be required to complete training related anti-oppressive/restorative and transformative justice models.
- The School District should commit to reviewing the SPLO programs every 5 years and ensure that any review process is independent of Police. Police officers should not sit in on School District review committees.
- Establish an impartial process for collecting data from the community that is trauma-informed, and is inclusive for all members of the community, particularly marginalized people, free of barriers and safe to participate in for all consultative processes SPLO related or otherwise.
- Support student mental health by implementing a School District staffing formula that includes a base-level of counselling, behaviour support, psychologist, inclusive learning support and other forms of inclusive, mental health and social supports necessary to utilize a proactive model of safe schools and behaviour management.
- To support anti-racism the School District should establish an official definition of racism connected to democratic and systemic racism.
- Adopt an official policy with budgeted line items for undertaking anti-oppression work.
- Acknowledge and validate the historical and ongoing violence perpetuated against IBPoC people by Police through a public statement. This process should be steered by IBPoC people from the community.

End with recommendations

- Relationship with Police is fractured and if program ends we need to create ways to rebuild the relationship
- That the board end the SPLO programs due to current trauma-informed research on impacts of policing on Indigenous, Black, People of Colour (IBPoC) students.
- If no SPLO reach out to University of Victoria law faculty to identify a subject matter expert to visit classes.

*Note it may not be possible to have Police Officers wear plainclothes and not carry guns.

- Bike safety – replace with an appropriate school based alternative
- Confirm lockdown procedures and school safety process
- Establish what services currently being provided by the SPLO will continue.
- Once the School District establishes which services will continue after cessation, the School District should identify who will provide the service moving forward (ie: School District staff, volunteers, other agencies).
- Identify alternate funding source(s) for retained service(s) as appropriate.
- School District should review the policing lens through which subject matter is currently taught (i.e.: substance use and the law) and consider providing this subject matter through another non-policing lens/perspective. Look to subject matter experts to assist the School District to assess best practice and possible partnerships.
- Community safety related services can be provided through regular policing service but need to address how to maintain the liaison aspect of the SPLO role so that community safety issues that spill over into the school environment are properly coordinated.
- Review the Police role in schools where there is a legal intervention required.
- All schools in the School District should offer social justice subject matter courses regardless of whether the SPLO program continues.
- All interactions between students and Police should be tracked and reviewed with clear accountability/responsibility in place.
- The School Board should end the SPLO programs due to current trauma-informed research on impacts of policing on Indigenous, Black, People of Colour (IBPoC), 2SLGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities, and focus on preventative measures for intensive behaviour.
- Support early intervention by hiring appropriate professionals such counsellors, social workers, nurses, and behavioural support teachers to support complex needs of students.
- Properly fund Education Assistant's (EA's) to keep retention rate of EA's to support at ground level.
- The delivery of curriculum programs should be administered by appropriate groups/organizations that present information based on research, from a trauma-informed, compassionate perspective that addresses structural inequities and power dynamics.
- Administrators should be directed to track the frequency, purpose, and intensity of all uses of Police in schools and report directly to the Superintendent and Board of Education.
- Establish thorough and sufficient policy to govern actions of all interactions with Police in schools.

*Note it may not be possible to have Police Officers wear plainclothes and not carry guns.

- Implement a substantial and impartial complaints process specifically referring to Police along with a dedicated Ombudsperson at each school who will assist students and families with the process.
- The complaints process should be made clear to families during the school year (i.e., principal letter, school assembly, PAC meetings, etc.) and to students in their classroom (by teacher).
- All schools should develop consistent discipline and behaviour management procedures that are based in trauma-informed research on impacts of IBPoC, 2SLGBTQIA+ students, and students with disabilities.
- The School District should adopt an official policy that Police not be used in instances of student behaviour management.
- The School District should invest appropriately in school and mental health supports for situations that require intensive intervention.
- The School District should invest in creating safer schools without Police by utilizing models of transformative and/or restorative justice and utilizing approaches outlined in alternative approaches to discipline overview-(see <https://mje.mcgill.ca/article/view/9547/7381>).
- The School District should collect data on race, ethnicity, ability, gender expression of students disciplined, and whether Police are involved in any services provided to these students, families should be contacted within a month of receiving services to provide anonymous feedback on the experience of the process.
- The School District take an active stance against criminalization of youth specifically with respect to the Youth Criminal Justice Act.
- The School District should adopt a restorative or transformational justice model for dealing with school related offences.
- Police may not be used in the surveillance of students, nor have the power to arrest, detain, interrogate, question, fine or ticket students on municipal code, juvenile, criminal or immigration-related matters on school grounds.
- Police not be used to perform well-being checks on students attending or not attending school.
- A lawyer or independent Ombudsperson should be appointed at each school for assisting students with navigating the criminal justice system and any multi-jurisdictional aspects of those services that are required.
- On those rare occasions when it is appropriate for law enforcement to enter a school building, there should be agreements with Police departments that limit the situations where law enforcement can be called into a school, with particular safeguards in place to ensure students' rights to education and dignity are protected, in addition to their constitutional rights to counsel and due process.

*Note it may not be possible to have Police Officers wear plainclothes and not carry guns.

- Regulation 5145 should be removed and administrators should not be able to substitute as legal guardians in the matter of the questioning of students. Students interacting with the criminal justice system be provided a lawyer for the purposes of legal counsel and ensuring their rights are upheld.
- All school staff should be provided with current training that includes research-based information on the impacts of policing on IBPoC, 2SLGBTQIA+ students, and students with disabilities.
- All district staff should be provided in-service training on identifying personal implicit bias, as well as anti-racist and anti-oppressive training.
- All school staff should receive in-service training in trauma-informed/antiracist approaches to behaviour management.
- Police should not attend school functions particularly for events where their presence may be triggering for IBPoC people such as Orange Shirt Day, Rainbow Day, and Pink Shirt Day.
- If Police are brought in for the purposes of a class, all legal guardians of students must be notified 2 weeks in advance in writing and both legal guardians and students have the right to not attend these sessions without academic penalty.
- Police may not wear their street uniform or carry guns on school grounds. Police must be thoroughly identified, as students and staff have a right to know when they are speaking with a Police Officer.
- Regulation 5134.1 should be removed and Police should not mentor individual or groups of students.
- The School District should acknowledge the need for a diversity of people and perspectives to be brought into the classroom; the School District should ensure there is funding and availability for members from community groups and organizations to present programming, with a special attention to IBPoC groups.
- The School District should take seriously the democratic concerns of having independent reviews of policing. Police officers should not sit on any School District committee reviewing any function of policing within schools.
- The School District should establish an impartial process for collecting data from the community that is trauma-informed, and is inclusive for all members of the community, particularly marginalized people, free of barriers and safe to participate in for all consultative processes policing related or otherwise.
- To support student mental health and social supports the School District should implement a staffing formula that include a base-level of counselling, behaviour support, psychologist, inclusive learning support, and other forms of inclusive mental health and social supports necessary to utilize a proactive model of safe schools and behaviour management.
- The School District should establish an official definition of racism connected to democratic and systemic racism.

*Note it may not be possible to have Police Officers wear plainclothes and not carry guns.

- The School District should adopt an official policy with budget line items for anti-oppression work.
- The School District should acknowledge and validate the historical and ongoing violence perpetuated against IBPoC people by Police through a public statement. This process should be steered by IBPoC people from staff, students, and community.

*Note it may not be possible to have Police Officers wear plainclothes and not carry guns.



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

850 CALEDONIA AVE VICTORIA, BC V8T 5J8 250.995.7217 www.vicpd.ca

March 23, 2023

Board of Education
School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8

Dear Trustees:

On Monday, March 13, 2023, you received a letter from the Greater Victoria Teachers' Association (GVTA) regarding the School Police Liaison Officer (SPLOs) program. As you know, I presented to the Board of Education on March 13, 2023 in response to that letter.

The purpose of my correspondence today is to further elaborate on my position about this important issue. I continue to be very concerned about the contents of the letter from the GVTA. I would like to clarify the role of the SPLOs and other police presence in schools, as well as address some of the grossly inaccurate statements and assertions that were made as they are not reflective of the local reality.

The GVTA letter implies that the SPLO Review Committee has recommended ending the SPLO program. My understanding is that the Review Committee put forward two options to consider: end the program or continue the program with changes. You may not be aware, but the majority of the Review Committee members want to keep the program and implement positive changes. Keeping the program with changes is also consistent with the results of the extensive survey conducted by the Review Committee.

It is important to understand the current role that SPLOs undertake in schools. The GVTA letter paints a picture of officers surveilling students and patrolling hallways waiting to make arrests, which is simply not true. The SPLOs are there to build positive relationships and trust with students which organically allows officers to be viewed as positive role models. These positive relationships are important in keeping students safe, and reduces the exploitation of youth, including sexual exploitation, which is increasing specifically amongst young men. It also helps prevent sexual violence, and recruitment of youth into gangs, which is a rising concern in Greater Victoria. Police are also in schools to promote student and community safety, which consists of creating school lockdown procedures, and assisting with lockdown drills, much like the role the Fire Department plays in fire drills.

It should be noted that SPLOs are not posted to one particular school, nor do they necessarily spend their entire shift at one school. They are assigned to multiple schools with flexible schedules so they can customize the level of engagement required based on the needs of the students and the preferences of the teachers and/or school leadership. As a result, SPLOs might attend several schools once a week for short periods of time, or attend a few particular schools a few times a week for longer durations. While in schools proactively, the officers are approachable for teachers and can be consulted on potentially worrisome behaviours that are not criminal, but are beyond the capacity of teachers and counsellors to manage. Police are often invited into schools and classrooms of all ages for a variety of reasons. I can give you countless examples of the positive experiences that take place with not only our SPLOs, but our Community Resource Officers (CROs) as well.

When youth have a positive relationship with a trusted adult, they are more likely to disclose concerning activities, which helps us take action to end criminal behavior aimed at youth. Officers are selected to be SPLOs based on their ability to build positive relationships with youth, be positive role models, and are genuinely committed to the well-being of students.

In addition, the generalized stereotypes, outdated perceptions, and sweeping prejudice against police in this letter is unfounded, biased, and inaccurate. In fact, I find this letter extremely offensive.

One critical point in both this letter, and the BC Human Rights Commissioner's letter that is referenced, is the acknowledged lack of Canadian research around the impact of SPLOs in schools. There is very little research that reflects the reality of our communities, our relationships and our justice system, and the recommendations in this letter are based on a false belief regarding the role of the SPLOs in Greater Victoria.

The SPLO Review Committee survey, which was conducted locally, better reflects my understanding of the reality of police relationships with youth, and the desire our community has for police officers to be in schools. I understand that the survey had a significant level of participation from students, former students, teachers, parents, administrators, local First Nations and other community members, which further validates the survey results. I hope that the Trustees will carefully review and consider the SPLO Program Review Engagement Summary Report before making any decisions about this program.

From my own experience engaging with BIPOC communities as a BIPOC parent and police officer, as well as a former SPLO, I can say with a level of certainty that the contents of the GVTA letter do not reflect what our BIPOC communities want for our students. I hear the concerns expressed in this letter, and acknowledge that it is important to hear all voices in this discussion, but I do not believe that this is the will of our communities. Removing police presence from schools in such a sweeping manner, as called for by the GVTA, is irresponsible, based on a false belief, and would negatively impact the safety and well-being of students.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Del Manak', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Del Manak
Chief Constable

Please feel free to share my letter with your colleagues and Board.
Thank you.
M. KELLY

Dear Mr Parmar and Board Members,

I would like to thank Mr Parmar for expressing his views and positive experiences in relation to the Police School Liason Officers that work with your School District, as detailed in today's Times Colonist article by Jeff Bell.

Officer Manak's comments and actions reinforce my view that our dedicated and hard-working Police Officers want only the best for our children. Consequently, their presence in our schools and relationship building with our students is very important in teaching our children about the danger of drugs and gangs, the importance of law and order, and who they can turn to in times of trouble.

"A Police Officer is your friend", and is one of the first people to whom we all turn in times of trouble. It is essential that our children understand this and have that message humanized and reinforced via kind, caring, committed Liason Officers such as Manak and his team.

Furthermore, an Officer's uniform is an integral component of their role, similar to a Fireman, Pilot, a Doctor's white coat, a Paramedic... and helps children to recognize them.

It is very troubling to consider what possible agenda the GVTA is promoting through their letter. It is certainly not a child-centered agenda that puts each child's best interest as the primary determinant of each decision.

I would also be very interested in seeing "the evidence" to support the GVTA position. I suspect it's quality and relevance to our community is lacking.

And to insult Officer Manak and his Officers with unsubstantiated claims of systemic racism is hurtful, hateful and such a betrayal to all those selfless and brave Officers who put themselves in harms way each day for our safety and well-being.

Please remain firm and courageous against any of this despicable rhetoric from the GVTA and "the vocal woke minority", who are pushing this devisive and harmful agenda.

Please know that you are on the right side of history and that the majority of parents and community members agree with you.
Our children's futures literally depend on your words and decisions.

Thank you, once again, for your efforts on behalf of our children.

Mrs Mary KELLY
122- 75 Songhees Road
Victoria BC V9A 7M5



Royal Canadian
Mounted Police

Gendarmerie royale
du Canada

Security Classification/Designation
Classification/désignation sécuritaire

Supt. Todd Preston
Officer in Charge
West Shore RCMP Detachment
698 Atkins Avenue
Victoria, BC V9B 3A4

Board of Education
School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8

April 24, 2023

Dear Trustees:

I would like to address the concerns brought forward by the Greater Victoria Teacher's Association (GVTA) regarding the School Police Liaison Officer Program (SPLO). West Shore RCMP provides policing services to View Royal and officers from our Community Policing Unit regularly attend several Schools in View Royal performing SPLO's duties.

In a recent letter by the GVTA, it was stated that, "The presence of (school officers) not only harms many marginalized students, but also does nothing to solve the broader systemic issues caused by underfunding and austerity". I unequivocally disagree with this statement. As a police leader with over 25 years of experience, I can refer to countless times when the relationships built by our SPLO's had positive effects on students which led to preventing and solving crime.

Most recently, grade 5 students from View Royal and Craigflower Elementary completed their 10-week journey through the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program. The program was taught by Cst. Cole Brewer a proud member of the Lower Simlikameen Indian Band who works at West Shore RCMP in the Indigenous Policing Unit. D.A.R.E. has proven to be a successful tool in teaching children the skills they need to avoid involvement in gangs, drugs and violence. Cst. Brewer has been the SPLO for View Royal Schools for a number of years. He reflected that having discussions around drug abuse was hard, but the relationship he built with the students allowed for a safe environment where students were able to ask questions and discuss topics beyond the curriculum.

Many of the students in this class were apart of the BIPOC community, including students from both Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations. Cst. Brewer's connection to the students from these communities is critical in our steps to take meaningful actions toward reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. In my discussions with the Chiefs and Councillors of both Esquimalt and Songhees Nations they have identified police-youth engagement as a top priority and support the work SPLO's are doing in the schools to connect with Indigenous youth. SPLO's have been well received in our schools and their presence is needed in order to earn the trust of today's youth. Our SPLO's have been unfairly accused of perpetuating systemic racism. In fact, the very goal of the SPLO's is to reconcile these issues and build relationships with our youth in an effort to impact their lives in a positive way. The narrative the GVTA letter will have you believe that we operate a mandate whereby police target marginalized students, could not be further from the truth.

I echo Victoria Police Chief Del Manaks' sentiments on keeping SPLOS's in our schools. SPLO's were originally brought in as a strategy under the Community Policing Model which focuses on reducing crime and enhancing service delivery by developing relationships with community members. Thus, we cannot employ a community-based policing model by refusing to let the police into the fundamental institutions of our society, especially our schools.

Sincerely,

Supt. Todd Preston, Officer in Charge of West Shore RCMP Detachment

From: [Jeff Duyndam](#)
To: [Trustees](#)
Cc: [Deb Whitten](#)
Subject: FW: School Police Liaison Officer Program
Date: Thursday, April 20, 2023 3:24:01 PM

From: Tillicum Parent Advisory Committee <tillicumelementarypac@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 20, 2023 3:09 PM
To: Jeff Duyndam <jeduyndam@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: School Police Liaison Officer Program

CAUTION: External email. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you are confident about the source.

Hi Jeff,

Can you please forward this email below to the Board on behalf of the PAC? Thank you as always.

Dear SD61 Trustees,

I am writing this letter to you on behalf of the PAC for Tillicum Elementary School (SD 61) as it has come to our attention that the school district is about to make a monumental decision to no longer allow school police liaison officers on school grounds.

We are writing to express our complete and total opposition of this decision. As a school with a diverse population of students and families with complex needs, Tillicum has greatly benefited from the SLO program. The relationships our students have built with our SLO, starting in kindergarten, is critical in teaching them that police are here to help and not to be feared. How will this relationship building be replaced when these positive role models in law enforcement are removed from our schools?

When our SLO arrives onsite, our students flock to him - always excited to engage and chat. My son (who is now in grade 4) and his friends still talk about a funny and positive interaction they had with our SLO at our meet the teacher night in kindergarten. Clearly that left a positive impression for those kids, something that has helped shape their impression of law enforcement. The incredible experience our school had last year when our principal participated in the Tour de Rock program further excited and energized our school community, building upon the positive relationship building done onsite by our SLO. These healthy relationships that our students have built with law enforcement officers will be stripped away if they only see police in emergency situations. This is very concerning!

There is a great deal more that our school benefits from beyond the positive role modeling and relationship building that happens with our SLO. Our families are supported if and when the needs arise and our SLO is always available and quick to provide guidance in a myriad of situations. Our SLO has come onsite at a moment's notice to help assist with our ongoing traffic safety issues around the school (this really should be a focus for the school district rather than a review of a long standing and positive program like SLO especially since one of our cross guards was almost hit

yesterday). Additionally, they help out with our breakfast program, volunteer on a weekly basis to pick up bread donations and bring them to the school for our food programs and so much more. Who will we now turn to for this support?

We recognize that not everyone in our community and school district have a positive relationship with law enforcement. So I ask you, what better place to teach young children about the important work and positive relationships they can have with police officers than in elementary school? Where else can children develop a personal relationship with law enforcement officers in a safe and familiar environment like school?

We were greatly concerned when we heard this program was being reviewed and potentially being removed and are beyond disappointed to hear that this may actually now transpire. Our PAC has carefully followed along during the review of this program and encouraged our parents to share their input and thoughts to ensure that our voices were heard to try and fight to keep this program in our schools. It seems our efforts have fallen on deaf ears. Please reconsider this decision and think about the lifelong impacts taking such a positive program out of our schools will have on our students.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this extremely important matter.

—
Lisa Connell
PAC Chair
Tillicum Elementary School

From: [Jeff Duyndam](#)
To: [Trustees](#)
Cc: [Deb Whitten](#)
Subject: Community Liaison Officers...
Date: Thursday, April 20, 2023 3:25:21 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

SD61 Trustees,

I have just met with our Staff Committee and we wish to express our support for the School/Community Liaison Program with Saanich Police. We have heard the program could potentially change or be cut and we believe this would negatively impact our school community. We have a proudly diverse population at Tillicum. Here are just a few examples of what this program adds to our Learning Community:

- Cst. Dion Birtwhistle is a positive role model for our students, building trust and a positive relationship between law enforcement and our community.
- Cst. Dion Birtwhistle regularly walks out onto the playground and swarms of students run to him hugging and high-fiving him.
- Cst. Dion Birtwhistle is regularly seen playing basketball with students reinforcing ideas around fair and inclusive play.
- Cst. Dion Birtwhistle delivers bread to our school on a weekly bases and volunteers in our breakfast program.
 - On “bread days” our CLO is seen chatting with kids and families as students rush over to see him with big smiles.
 - Staff, students, and parents regularly thank Dion for bringing bread to our school.
- Our CLO also leads our bike and road safety programs.

We believe that when implemented correctly, CLOs play an important and positive role in the lives of students.

A letter from our teachers is soon to follow.

Jeff Duyndam

Principal, Tillicum Community School
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 250-386-1408 Fax: 250-380-2805
tillicum.sd61.bc.ca | [@TillicumTBirds](https://twitter.com/TillicumTBirds)



SAANICH POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Constable Dean Duthie



April 17, 2023

Board of Education
School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria, BC V8Z 1E8

Dear Board Chair and Trustees,

I am writing to you in response to the letter you received from the Greater Victoria Teachers' Association (GVTA) regarding the School Liaison Officer (SLO) program, on March 13, 2023. As you know, the Saanich Police Department has maintained a consistent, formal, and meaningful connection with schools in School Districts No. 61 and 63 for several decades, and these relationships have proven to enhance trust, confidence, safety, and responsibility in our community and region.

The Saanich Police Department has been actively involved as resources to the SLO program review committee since 2021. During this time, we have made concentrated efforts to ensure that the issues and concerns were being presented accurately and impartially. As an example, an informative letter was prepared and distributed to the School District 61 School Liaison Officer Ad Hoc Committee on November 30, 2021, as attached. The letter, authored by Inspector Darrell Underwood, a leader within the Saanich Police Department and community, unfortunately did not result in any discussion by the committee. That said, it is my understanding that the Review Committee identified three options for consideration, ending the program, continuing the program with changes, or making no changes.

The information outlined in the GVTA letter does not accurately reflect information that we continue to receive from school administrators, staff, and students. I understand and appreciate that there are differing opinions, concerns, and perspectives, however; the tone and tenor of the GVTA letter creates a misleading narrative that has questionable support. The personal feedback that we receive from school administrators and students is contrary to what

the GVTA claims. A very recent and strong example of the trusted relationship between students in the Greater Victoria region and police is the overwhelming success of the Greater Victoria Police Foundation's Police Camp, which was inclusive, empowering, educational, and inspiring.

The Saanich Police Department continually assesses our services, structure, resources, and priorities to ensure that we meaningfully address and respond to the evolving and changing public safety needs of the community. We recently modernized our School Liaison Section by expanding and diversifying its mandate. This has enhanced inclusivity, diversity, and our relationship-focused approach to include schools, youth, older adults, ethnic/culturally diverse and LGTBQ2S+ communities. The evolution and modernization of this vital service demonstrates our focus and responsiveness to equity, diversity, and inclusion as well as the ongoing changes and expectations of our community, region, province, and country.

Our officers are committed to maintaining and strengthening public safety – and this is only accomplished when people feel safe. To feel safe, people need to trust and have confidence in their police, and the best way to achieve this is through connection and relationships. Our Community Liaison Officers' primary focus is building and strengthening relationships. This is accomplished through personal engagement and education-based conversations with students about important issues such as bullying, bike safety, lockdowns, online safety, drug and alcohol education, self-confidence, leadership, and goal-achievement – to list a few.

Police officers and schools have built and nurtured meaningful relationships for years, which have contributed to vibrant learning and flourishing environments within schools and our communities. The positive outcomes are evident and routinely demonstrated through the behaviours and energy of students when our Community Liaison Officers attend schools.

It is my sincere hope that the Board carefully considers the immediate and long-term impacts associated with dismantling longstanding, trusting relationships between police and schools, and can envision a future that has strong potential for achieving healthy growth through continuous improvement strategies and modernization initiatives that will strengthen and sustain these vital relationships and connections.

Respectfully,



Dean Duthie
Chief Constable
Saanich Police Department



SAANICH POLICE DEPARTMENT

TO: SD61 School Liaison Officer Ad
Hoc Committee

DATE: November 30, 2021

FROM: S/Sgt. D. Underwood

Re: Saanich Police Department's Response to Presenter Comments
School District No. 61 SLO Program Review

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide additional clarity and context for information received by School District No. 61 (SD61) School Liaison Officer (SLO) Program Review Committee from presenters.

On May 10, 2021, I spoke with the Committee Chair Ms. Nicole Duncan to discuss the best method to provide clarity and context for information received in previous presentations. Ms. Duncan stated that a response could be provided in writing and that the information would be shared with the Committee later. To date, the police representatives have served as a resource to the Committee, and we have not attempted to guide the committee in their deliberations or their findings. The Saanich Police Department (SPD) have been intentional in taking this position as we do not want to be viewed as self-promoting or biased. This has at times created an uncomfortable position for the officers, because if we speak out about inaccuracies and put a presenter or a committee member on the spot, it could cast a negative shadow.

The purpose of this memorandum is to correct perceived inaccuracies that have been submitted to date so that the Committee has the benefit of a fulsome and balanced understanding of the issues in reaching their decision, and I respectfully submit the following for your review and consideration:

- 1) This review is specific to school liaison officers, not police in general. However, I recognize that police actions outside of schools can impact students' and school liaison officers' relationships. We need to ensure that we are not broadly stereotyping all police. The terms of reference state this committee is to review the School Liaison Officer program, not police in general. The SPD School Liaison Section is deeply committed to assisting children and youth and providing resources and assistance to all the schools we serve. We focus on a supportive delivery model, and we engage in conversation with students and parents to help build relationships.

- 2) There have been requests for the Committee to secure an outcome similar to the Vancouver School Board and cancel SLO programming. I think it is important to note that in deciding to suspend the SLO program in Vancouver schools, the Board also indicated their desire to work with RCMP and Municipal Police Departments to:

- Establish communication protocols and points of contact in the event of school emergencies, lockdowns, critical incidents and VTRA
- Determine a process to establish protocols and training for emergency procedures in schools
- Determine a process to request information sessions
- Determine a referral process to the gang unit

All the above elements are foundational to our current SLO programs in SD61 schools, except for referrals to a gang unit as such a unit does not exist in CRD police agencies.

- 3) Several presenters have made reference to the “school-to-prison pipeline.” I have conducted some additional research into this US based theory and learned the following.

During the committee meeting on June 1, 2021, Ms. Deb Whitten confirmed that a Suspension Board oversees all child suspensions in excess of five days. Suspensions less than five days have oversight from the school principal, vice-principal and other stakeholders. Over the past three years, schools have moved away from out-of-school suspensions because they are not beneficial for relationship building and remediating behaviours. For clarity, the police are not involved in the school suspension process for SD61, or any other school district that I am aware of. Through follow-up discussions with Ms. Jennifer Chambers, I have confirmed that there has been only one police officer at an SD61 suspension hearing in her recent memory, and that police officer was present for the hearing as a child advocate making recommendations against the suspension.

All study data I could locate for the school-to-prison pipeline originates from the United States. Their SLO programs operate very differently from those here in Victoria. During my 21-years of policing the Saanich Police Department, SLOs have never been involved in a physical altercation with a child to remove them from school property as a result of a school-imposed suspension. I recognize that suspension could lead to unsupervised time, but SD61 should look at their records of suspension to assess how high that rate is, because the studies from the United States suggest a 300% increase in school suspensions.

In British Columbia, Crown Counsel has the responsibility of approving charges brought forward on the recommendation of police agencies. This creates another layer of insulation from the school-to-prison pipeline. The SPD SLOs do not serve as the primary investigator for criminal investigations in the school community unless absolutely necessary. Although

this is a grey area, the SPD SLOs typically refer an investigation to front-line officers but stay involved as a resource and liaison. There are times where our SLOs conduct investigations related to school activities when the circumstances suggest that it would be the most appropriate way to proceed. More commonly, SPD SLOs act as a support person to the victim, accused, parents, and school.

Across Canada, the ability to hold a youth in custody is outlined in the strict parameters of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. Police can only arrest for a serious criminal offence. If a youth is arrested, a tele-bail hearing before a Justice has to occur before a youth is held in a temporary holding facility. Before that hearing occurs, Crown Counsel must approve the charge as recommended by the police, then Crown Counsel, not the police, facilitates the tele-bail process. Youth in Canada are only remanded in custody for “serious violent offences”, and even then as a last resort when community supervision has been deemed insufficient to mitigate known public safety risks.

The Saanich Police do not subscribe to a zero-tolerance behavioural policy and SD61 does not impose the zero-tolerance student discipline model of the United States. When serious school-based behavioural issues are identified, the police are not involved in the student’s potential suspension process or their removal from school.

The school-to-prison pipeline is a US practice, not present in Victoria. SD61 does not have a suspension rate similar to the US when this phenomenon became an issue. Unlike many US jurisdictions, SPD presence in schools has not increased due to school-based shootings, and the police do not act as an authority figure or policy enforcement arm for the school. Misbehaving youth are the school’s responsibility to address, not the police. If a child’s behaviour puts themselves or another child at risk, then police may get involved in making the situation safe for everyone concerned.

The SPD SLO program is in place to build relationships with youth or re-build relationships if the youth has had a negative interaction with a police officer outside of school. SLOs provide educational material, give presentations, and help demystify the police uniform (see the program list already provided for engagement activities). Since the SPD SLOs visit schools K-12, it affords an opportunity for youth to become accustomed to police uniforms, and get to know the people inside the uniform, by the time they are in middle and high school.

When I look at the school-to-prison pipeline, it shows a primary issue with the US school system and the lack of responsibility to manage inappropriate conduct of youth in the school community. Instead of addressing the behaviour, the school moves to suspend the child, and police involvement is commonplace in the US model. From my understanding, this process has not and will not be supported by school districts in our community and certainly would not be supported by our local police agencies.

The article “*School Prisons and Aboriginal Youth Making Connections*” brought forward concerns about teacher interactions with aboriginal youth, not police interactions with

youth. I could not locate a reference in the article about school-to-prison pipeline or school liaison officers' involvement in increasing the youth incarceration rate.

- 4) There was a suggestion that SLOs create too many police files about children, that follow them from their youth into adulthood. Our SLO program works to the contrary. We do not create a police file unless it is absolutely necessary, as we do not want young people to be over-documented in the police database. Police records are subject to disclosure pursuant to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; therefore, the SPD attempt to not over-document.
- 5) Some stakeholders have suggested that police engagement with the Committee is adversely impacting its work and the participation of interest groups. Our participation has been limited to providing information when requested by the committee members and providing context for and information about the structure and operation of the SLO program. At the end of this process, we will look forward to receiving feedback from the Committee as we want to provide the best service possible in the interest of the students, staff, parents, and community.
- 6) There has been a statement that “the profession of policing is complicit with racism in our society. Police are the state sanctioned use of force that has been and continues to be used to displace Indigenous people from their land and quell dissent against injustice.” In the context of the SLO program, I feel it is important to note that our officers only participate in school approved activities and only deliver school approved programming. While the Saanich Police do not have any Indigenous reserves in our policing jurisdiction, we do have a positive working relationship with the staff and visitors to the Victoria Native Friendship Centre in Saanich.

There has been a suggestion that police are the only institution with systemic racism, and because we enforce the law, we perpetuate that racism. Being Indigenous, having aunts who went to residential school, uncles who went to day school, and my Dad being the first of his family to go to public school, I have a learned understanding of racism relating to that belief. Over time, residential schools later transitioned Indigenous students into public schools. The later public school system has also been a significant part of systemic racism for Indigenous people. Both the school system and the policing profession have been taking important steps to acknowledge the harm done by these policies and improve their institutions. I will be the first to admit that not all aspects of policing are perfect. However, I cannot accept the assertion, in our current SLO program review context, that policing has been the only institution that has been involved in systemic racism when educational and other government institutions have likewise been involved as well. We all have work to do in partnership with one another to acknowledge the harm done and take meaningful steps to improve public service delivery for all vulnerable persons in our community going forward.

- 7) It appears from the Committee discussions that some committee members may not have had much personal experience working directly with SLOs to inform their own opinions

about the officers and the programs they deliver to students and staff in our schools. I would respectfully encourage the Committee to carefully consider the input of those students and staff who have had the opportunity to engage with SLOs and our programs in reaching your decision about the future of the SLO program in SD61. All police agencies have provided a list of existing programs that police are offering. This Committee's objective is to assess the SLO program, and those who have experience with it should be best positioned to identify the elements of the SLO program that might be safeguarded, improved, or removed.

In conclusion, I would like to leave the Committee with this final thought for consideration. The Committee has undertaken broader discussions of related constructs such as racism, systemic racism, and white privilege. These are all significant concerns, and as an Indigenous person, I appreciate that these conversations are occurring. When I hear that children or youth are fearful of the police, that is saddening. In some cases, those fears might be rooted in the three points above. That fear could also be a compounded fear from shared stories or learned behaviour from the child or youth's family or friends. As the Review Committee, you face a critical question about whether engagement or disengagement with the SLO program will produce the desired outcomes for students and our community.

The Committee could vote to end the SLO program as an attempt to rectify racism, systemic racism, white privilege, or fear. By doing so I think the fear is left to continue and grow within the affected person because they will not know anything different. A possible negative interaction with a police officer outside of school will be the only known interaction to guide that person's beliefs as they grow. The complete removal of SLOs, that are attempting to improve relationships, might only continue a cycle of racism, systemic racism, white privilege, or fear that everyone in society wants to stop.

Conversely, the Committee could vote to maintain or modify the SLO program to connect with children and youth. The school liaison officers can continue to try and break down that wall of fear or history of racialized behaviours. As a police officer, I have had personal conversations with marginalized youth and adults where they have shared a negative interaction with a police officer. After our discussion, they have appreciated the opportunity to speak to a different officer to help inform their thoughts and feelings. I have also had the privilege of receiving feedback from the BIPOC community, where they have sought more police participation in community events to strengthen the relationship between the community and police.

I believe that it is through our conversations that real change occurs. If those conversations don't happen, then stereotypes and fear have an opportunity to grow and jeopardize public trust and confidence. Allowing fear or the thoughts of racism to continue to grow in our children or youth is not breaking down the barriers we want addressed. I believe that the path forward for the public police relationship will require enhanced opportunities for engagement and understanding and that our community will grow stronger as a result.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information and my personal reflections with you

for your review and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Staff Sergeant Darrell Underwood
Community Engagement Division
Saanich Police Department



April 21, 2023

Board of Education
School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria BC V8Z 1E8

Dear Greater Victoria School District 61 Trustees,

Re: Victoria Principals' and Vice Principals' Association Letter in support of Greater Victoria School District 61 Police Liaison Program

The Victoria Principals' and Vice Principals' Association wishes to express our support for the continuation of the Greater Victoria School District's School Liaison Program.

As administrators in SD61, Principals and Vice Principals are focused on supporting our students. Our roles and support stretch beyond the classroom. We work with many provincial, municipal and local community members, agencies, unions and nations in a shared goal of nurturing student learning and their wellbeing in a safe, responsive and inclusive learning environment. These partnerships and working relationships reflect our district's values of engagement, equity, innovation, positive change, integrity, openness, transparency, respect, social responsibility and justice. Over the years the program has been in effect, the school liaison officers have proven to play an important role in achieving our goals. Our relationships with our local police departments reflect our shared values.

Administrators have seen the benefits of this program in the positive relationships that School Liaison Officers (SLO) foster with students, beginning in elementary school and through middle and secondary schools. School liaison officers are present in schools for assemblies, to answer questions from students, to visit classes and to consult by request with administrators, teachers, students and families about a variety of issues. Our SLO community

partners' approach to this work is trauma-informed and demonstrates both professionalism and sensitivity. These important and deliberate connections build relationships with students, families and community through positive interactions.

There are also times when schools need the assistance and expertise of police officers. In those high stress times, the familiar face of a trauma-informed trained school liaison officer can decrease anxiety for students. SLOs know our students, our buildings, and our unique circumstances. We reach out to our SLOs to work together to support students who are struggling in school or community. Our district works collaboratively with SLOs and other agencies to identify students who need additional supports and can continue that support after school hours as appropriate.

The VPVPA acknowledges the important work that schools need to do with our IBPOC and marginalized students and the Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We feel this important work is best done in partnership with the institutions, who like schools, have historically created and upheld unjust systems. Removing our school liaison officers from schools does not help to decolonize our systems; rather it maintains and reinforces stereotypes and barriers towards Truth and Reconciliation.

The Victoria Principals' and Vice Principals' Association strongly wishes to work towards decolonization and demarginalization within our schools and with our partners. We feel we are better together, and together we can make these necessary improvements. Each partner's voice is essential and we look forward to continuing this important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Brenna O'Connor".

Brenna O'Connor

VPVPA President

On behalf the Victoria Principals' and Vice Principals' Association

Kelly Gorman

From: Jeff Duyndam
Sent: Friday, April 21, 2023 12:56 PM
To: Trustees
Cc: Deb Whitten
Subject: FW: Police Liaison Officers

Would you please include the email below from the teachers at Tillicum in Board Correspondence. Thank you.

Jeff Duyndam

Principal, Tillicum Community School
Greater Victoria School District No. 61
Ph: 250-386-1408 Fax: 250-380-2805

 tillicum.sd61.bc.ca |  [@TillicumTBirds](https://twitter.com/TillicumTBirds)



From: Laura Nault
Sent: Friday, April 21, 2023 12:53 PM
To: Jeff Duyndam <jeduyndam@sd61.bc.ca>
Subject: Police Liaison Officers

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing to express our support for the Police Liaison Program to continue in its current capacity. Over the years, we as a staff have experienced an array of opportunities that have brought nothing but positive experiences for our student body. This includes, but is not limited to:

- mentoring programs for at-risk youth
- educational opportunities through police dog training
- opportunities for young children to connect with police officers in a positive manner
- presentations around Halloween and bike safety.

We have also appreciated police volunteers who have donated their time to our toast program, Cops for Cancer (who come by our school every year), and helping us connect with outside businesses in the Tillicum community. We feel strongly, given the positive impact of the Police Liaison Program, it should be allowed to continue. It has had a wonderful impact with our vulnerable and culturally diverse families that we have in our community. We also feel that the program is a vital component to building bridges between police officers and our community.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brad Carlson (GVTA Rep), Laura Nault (Staff Committee Chair), Meghan Kushnir (E.L.L. Specialist), and Marylou Tompkins (Pro-D Rep)

Tillicum Elementary

Greater Victoria School District No. 61

Ph: 250-386-1408

 www.sd61.bc.ca |   @sd61schools





Greater Victoria Teachers' Association

5-515 Dupplin Road Victoria BC V8Z 1C2
t. 250.595.0181 f. 250.595.0189 info@gvta.net gvta.net

Via email

March 3, 2023

Board of Education
School District No. 61 (Greater Victoria)
556 Boleskine Road
Victoria BC V8Z 1E8

Dear Trustees,

Re: School Police Liaison Officers

The Greater Victoria Teachers' Association strongly recommends that:

The SD#61 Board of Education end the School Police Liaison Officer Programs (SPLO) and establish a committee to establish an action plan on how to implement the recommendations put forward by the School Police Liaison Officer (SPLO) review committee [*on ending the program, see below for clarity*], enhance mental health services in schools, address violence in the workplace, and provide evidence-based, harm-reduction and trauma-informed programming on drug use, consent/sexual violence and all other programs currently delivered by SPLO's."

This decision is based on research conducted by the BCTF on the effect of SLO (School Liaison Officers) on teachers from marginalized groups, numerous reports from organizations and civilian review committees across Canada on the effects of policing on marginalized populations, and the recommendation from the BC Human Rights Commissioner to end SLO programs. This research makes it evident that SLO programs cause harm that negatively affects the safety, rights, and sense of belonging that many marginalized people (including Indigenous, Black, People of Colour, 2SLGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities) experience in school.

Public conversations over the last several years have highlighted that Canada's policing and criminal justice systems have been founded on and continue to perpetuate systemic racism. For our schools to take meaningful anti-racist action, we must not ignore this legacy, or the ongoing harm caused by police.

While school budgets have been drastically reduced over the last 20 years, police budgets in British Columbia have increased beyond the rate of inflation. Victoria Teachers and school counsellors are working in a chronically underfunded system

marked by insufficient staffing, inadequate resources, and an expectation to do more with less. In this underfunded system, police have, at times, been used to fill gaps in school supports, by taking on a variety of roles, including supporting the work of school counsellors. The presence of SPLO's not only harms many marginalized students, but also does nothing to solve the broader systemic issues caused by underfunding and austerity. For this reason, in addition to ending the SPLO program, our district needs to provide fully funded academic, social, health, and emotional support services in schools, enhance the rights of students and have clear and significant policy to govern any interaction schools may have with police.

It is important that as a district that supports the rights of all learners and seeks to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion, that we embrace policy that supports the marginalized members of our community by ending all SPLO programs, and creating the supports necessary to support all learners.

Specific Recommendations from GVTA For the SPLO Review Committee:

That the board end the SPLO programs due to current trauma-informed research on impacts of policing on Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC), 2SLGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities, AND;

- 1) Focus on preventative measures for intensive behaviour such as early intervention by:
 - a. Hiring appropriate professionals such counsellors, social workers, nurses, and behavioural support teachers to support complex needs of students.
 - b. Properly fund EA's to keep retention rate of EA's to support at ground level.
- 2) Delivery of curriculum programs be administered by appropriate groups/organizations that present information based on research, from a trauma-informed, compassionate perspective that addresses structural inequities and power dynamics.
- 3) That administrators be directed to track the frequency, purpose, and intensity of all uses of police in schools and report directly to the superintendent and school trustees.
- 4) Establish thorough and sufficient policy to govern actions of all interactions with police in schools which includes:
 - a. Complaints Process:
 - i. A substantial and impartial complaints process specifically referring to police be established along with a dedicated ombudsperson at each school who will assist students and families with the process.

- ii. That the complaints process be made clear to families in three situations during the school year (i.e., principal letter, school assembly, PAC meetings etc.) and to students in their classroom (by teacher).
- b. That all schools develop discipline and behaviour management procedures that are based in trauma-informed research on impacts of BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+ students, and students with disabilities.
 - i. That the district adopt an official policy that police not be used in instances of student behaviour management and that the district invest appropriately in school and mental health supports for situations that require intensive intervention.
 - ii. Investing in creating safer schools without police by utilizing models of transformative and/or restorative justice and utilizing approaches outlined in alternative approaches to discipline overview
<https://mje.mcgill.ca/article/view/9547/7381>.
 - iii. That data be collected on race, ethnicity, ability, gender expression of students disciplined, and that if police are involved in any services provided to these students, that families are contacted within a month of receiving services to provide anonymous feedback on the experience of the process.
- c. Student Rights:
 - i. That the district take an active stance against criminalization of youth specifically with respect to the Youth Criminal Justice Act.
 - ii. That the district adopt a restorative or transformational justice model for dealing with school related offences.
 - iii. That police may not be used in the surveillance of students, nor have the power to arrest, detain, interrogate, question, fine or ticket students on municipal code, juvenile, criminal or immigration-related matters on school grounds.
 - iv. On those rare occasions when it is appropriate for law enforcement to enter a school building, there should be agreements with police departments that limit the cases when law enforcement can be called into a school, with particular safeguards in place to ensure students' rights to education and dignity are protected, in addition to their constitutional rights to counsel and due process.
 - v. That police not be used to perform well-being checks on students attending or not attending school.
 - vi. That a lawyer or independent ombudsperson be appointed at each school for assisting students with navigating the criminal justice system and multi-jurisdictional sections if those services are required.

- vii. That Regulation 5145 be removed and that administrators not be able to substitute as legal guardians in the matter of the questioning of students. Students interacting with the criminal justice system be provided a lawyer for the purposes of legal counsel and ensuring their rights are upheld.
- d. Staff Training:
 - i. That all school staff are provided with current, research-based information on the impacts of policing on BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+ students, and students with disabilities
 - ii. That all district staff are provided in-service training on identifying personal implicit bias, as well as anti-racist and anti-oppressive training.
 - iii. That all school staff receive in-service training in trauma-informed/antiracist approaches to behaviour management.
- e. Police and School Community:
 - i. That police not attend school functions particularly for events where their presence may be triggering for BIPOC folks such as Orange Shirt Day, Rainbow Day, and Pink Shirt Day.
 - ii. That if police are brought in for the purposes of a class, all legal guardians of students must be notified 2 weeks in advance in writing and both legal guardians and students have the right to not attend these sessions without academic penalty.
 - iii. Police may not wear their street uniform or carry guns on school grounds. Police must be thoroughly identified, as students and staff have a right to know when they are speaking with an officer.
 - iv. That Regulation 5134.1 be removed and police not mentor individual or groups of students.
- f. School Programing:
 - i. That the District acknowledge the need for a diversity of people and perspectives to be brought into the classroom; the district should ensure there is funding and availability for members from community groups and organizations to present programming, with a special attention to BIPOC groups.
- h. Future Review Processes:
 - i. That the district take seriously the democratic concerns of having independent reviews of policing;
 - ii. That police officers may not sit on any review committee reviewing any function of policing within schools.
 - iii. Establish an impartial process for collecting data from the community that is trauma-informed, and is inclusive for all members of the community, particularly marginalized people, free

of barriers and safe to participate in for all consultative processes policing related or otherwise.

5) Mental Health and Social Supports in Schools:

- a. That the District staffing formula include a base-level of counselling, behaviour support, psychologist, inclusive learning support, and other forms of inclusive mental health and social supports necessary to utilize a proactive model of safe schools and behaviour management.

6) Anti-racism/Anti-Oppression:

- a. The District establish an official definition of racism connected to democratic and systemic racism.
- b. Adopt an official policy with budget line items for anti-oppression work.
- c. Acknowledge and validate the historical and ongoing violence perpetuated against BIPOC folks by police through a public statement.
- d. That this process be steered by BIPOC folks from staff, students, and community.

Sincerely,



Ilda Turcotte
President, Greater Victoria Teachers' Association
cc GVTA Executive Committee

*Trustee Duncan- Chair, School Police
Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc
Committee*

TO: The Education Policy and Directions Committee
FROM: Trustee Duncan, Chair, School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee
RE: School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee Update
DATE: Monday, February 1, 2021

The purpose of the memo is to provide an update regarding the School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee's progress to date.

Background

The School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee was established by the Board of Education to undertake discussions with members of the school community, including, but not limited to racialized, Indigenous and LGBTQ+ staff, parents and students to:

1. Determine what, if any, concerns there may be regarding the District's School Police Liaison Officer Program and;
2. Develop recommendations, as required, on what changes, including the cessation from the program, should be made to the program to improve its value to the school community.

Update

The Committee met on 26 November 2020 and 7 January 2021. The next Committee meeting is scheduled to occur on February 4, 2021. The Committee has 21 members, including four student representatives, one representative from the Esquimalt Nations, two representatives from GVTA, two representatives from CUPE, two representatives from VCPAC, one representative from Victoria Police Department and two representatives from Saanich Police Department, two members of the Senior Leadership Team, two School Administrators, one School District Communications staff member, and two Trustees. Topics of discussion at the Committee meetings have included: the Committee's Terms of Reference specifically the purpose and deliverables, the timeline for the Committee work, the role of the School Police Liaison Officers, the importance of student and parent voice, the importance of considering the program through the lens of racism and discrimination.

During the February meeting the Committee will be presented with information regarding the roles and responsibilities of the School Liaison Officers including specific training or education they receive. In addition to this topic, the Committee will discuss the draft Communications Plan

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

*Trustee Duncan- Chair, School Police
Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc
Committee*

developed in collaboration with Lisa McPhail. This will include the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation for consultation, a timeline to guide the work of the Committee including a proposed schedule for consulting with stakeholders.

Despite the challenges of meeting during COVID the Committee has been productive and is currently pursuing opportunities to fully understand racism and systemic bias in addition to trauma informed practice. The committee is exploring inviting community experts to specifically address these two topics.

The Committee intends to provide a Summary Engagement Report to the Education Policy and Directions Standing Committee on June 7, 2021 and then to provide a set of recommendations to be discussed initially at an Education Policy and Directions Standing Committee meeting in the 2021-2022 school year before being presented to the Board of Education.

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

Office of Trustee Duncan

TO: The Education Policy and Directions Committee

FROM: Trustee Duncan, Chair, School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee

RE: School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee Update

DATE: June 7, 2021

The purpose of the memo is to provide an update regarding the School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee's progress to date and to request financial support to assist the Committee to complete its engagement work.

Background:

The School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee was established by the Board of Education to undertake discussions with members of the school community, including, but not limited to racialized, Indigenous and LGBTQ+ staff, parents and students to:

1. *Determine what, if any, concerns there may be regarding the District's School Police Liaison Officer program; and*
2. *Develop recommendations, as required, on what changes should be made to the program to improve its value to the school community including consideration of cessation of the program.*

Update:

The Committee met on 4 February 2021, 1 April 2021, 6 May 2021 and 1 June 2021. The Committee did not meet in March 2021.

The Committee has 21 members, including four student representatives, one representative from the Esquimalt Nation, two representatives from GVTA, two representatives from CUPE, two representatives from VCPAC, one representative from Victoria Police Department and one representative from Saanich Police Department (with an alternate), two members of the Senior Leadership Team, two School Administrators, one School District Communications staff

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

member, and two Trustees. Topics of discussion at the Committee meetings have included: the Committee's Terms of Reference specifically the purpose and deliverables, the timeline for the Committee work, the role of the School Police Liaison Officers, the importance of student and parent voice, the importance of considering the program through the lens of racism and discrimination.

During the February meeting the Committee received a Communications Plan developed by Lisa McPhail, Manager of Communications & Community Engagement for SD61. The Communications Plan will follow guidelines from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation for consultation and includes a timeline to guide the work of the Committee.

The Committee also participated in an anti-racism workshop provided by Dr. Moussa Magassa. The Committee is currently exploring inviting a community expert to speak about a trauma informed approach when assessing school police liaison programs.

In April 2021 the Committee started a monthly Speakers Series open to anyone wishing to make a presentation to the Committee. During the April Speaker Series the Committee received its first four guest presentations from various stakeholder groups such as the GVTA, Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) and the Crime Reduction & Exploitation Diversion Coordinator, Pacific Centre Family Services Association (MYST).

Currently the Committee is in the information gathering stage. The Committee is seeking to hear feedback and to gather information which it will then consider prior to making recommendations for the Board's consideration. The Committee received a draft public survey in May 2021 from Lisa McPhail. The Committee is currently working to finalize the public survey and will meet again before the end of the school year to progress this work. The Committee spent a considerable amount of time in May and June discussing the need to adapt its engagement plans, as required in order to ensure that it has heard from our diverse learning community and the public prior to making any recommendations to the Board.

At the conclusion of the engagement process the Committee intends to provide a Summary Engagement Report to the Education Policy and Directions Standing Committee on a date to be confirmed. The Committee will then provide a set of recommendations to be discussed initially at an Education Policy and Directions Standing Committee meeting in the 2021-2022 school year before being presented to the Board of Education.

The Committee has reached out to invite feedback from the following stakeholders:

- ICA
- Inclusion BC
- Native Friendship Centre
- Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society
- Pacific People's Partnership
- International Institute for Child Rights and Development (ties with Royal Roads)
- Hulitan Family and Community Services Society

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

One *Learning* Community



- UVIC – Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement
- Camosun – Centre for Indigenous Education and Community Connections
- Resilience BC
- Mothers Against Racism
- The Support Network for Indigenous Women and Women of Colour
- Urban Native Youth Association
- Mosaic BC
- Out on Screen
- BC Community Alliance
- Black Lives Matter Vancouver
- BC Black History Awareness Society
- Metis Nation of British Columbia
- First Nations Health Authority
- UVIC Academic Advisory Committee on Equity and Diversity
- Jamaican Community Victoria Association
- Binkadi Community Association
- African Heritage Association of Vancouver Island

Recommended motion:

That the Board of Education of School District 61 (Greater Victoria) direct the Superintendent to allocate a budget of \$5,000 to assist the School Police Liaison Ad Hoc Committee to complete its work.

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

One *Learning* Community



*Trustee Duncan- Chair, School Police
Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc
Committee*

TO: The Education Policy and Directions Committee
FROM: Trustee Duncan, Chair, School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee
RE: School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee Update and Survey Results
DATE: Monday, January 10, 2022

The purpose of the memo is to provide an update regarding the School Police Liaison Officer (SPLO) Program Review Ad Hoc Committee's work and to share the SPLO Program Survey.

Background

The School Police Liaison Officer Program Review Ad Hoc Committee was established by the Board of Education to undertake discussions with members of the school community, including, but not limited to racialized, Indigenous and LGBTQ+ staff, parents and students to:

1. Determine what, if any, concerns there may be regarding the District's School Police Liaison Officer Program and;
2. Develop recommendations, as required, on what changes, including the cessation of the program, should be made to the program to improve its value to the school community.

Update

In 2021, the Committee met on 7 January, 4 February, 11 March (participated in anti-racism training), 1 April, 6 May, 1 June, 17 June, 16 September, 28 October, 2 December. The next Committee meetings are scheduled to occur on 13th & 27th January, 2022. During, these meetings the Committee will consider the information we have received and start to draft recommendations. During the final phase of the Committee's work we will continue to focus on the importance of student and parent voice and the importance of considering the program through the lens of racism and discrimination. For your information, please find the SPLO Program Survey Summary Report and associated survey data attached to this memo.

Please note, the Committee intends to provide recommendations to be discussed initially at an Education Policy and Directions Standing Committing meeting before being presented to the Board of Education. The Board of Education will decide how to proceed in relation to the School Police Liaison Officer Program.

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

School Police Liaison Officer Program Survey

Summary Report – Additional Data Analysis

This document includes response data for key questions of the Greater Victoria School District 61's School Police Liaison Officer Program Survey, broken down by respondent group.

Data is broken down into five respondent groups:

Group name	Description	Total number of respondents in each group
BIPOC	Respondents who self-identified as having an ethno-cultural background other than 'White' <i>Students</i>	812 <i>361</i>
Indigenous	Respondents who self-identified as having an 'Indigenous' ethno-cultural background <i>Students</i>	178 <i>41</i>
White	Respondents who self-identified as having only 'White' ethno-cultural background <i>Students</i>	2150 <i>426</i>
2SLGBTQIA+	Respondents who self-identified as part of the '2SLGBTQIA+' community <i>Students</i>	438 <i>177</i>
All data	All survey respondents <i>All students</i>	3,815 <i>931</i>

**Please note that survey respondents could select more than one ethno-cultural background, therefore totals will vary.*

**Please note that survey respondents could self-select more than one ethno-cultural background.*

School Police Liaison Officer Program Survey

Q3 – Have you had any interactions with a School Police Liaison Officer in the school? Select all that apply:

All respondents										
	BIPOC		Indigenous		White		2SLGBTQIA+		All data	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
None of the above	411	51	80	45	988	46	191	44	1785	47
Class presentation	228	28	50	28	635	30	151	34	1120	29
Community event	132	16	44	25	473	22	82	19	823	22
Crime prevention and safety	151	19	40	22	388	18	80	18	731	19
Drug/substance use education and information	124	15	40	22	347	16	88	20	627	16
Filing a report	30	4	11	6	111	5	17	4	197	5
Parent information talk	59	7	22	12	194	9	28	6	356	9
Safety session, such as bike skills, internet use, bullying, etc.	201	25	52	29	596	28	131	30	1036	27
Support for conflict resolution	51	6	22	12	184	9	37	8	340	9
Weapons	26	3	8	5	72	3	14	3	132	3

School Police Liaison Officer Program Survey

Students										
	BIPOC		Indigenous		White		2SLGBTQIA+		All students	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
None of the above	185	51	22	54	218	51	85	48	483	52
Class presentation	102	28	8	20	122	29	64	36	260	28
Community event	32	9	6	15	53	12	20	11	102	11
Crime prevention and safety	62	17	7	17	62	15	30	17	144	15
Drug/substance use education and information	51	14	9	22	73	17	36	20	143	15
Filing a report	7	2	2	5	5	1	2	1	17	2
Parent information talk	14	4	5	12	15	4	5	3	39	4
Safety session, such as bike skills, internet use, bullying, etc.	92	25	10	24	113	27	55	31	231	25
Support for conflict resolution	16	4	4	10	11	3	9	5	39	4
Weapons	12	3	2	5	9	2	5	3	24	3

School Police Liaison Officer Program Survey

Q4 – My previous interactions with School Police Liaison Officers in the school setting have been:

All respondents										
	BIPOC		Indigenous		White		2SLGBTQIA+		All data	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
I have not had any interactions	383	47	68	38	818	38	161	37	1522	40
Very positive	194	24	64	36	712	33	89	20	1198	31
Positive	123	15	23	13	314	15	61	14	544	14
Neutral	80	10	10	6	199	9	67	15	364	10
Negative	19	2	9	5	73	3	42	10	116	3
Very negative	13	2	4	2	34	2	18	4	71	2

	BIPOC	Indigenous	White	2SLGBTQIA+	All data
Very positive or positive	39%	48%	48%	34%	45%
Very negative or negative	4%	5%	5%	14%	5%

Students										
	BIPOC		Indigenous		White		2SLGBTQIA+		All students	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
I have not had any interactions	186	52	22	54	201	47	83	47	460	49
Very positive	43	12	6	15	65	15	16	9	133	14
Positive	73	20	7	17	66	15	29	16	155	17
Neutral	49	14	4	10	72	17	31	18	146	16
Negative	6	2	1	2	17	4	14	8	25	3
Very negative	4	1	1	2	4	1	4	2	12	1

	BIPOC	Indigenous	White	2SLGBTQIA+	All students
Very positive or positive	32%	32%	30%	25%	31%

School Police Liaison Officer Program Survey

Very negative or negative	3%	4%	5%	10%	4%
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Q7 – My previous interactions with police officers (non-SPLO) in the school setting have been:

All respondents										
	BIPOC		Indigenous		White		2SLGBTQIA+		All data	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
I have not had any interactions	479	59	86	48	1227	57	220	50	2046	56
Very positive	90	11	25	14	317	15	41	9	554	15
Positive	97	12	24	13	275	13	48	11	479	13
Neutral	103	13	25	14	225	10	85	19	407	11
Negative	25	3	10	6	67	3	23	5	117	3
Very negative	18	2	8	5	39	2	21	5	76	2

	BIPOC	Indigenous	White	2SLGBTQIA+	All data
Very positive or positive	23%	27%	28%	20%	28%
Very negative or negative	5%	11%	5%	10%	5%

Students										
	BIPOC		Indigenous		White		2SLGBTQIA+		All students	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
I have not had any interactions	223	62	19	46	251	59	84	47	542	58
Very positive	18	5	2	5	27	6	8	5	59	6
Positive	49	14	5	12	51	12	20	11	116	12
Neutral	57	16	11	27	76	18	51	29	151	16
Negative	8	2	1	2	17	4	8	5	28	3
Very negative	6	2	3	7	3	1	6	3	15	2

	BIPOC	Indigenous	White	2SLGBTQIA+	All students
Very positive or positive	19%	17%	18%	16%	18%

School Police Liaison Officer Program Survey

Very negative or negative	4%	9%	5%	8%	5%
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Q8 - How comfortable are you with having School Police Liaison Officers in schools?

All respondents										
	BIPOC		Indigenous		White		2SLGBTQIA+		All data	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Very comfortable	317	39	89	50	1106	51	124	28	1773	49
Comfortable	172	21	30	17	363	17	62	14	611	17
Neutral	151	19	21	12	221	10	72	16	444	12
Uncomfortable	38	5	10	6	181	8	61	14	253	7
Very uncomfortable	56	7	20	11	184	9	93	21	306	8
Not sure	78	10	8	5	95	4	26	6	217	6

	BIPOC	Indigenous	White	2SLGBTQIA+	All data
Comfortable and very comfortable	60%	67%	68%	42%	66%
Uncomfortable and very uncomfortable	12%	17%	17%	35%	15%

Students										
	BIPOC		Indigenous		White		2SLGBTQIA+		All students	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Very comfortable	72	20	9	22	112	26	25	14	215	23
Comfortable	94	26	10	24	99	23	32	18	211	23
Neutral	118	33	13	32	105	25	52	29	260	28
Uncomfortable	14	4	2	5	48	11	30	17	70	8
Very uncomfortable	16	4	3	7	20	5	17	10	41	4
Not sure	47	13	4	10	41	10	21	12	110	12

School Police Liaison Officer Program Survey

	BIPOC	Indigenous	White	2SLGBTQIA+	All students
Comfortable and very comfortable	46%	46%	49%	32%	46%
Uncomfortable and very uncomfortable	8%	12%	16%	27%	12%

Q9 – Would you like to see the School Police Liaison Officer Program continue in the Greater Victoria School District?

All respondents										
	BIPOC		Indigenous		White		2SLGBTQIA+		All data	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Yes	451	56	106	60	1304	61	161	37	2150	60
No	86	11	25	14	312	15	127	29	490	14
Not sure	153	19	25	14	282	13	75	17	532	15
I would like to see it continue if changes are made to address concerns	122	15	22	12	252	12	75	17	432	12

Students										
	BIPOC		Indigenous		White		2SLGBTQIA+		All students	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Yes	148	41	13	32	180	42	49	28	373	40
No	28	8	3	7	53	12	34	19	91	10
Not sure	115	32	17	41	128	30	57	32	294	32
I would like to see it continue if changes are made	70	19	8	20	64	15	37	21	149	16

School Police Liaison Officer Program Survey

to address concerns										
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The Greater Victoria School District 61

School Police Liaison Officer Program Survey Summary Report

November 2021

Executive Summary

The Greater Victoria School District (the District) is reviewing the School Police Liaison Officer (SPLO) Program. As part of the review, the District asked for feedback from all members of the learning community through an online survey to gather input on individual perspectives and experiences with the program.

The survey was open from October 12–26, 2021. To increase student participation the survey was provided to students in grades 9 through 12 with an extended timeline to complete between November 8–19, 2021. The additional opportunity for students to fill out the survey resulted in almost double the number of responses from students.

In total, **3,815** people responded to the School Police Liaison Officer Program survey.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

45% of respondents reported that their previous interactions with School Police Liaison Officers had been positive or very positive, **40%** of respondents reported not having any interactions, and **5%** of respondents reported that their previous interactions had been negative or very negative.

66% of respondents reported that they were comfortable or very comfortable with School Police Liaison Officers in schools, while **16%** of respondents reported that they were uncomfortable or very uncomfortable.

60% of respondents would like to see the SPLO Program continue in the District and an additional **12%** of respondents would like to see it continue if changes are made to address concerns. **15%** of respondents would like to see the SPLO Program end.

Background

In September 2020, the Greater Victoria School District Board of Education (the Board) passed a motion to form an ad hoc committee to review the SPLO Program. The committee represents students, parents and guardians, rightsholders, key stakeholders, police officers, senior administration and trustees.

Over the past year, the committee has participated in educational learning opportunities on anti-racism and culturally committed approaches. The committee also hosted a speaker series informed by school communities and members of the public about their interactions with the SPLO Program, including the collection of written and recorded submissions that could be shared with the committee to review.

On October 12th, 2021, the District issued a [media release](#) announcing the launch of a survey as part of the program review. The survey asked for feedback from all members of the learning community about their perspectives and experiences related to the SPLO Program, as well as their views on the future direction of the program. The survey was shared with educational partners, local community associations, all staff and schools, and was distributed to families.

The survey was open from October 12–26, 2021. To increase student participation the survey was provided to students in grades 9 through 12 with an extended timeline to complete between November 8-19, 2021. The additional opportunity for students to fill out the survey resulted in almost double the number of responses from students.

THE SPLO PROGRAM

For more than 30 years, police liaison officers from multiple police departments have served as resources to District schools. These SPLO officers assist with education and drug prevention, school safety drills, community and sports events, and addressing school violence. Currently, there are 12 police liaison officer positions serving elementary, middle and secondary schools across the District.

See the [School Police Liaison Officer Backgrounder](#) for more information.

HOW INPUT WILL BE USED

The results of the survey will inform recommendations for the Board's consideration by spring 2022.

Survey Results

3,815 people responded to the School Police Liaison Officer Program survey.

3,220 surveys were received during the initial survey and an additional **595** surveys were received when students were provided an additional opportunity to complete the survey.

Survey Highlights

45% of respondents reported that their previous interactions with School Police Liaison Officers had been positive or very positive, **40%** of respondents reported not having any interactions, and **5%** of respondents reported that their previous interactions had been negative or very negative.

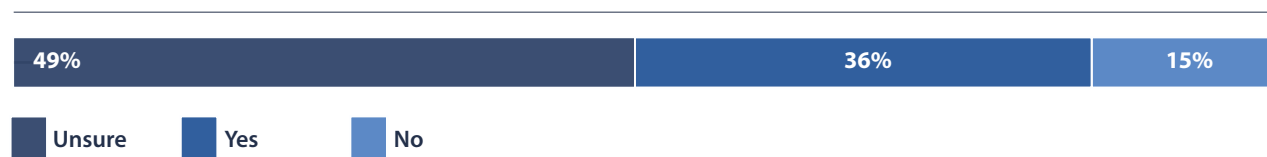
66% of respondents reported that they were comfortable or very comfortable with School Police Liaison Officers in schools, while **16%** of respondents reported that they were uncomfortable or very uncomfortable.

60% of respondents would like to see the SPLO Program continue in the District and an additional **12%** of respondents would like to see it continue if changes are made to address concerns. **15%** of respondents would like to see the SPLO Program end.

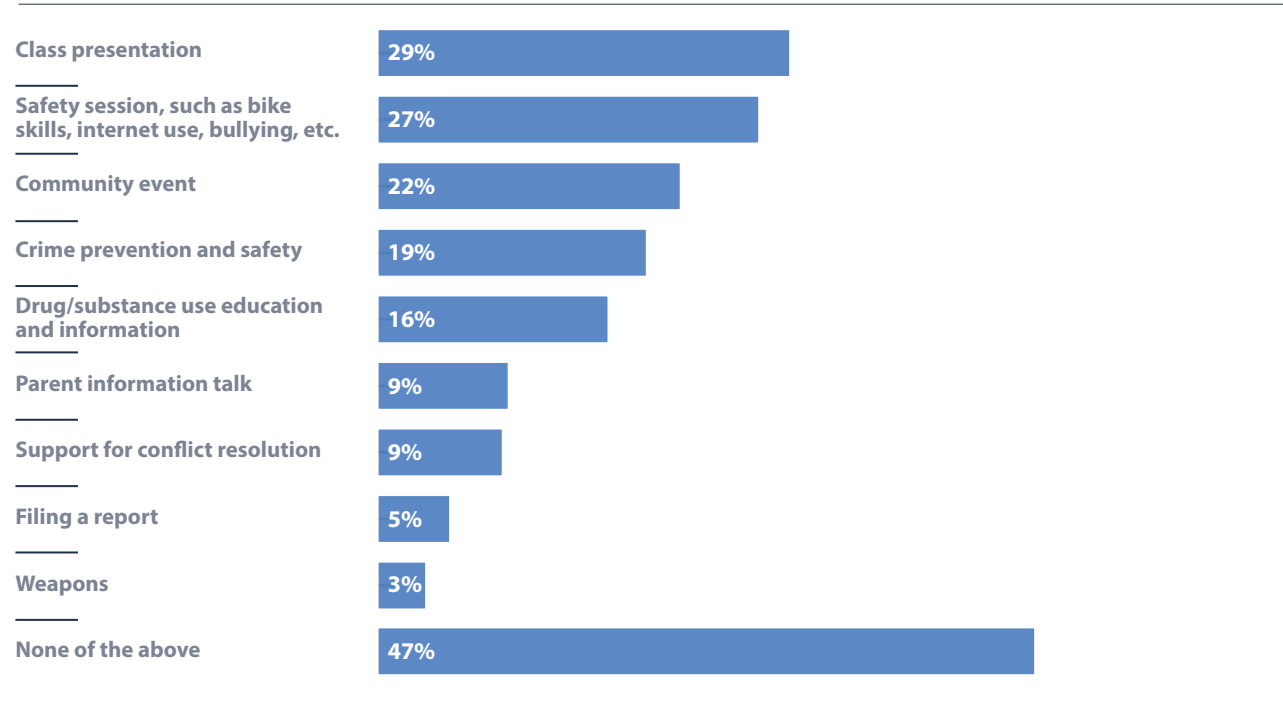
Q1 How familiar are you with the School Police Liaison Officer Program?



Q2 Is there a School Police Liaison Officer in your school?

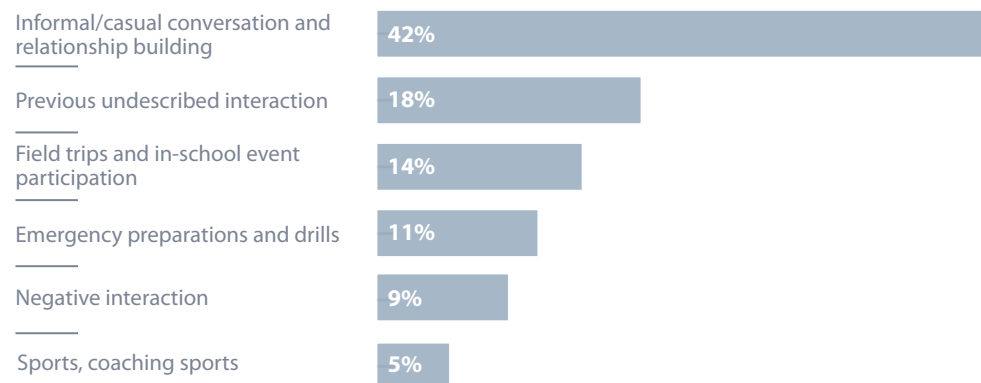


Q3 Have you had any interactions with a School Police Liaison Officer in the school? Select all that apply:



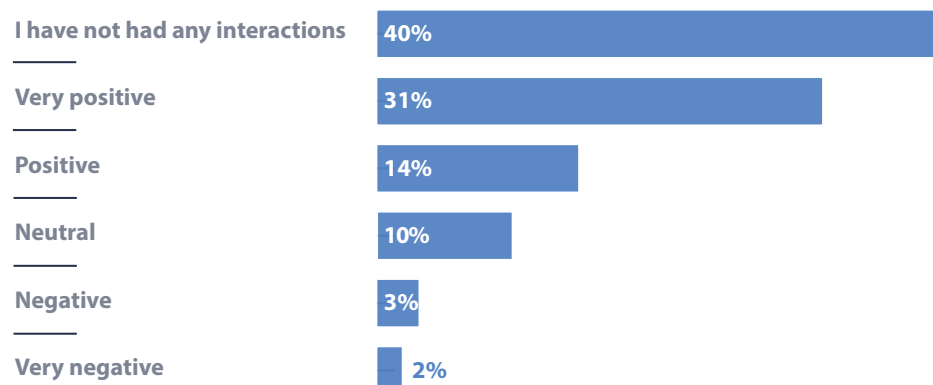
Other (please specify) 4%

Key themes (percentage of total 'Other' responses):



For questions where the respondent could select 'all that apply', the percentages will not add up to 100%.

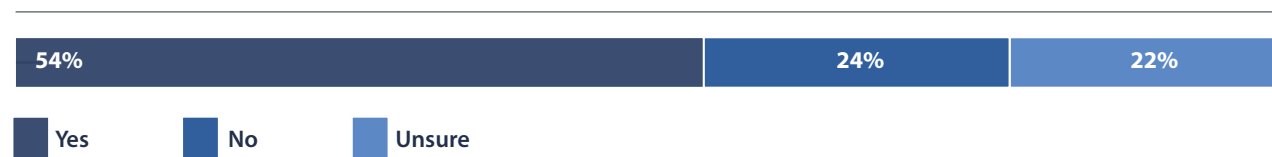
Q4 My previous interactions with School Police Liaison Officers in the school setting have been:



If applicable, please describe your interaction:

Themes	Mentions
Positive interactions with members of the learning community, including making connections with students, and being friendly, helpful and supportive	198
Educational sessions and informal provision of information and guidance related to safety and other support	128
Response to and support with safety and security of the school , including bullying, conflict resolution, and emergency situations	59
Direct support for having SPLOs in schools	49
Negative experiences and sentiment about police in schools, including accusations of misconduct	47
The presence of a uniformed officer in school can be intimidating for members of the learning community and make some students feel scared	28
Concerns about impact of the presence of police officers on BIPOC and other marginalized groups	18
Opposition to having SPLOs in schools , including suggestion to replace them with different kinds of trained professionals	18
Respondent sharing that they have experienced both positive and negative interactions	15

Q5 Do you know the difference between a School Police Liaison Officer and other police officers that might attend your school?



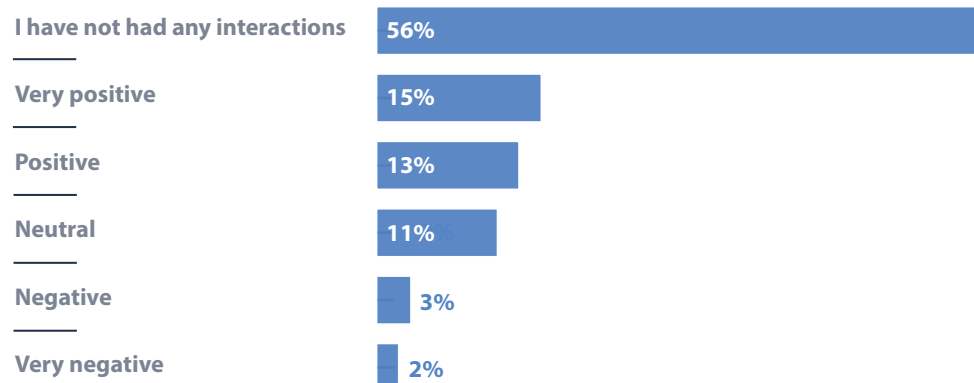
Q6 Have you had any other interactions at school with police officers that are not related to the School Police Liaison Officer Program?



If applicable, please describe your interaction:

Themes	Mentions
Response or participation in non-emergency situations , including investigations, traffic management, filing reports and more	75
Response to an emergency or safety-related situation , including lockdowns, threats, de-escalation, and other situations where security of a one or more members of the learning community was compromised	66
Educational sessions and drills related to safety , including self-defense, bike safety, drug use prevention and more	49
Positive experiences , including reports that the police officer was professional, respectful, helpful and more	37
Information interactions or connections unrelated to law enforcement or safety, including participation in school events	37
Negative experiences and sentiment about police in schools, including accusations of misconduct	23
Police officers can make students feel intimidated or scared , especially since they do not have the same training as a SPLO	18
Concerns or experience with the impact of the presence of police officers on BIPOC and other marginalized groups	3

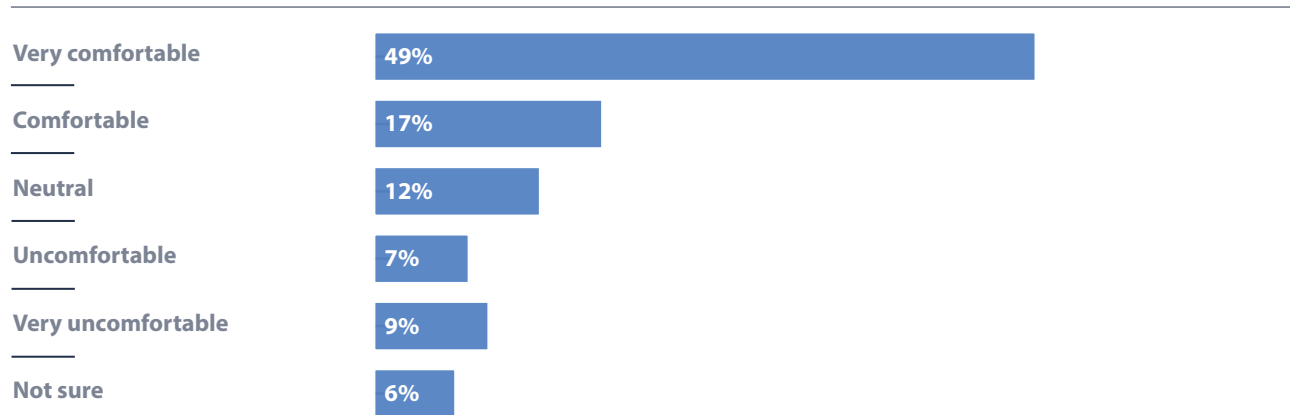
Q7 My previous interactions with police officers (non-SPLO) in the school setting have been:



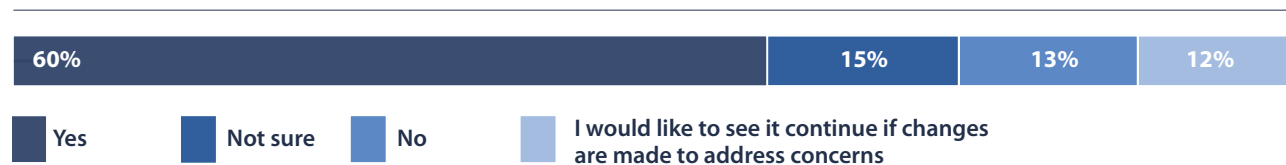
If applicable, please describe your interaction:

Themes	Mentions
Positive experiences , including reports that the police officer was professional, respectful, helpful and more	30
Negative experiences and sentiment about police in schools, including accusations of misconduct	19
Police officers can make students feel intimidated or scared , especially since they do not have the same training as a SPLO	17
Educational sessions and drills related to safety , including self-defense, bike safety, drug use prevention and more	12
Response or participation in non-emergency situations , including investigations, traffic management, filing reports and more	11
Information interactions or connections unrelated to law enforcement or safety, including participation in school events	10
Opposition to the presence of police in schools	9
Response to an emergency or safety-related situation , including lockdowns, threats, de-escalation, and other situations where security of a one or more members of the learning community was compromised	8
Concerns or experience with the impact of the presence of police officers on BIPOC and other marginalized groups	7

Q8 How comfortable are you with having School Police Liaison Officers in schools?



Q9 Would you like to see the School Police Liaison Officer Program continue in the Greater Victoria School District?



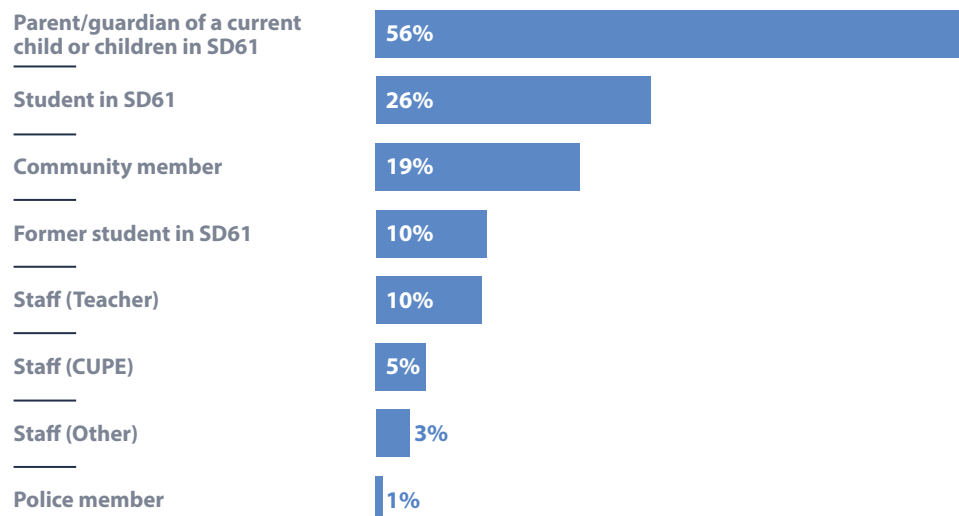
Q10 Please share any additional feedback or recommendations you have about the School Police Liaison Officer Program.

Themes	Mentions
Support for the SPLO Program and requests not to cancel it, including that the program is essential to the school community, has a positive impact on students, builds trust in and positive relationships with police, introduces policing as a potential positive career choice, and educates students of the integral role of police in society	518
Opposition to the SPLO Program and advocacy for its removal, including comments about how police are unnecessary and detrimental in the school environment, especially for marginalized students	176
Acknowledgment of and/or concern about students feeling unsafe or uncomfortable with police around, especially marginalized students	122
Shared positive personal experiences with SPLOs	101
The role that SPLOs currently play could be carried out by different kinds of trained professionals , including comments that resources could be better directed to other kinds of in-school support and police resources would be better applied in the community	100
Comments and questions about the program purpose and program review , and suggestions for engagement and information sharing , including comments about being unaware of the program until the survey	94
Suggested changes to improve the program to make it more accessible and well-received, including increasing funding to existing and cut SPLO Programs, suggested partnerships with other agencies, suggested programming topics, and a shift in engagement approach	94
Comments about harm to social cohesion as a result of misinformation about police and media influences, including that removing SPLOs will only feed the biases and division at issue and will have a negative impact on the school and broader community	86
SPLOs provide valuable information to students about community safety, the law, the danger of drugs, including comments that they are the appropriate professional to provide this information	67
Officers would be perceived as less threatening if they wore plain clothes , did not carry a gun and were generally more informal in their approach	53
Comments about systemic racial and other bias in the institution of policing, including some comments referencing the VPD and RCMP	48

Themes	Mentions
Support for BIPOC and other marginalized voices in this survey and process, including that BIPOC voices should be prioritized and amplified	44
SPLOs help to keep the school safe from drugs, violence, theft, and bullying	41
Shared negative lived experiences involving SPLOs or the police, including mistrust in the police	37
Support for additional sensitivity and training of SPLOs on the topic BIPOC cultural awareness and bias, mental health, substance abuse, youth at risk and conflict mediation	37
Suggestions to increase the diversity of SPLOs	18

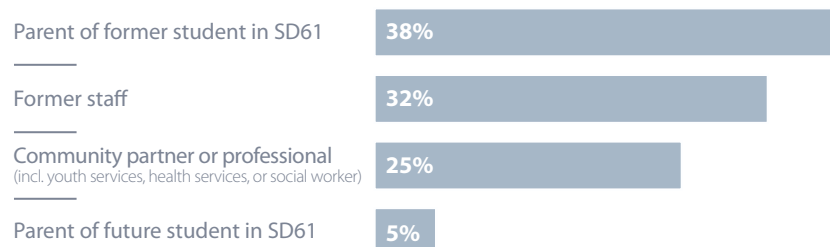
Q11 What is your connection to the Greater Victoria School District? Select all that apply.

The follow-up student survey did not include this question. The total number of respondents to the student survey was added to the "Student in SD61" option.



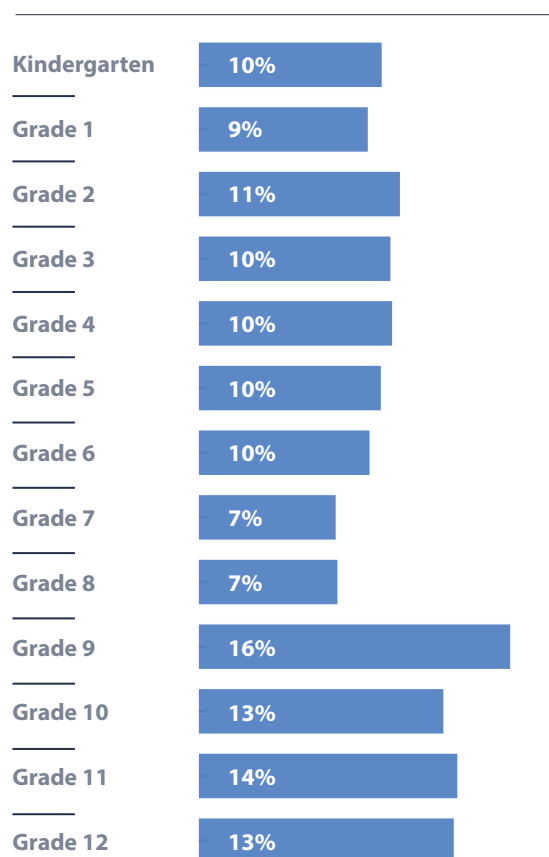
Other (please specify) 2%

Key themes (percentage of total 'Other' responses):

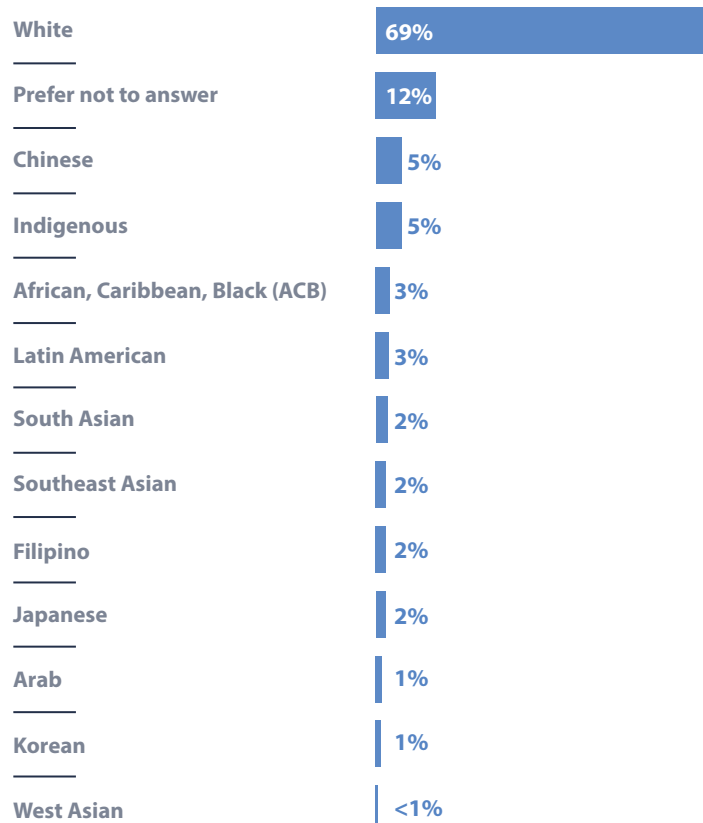


Q12 If you are a student, what grade are you in? If you are a parent/guardian, what grade is your child(ren) in? Select all that apply.

On the follow-up student survey, this question simply read "What grade are you in?". The student survey included students in grade 9 through 12 and their responses were added to the totals below.

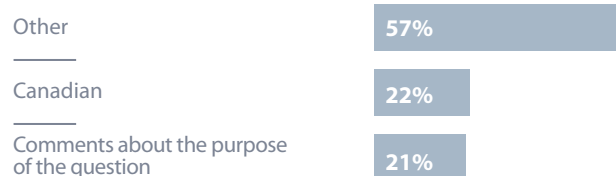


Q13 What ethno-cultural background do you identify with? Select all that apply.

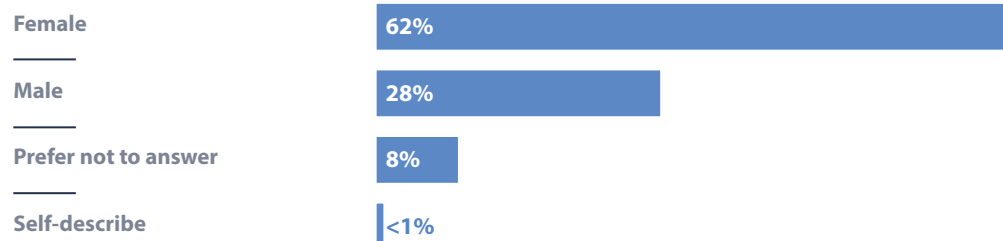


Other (please specify) 4%

Key themes (percentage of total 'Other' responses):

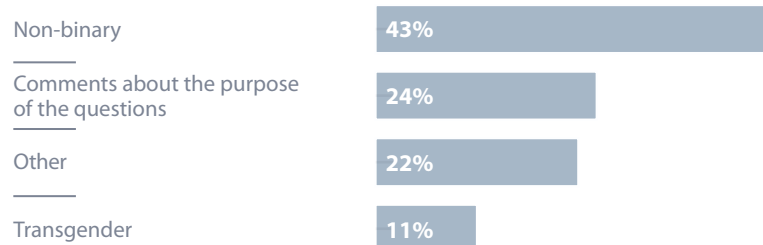


Q14 What gender do you identify with?



Other (please specify) 2%

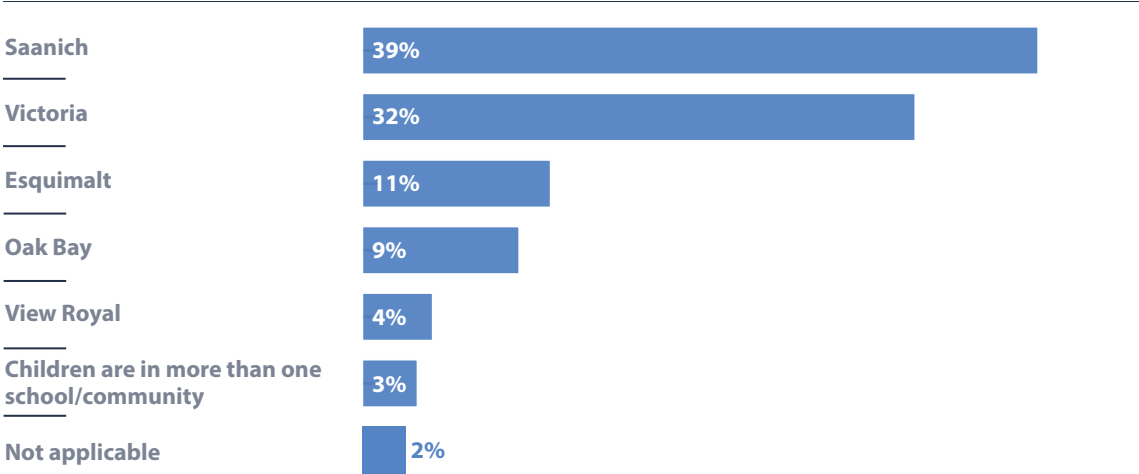
Key themes (percentage of total 'Other' responses):



Q15 Do you identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community?



Q16 Which community is your school located in?





British Columbia's
**Office of the Human Rights
Commissioner**

NOVEMBER 24, 2022

Suzanne Hoffman, CEO
BC School Trustees Association
4th Floor – 1580 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC, V6J 5K9

Via Email: shoffman@bcsta.org

Re: School Liaison Officer programs

Dear Suzanne Hoffman and British Columbia School Trustees,

As part of my statutory responsibility to promote and protect human rights in the province, I am writing regarding the continued use of School Liaison Officers (SLOs) in our schools. My legislative mandate extends across the province, including municipal governing bodies, and I write in my capacity under s.47.12(1)(c) of the *Human Rights Code*, which provides that "The commissioner is responsible for promoting and protecting human rights, including by... making recommendations or using other means the commissioner considers appropriate to prevent or eliminate discriminatory practices, policies and programs."

As I'm sure you are aware, Indigenous, Black and other marginalized students—as well as their parents and communities—have raised significant concerns about the harm caused by having police in schools.

Last year, in an effort to better understand both the positive and negative impacts of SLOs, my Office funded (through a grant) [research on the state of school liaison officer programs in Canada](#), conducted by Dr. Kanika Samuels-Wortley, assistant professor with the Institute of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Carleton University. I invite each of you to review her findings, which include:

- Only a few peer-reviewed studies have examined Canadian school liaison programs, and these employ small, non-random samples or have other methodological limitations that render their conclusions suggestive rather than definitive.
- The literature on SLOs in Canada tends to focus on the perspectives or opinions of police personnel rather than students. An extensive review of the Canadian literature revealed no peer-reviewed studies that explore the impacts on marginalized students. Thus, as noted by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, Canadian SLO literature maintains a "race-

absent” approach that ultimately fails to explore the systemic challenges faced by Indigenous, Black and other racialized students.¹

- The much more robust body of American research finds that SLOs make marginalized students feel less safe at school, contributing to a sense of criminalization and surveillance. Furthermore, the impacts go far beyond perception of safety. Researchers have shown that SLOs discipline Black students and students with disabilities at disproportionately high rates in the United States. Unfortunately, British Columbia lacks the disaggregated data to understand whether this is true of our officers as well.
- Overall, the research across jurisdictions suggests that students generally feel safe at school regardless of whether an SLO is embedded in their school. Some of the most methodologically sound research concludes there is no evidence to support the notion that SLO programs make schools safer.

Clearly there is an immediate need for research conducted in British Columbia that centres the experience of marginalized students and employs high-quality evaluation strategies. I have written to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General urging them to commission this research without delay, and I have also recommended that the provincial government guarantee funding for civilian alternatives to SLOs – civilian coaches, youth counsellors, substance use educators, restorative justice initiatives, etc. – so that no school district feels it is forced to rely on uniformed officers to provide services that should be delivered through the education system.

In the meantime, marginalized students, parents and communities are raising concerns that call into question the legitimacy of a police presence in our schools. I applaud those school boards who, after considering the available evidence and alternatives, have joined a movement of boards across Canada in ending their SLO programs.

Nevertheless, SLO programs continue in many school districts. At this moment, the Vancouver School Board (VSB) is considering bringing back a “revised and reimagined” SLO program over the objections of marginalized voices.² It is troubling that the VSB motion implies, without evidence, that SLOs are necessary for school and community safety and that tweaks to the SLO construct will be sufficient to address community concerns of harm and discrimination.³

In November 2021, my office released a [report on systemic racism in policing](#), based on what we understand to be the most extensive research ever conducted on policing data in Canada.⁴ The data showed the highly disproportionate impact of certain policing practices on Indigenous, Black and other racialized people. For example, in Vancouver, Indigenous men are 17.3 times more likely to be arrested than their presence in the population would predict. In Nelson, Black people are 4.7 times more likely to appear in mental health incidents involving the police than their presence in the population would predict. I offer these examples to show that the presence of police in our communities impacts different racialized groups differently, which supports the finding in the U.S.

¹ Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. “Statement: School Resource Officer Programs.” Posted July 20, 2020. <https://www.oacp.ca/en/news/statement-school-resource-officer-programs.aspx>

² “Dozens to speak for and against return of police to Vancouver schools.” CBC News. November 23, 2022. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/vsb-school-liaison-officers-1.6661081>

³ Vancouver DPAC [@VanDPAC]. November 21, 2022. “Vancouver School Board @VSB39 releases School Officer Liaison Program Motion just 4 hours before delegations are set to speak to it.” Twitter. <https://mobile.twitter.com/VanDPAC/status/1594836772756000772>

⁴ See p.59 of the report for recommendations concerning SLOs.

literature that SLO programs often make racialized students feel *less* safe rather than meeting their goals of increasing student safety.

Out of respect for the rights of our students, I strongly recommend that all school districts end the use of SLOs until the impact of these programs can be established empirically. For school boards who choose not to take this step, it is incumbent on you to produce independent evidence of a need for SLOs that cannot be met through civilian alternatives and to explain the actions you are taking to address the concerns raised by Indigenous, Black and other marginalized communities.

I know that we share the goal of creating safe and inclusive schools that uphold human rights. I appreciate your attention to these important issues.

I ask that the BC School Trustees Association share this letter with all school trustees in the province as soon as possible. To support my commitment to public accountability and responsibility to serve the people of British Columbia, this letter will also be made public.

Sincerely,



Kasari Govender
Human Rights Commissioner

CC: The Hon. Jennifer Whiteside, M.L.A.
Minister of Education

The Hon. Mike Farnworth, M.L.A.
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General

The state of school liaison programs in Canada

Dr. Kanika Samuels-Wortley¹
May 2021

This paper was funded by a grant from British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC), which holds the copyright. The conclusions in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner.

¹ Assistant Professor, Institute of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Carleton University

Introduction

Over the past decade, the use of dedicated police officers within schools—often referred to as school liaison officers (SLOs)—has become a particularly controversial topic in both Canada and the United States.² Advocates for such law enforcement initiatives, including the police, school officials and some parents, argue that SLOs keep students safe and improve police-community relations.^{3,4,5} Critics, however, argue that SLO programs are expensive, biased towards Black, Indigenous and other marginalized youth, and ultimately contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline.^{6,7,8,9} To illustrate, Merkwae argues that SLOs give law enforcement officials additional surveillance power and access to students and thus increase opportunities for legally punitive measures involving school violations.¹⁰ Furthermore, an increasing number of U.S. studies, indicate that police-involved disciplinary measures have a disproportionate impact on Black and other students of colour.^{11,12}

While there is a dearth of research that explicitly examines experiences with SLOs among racialized youth in Canada,¹³ community advocates within many Canadian jurisdictions have long argued that as a result of racially biased policing in schools, Indigenous, Black and other students of colour experience oversurveillance and subsequent criminalization.^{14,15} These allegations have led to the dissolution of SLO programs within several Canadian school boards, including the Toronto District

² In some jurisdictions, school-based officers are referred to as School Resource Officers (SROs) rather than School Liaison Officers (SLOs). In this report, the term School Liaison Officer (SLO) is used to refer to both types of school-based policing programs.

³ G. Abela and J. K. Donlevy, "Violence in Alberta's Urban Schools: The Perspectives of School Resource Officers," *Education & Law Journal* 29, no. 1 (2020): 1-26.

⁴ Linda Duxbury and Craig Bennell. *Police in schools: An evidence-based look at the use of school resource officers*. Routledge, 2019.

⁵ Wesley G. Jennings, David N. Khey, Jon Maskaly, and Christopher M. Donner. "Evaluating the relationship between law enforcement and school security measures and violent crime in schools." *Journal of police crisis negotiations* 11, no. 2 (2011): 109-124.

⁶ Denise C. Gottfredson, Scott Crosse, Zhiquan Tang, Erin L. Bauer, Michele A. Harmon, Carol A. Hagen, and Angela D. Greene. "Effects of school resource officers on school crime and responses to school crime." *Criminology & Public Policy* 19, no. 3 (2020): 905-940.

⁷ Christopher A. Mallet. "The School-To-Prison Pipeline: A Comprehensive Assessment. Springer Publishing Company, 2015.

⁸ Amanda Merkwae. "Schooling the police: Race, disability, and the conduct of school resource officers." *Michigan Journal of Race and Law*, 21 (2015): 147.

⁹ Tammy Rinehart Kochel, David B. Wilson, and Stephen D. Mastrofski. "Effect of Suspect Race on Officers' Arrest Decisions." *Criminology* 49, no. 2 (2011): 473-512.

¹⁰ Merkwae, "Schooling"

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Gottfredson et al., "Effects of school resource officers on school crime."

¹³ See Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, "Statement: School Resource Officer Programs."

¹⁴ Robyn Maynard. *Policing Black lives: State violence in Canada from slavery to the present*. (Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 2017).

¹⁵ Police-Free Schools Winnipeg. "Police-Free Schools WPG." <https://policefreeschoolswpg.ca/>

School Board (TDSB),¹⁶ the Peel District School Board (PDSB),¹⁷ the Winnipeg School Division,¹⁸ the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board¹⁹ and, more recently, the Vancouver and New Westminster school boards.²⁰ Furthermore, other Canadian school boards including the Edmonton Catholic School Board are presently conducting in-depth, independent evaluations of their SLO programs to help inform decisions regarding program continuation.²¹ As the debate continues, many police services and school boards in Canada are now re-evaluating and reforming long standing relationships and collaborations.

The initial objective of the current review was to explore the state of Canadian research into the potential benefits and harms of SLO programs—with a special focus on the impacts of SLOs on marginalized students (i.e., Black, Indigenous and other racialized students as well as students who identify as having a disability). However, while a few peer-reviewed studies have examined Canadian SLO programs in general, an extensive review of the literature reveals no peer-reviewed studies that explore the impacts of Canadian SLO programs on marginalized students. The Canadian-based research that does exist tends to focus on either SLOs as a form of community policing²² or the role of SLOs in addressing bullying and other forms of school violence.^{23,24} These studies also tend to focus on the perspectives or opinions of police personnel rather than students. One Canadian study of a particular SLO program has produced a book manuscript.²⁵ The authors maintain that in the Canadian context their study is “the largest and most comprehensive assessment of [SLO] programs to date.”²⁶ However, despite conducting their research in Peel Region, a municipality with one of the highest Black, Indigenous and South Asian populations in Canada, the authors failed to document the perceptions and

¹⁶ Shanifa Nasser. “Canada’s largest school board votes to end armed police presence in schools,” CBC News, November 22, 2017. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/school-resource-officers-toronto-board-police-1.4415064>.

¹⁷ Kevin Jiang. “Peel Police end controversial program that put officers in schools,” *Toronto Star*, November 18, 2020. <https://www.thestar.com/news/cta/2020/11/18/peel-police-announce-permanent-end-to-controversial-program-that-put-officers-in-schools.html>.

¹⁸ CBC News. “Winnipeg School Division budget cuts police from schools ‘solely for financial reasons,’” *CBC News*, March 9, 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-school-division-cuts-police-budget-2021-2022-1.5942650>.

¹⁹ CBC News. “Ottawa’s largest school board officially cuts ties with police,” *CBC News*, June 25, 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/oedsb-school-resource-officer-program-decision-end-1.6079001>.

²⁰ Jon Aspiri. “New Westminster school board ends police liaison program,” *Global News*, April 28, 2021. <https://globalnews.ca/news/7816191/new-westminster-school-board-ends-police-liaison-program/>.

²¹ Lauren Boothby. “Edmonton Public Schools suspends school resource officer program for 2020-2021 school year,” *Edmonton Journal*, September 4, 2020. <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/edmonton-public-schools-suspends-school-resource-officer-program-for-2020-2021-school-year>.

²² Ryan Broll and Stephanie Howells. “Community policing in schools: Relationship-building and the responsibilities of school resource officers.” *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice* (2019).

²³ Ryan Broll. “Collaborative responses to cyberbullying: preventing and responding to cyberbullying through nodes and clusters.” *Policing and society* 26, no. 7 (2016): 735-752.

²⁴ Ryan Broll, and Laura Huey. “‘Just being mean to somebody isn’t a police matter’: Police perspectives on policing cyberbullying.” *Journal of school violence* 14, no. 2 (2015): 155-176.

²⁵ Duxbury and Bennell, *Police in schools*.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 2.

experiences of racialized students.²⁷ Thus, as noted by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, Canadian SLO literature maintains a “race-absent” approach that ultimately fails to explore the systemic challenges faced by Black, Indigenous and other racialized students.²⁸

The few reviews that do explore the perspectives of racial minority youth are found in independent reports commissioned by school boards or community members themselves.^{29,30,31} In sum, despite the current trend toward the dissolution of SLO programs across Canada, research on school-based officers is extremely limited. Nonetheless, this review will provide an overview of the small but growing body of literature on SLO programs in the United States as well as a review of the much more limited Canadian research.

The first section describes SLO research across North America, including a discussion of the various methodologies that have been used to evaluate these programs. The second section will pay particular attention to Canadian based research, documenting the identified benefits and potential consequences of SLO programs. In this section I pay particular attention to criticisms and concerns over racial discrimination towards Indigenous, Black and other youth of colour. The third and final section will summarize the research findings and conclude with a review of research and policy recommendations.

The historical development of SLO programs in North America

The concept of placing police officers in schools for the primary purpose of maintaining school safety is not novel. Formal collaborative programs between school boards and police services emerged in the U.S. as early as the 1950s. Some Canadian school boards, including the Vancouver School Board, developed similar relationships starting in the 1970s.^{32,33,34} However, as a consequence of highly

²⁷ Duxbury and Bennell, *Police in schools*.

²⁸ Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. “Statement: School Resource Officer Programs.” Posted July 20, 2020. <https://www.oacp.ca/en/news/statement-school-resource-officer-programs.aspx>.

²⁹ Elana Gray, Rose-Ann Bailey, Janelle Brady, and Sam Tecle. *Perspectives of Black male students in secondary school: Understanding the successes and challenges—student focus group results*. Mississauga, ON: Peel District School Board, 2016.

<https://www.peelschools.org/Documents/We%20Rise%20Together%20Action%20Plan%20FINAL.pdf>.

³⁰ Toronto District School Board. *School Resource Officer Program Review*. Toronto, ON: Toronto District School Board, 2017. <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Agenda-Minutes/Type/A?Folder=Agenda%2F20171115&Filename=171115+School+Resource+Off+3269+FINAL.pdf>.

(Please note: the report was recently removed from the TDSB website)

³¹ Vancouver District Board. School Liaison Officer: Student and Stakeholder Engagement Program. March 2021 <https://www.vsb.bc.ca/News/Documents/SLOProgramReport-March2021.pdf>.

³² Argyle. *School Liaison Officer: Student and Stakeholder Engagement Program*. Vancouver, BC: Vancouver School Board, 2021. <https://www.vsb.bc.ca/News/Documents/VSB-SLO-EngagementReport-Mar2021.pdf>.

³³ Matthew T. Theriot and Matthew J. Cuellar. “School resource officers and students’ rights.” *Contemporary justice review* 19, no. 3 (2016): 363-379.

³⁴ Matthew T. Theriot, and John G. Orme. “School resource officers and students’ feelings of safety at school.” *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 14, no. 2 (2016): 130-146.

publicized school shootings—including the Columbine³⁵ and Sandy Hook³⁶ tragedies in the United States and the shooting death of Jordan Manners in Canada³⁷—the perceived need for police in schools was reinvigorated beginning in the late 1990s. The argument for police in schools was supported by emerging research demonstrating a positive relationship between perceived safe school environments and effective teaching and learning.^{38,39} As a result, since the turn of the century, the number of formal SLO programs in North American schools has steadily increased.^{40,41,42,43} To illustrate, in 1976 a study conducted by the National Institute of Education (NIE) found that only one per cent of U.S. schools had a SLO program. By 2016 a similar study found that 48 per cent of U.S. schools had an SLO, with 65 per cent stationed in secondary schools.^{44,45}

Unfortunately, similar data cannot be found in Canada. However, an iteration of collaborative agreements between the police and school boards can be found in most provinces.^{46,47} SLO programs have been documented in both elementary and high

³⁵ Columbine High School Shooting: Victims and Killers – HISTORY.

<https://www.history.com/topics/1990s/columbine-high-school-shootings>.

³⁶ Sandy Hook School Shooting – HISTORY. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/gunman-kills-students-and-adults-at-newtown-connecticut-elementary-school>.

³⁷ Global News. The Legacy of Jordan Manners. <https://globalnews.ca/news/6826381/legacy-of-jordan-manners/>.

³⁸ Hilary Horn Ratner, Lisa Chiodo, Chandice Covington, Robert J. Sokol, Joel Ager, and Virginia Delaney-Black. "Violence exposure, IQ, academic performance, and children's perception of safety: Evidence of protective effects." *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* (1982-) (2006): 264-287.

³⁹ Michael B. Ripski, and Anne Gregory. "Unfair, unsafe, and unwelcome: Do high school students' perceptions of unfairness, hostility, and victimization in school predict engagement and achievement?." *Journal of School Violence* 8, no. 4 (2009): 355-375.

⁴⁰ Abela and Donlevy, "Violence."

⁴¹ Theriot and Cuellar, "School resource officers and students' rights."

⁴² Theriot and Orme. "School resource officers and students' feelings of safety at school."

⁴³ Toronto Police Service, Toronto District School Board, and Toronto Catholic District School Board. *School Resources Officer Program: 2008/2009 Evaluation*. (Toronto, ON: Toronto Police Service, Toronto District School Board, and Toronto Catholic District School Board, 2009).

http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/publications/files/reports/2008.2009-sro_evaluation_program.pdf.

⁴⁴ Gottfredson et al., "Effects of school resource officers on school crime."

⁴⁵ Lauren Musu-Gillette, Anlan Zhang, Ke Wang, Jizhi Zhang, Jana Kemp, Melissa Diliberti, and Barbara A. Oudekerk. *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2017*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, 2018. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED581798.pdf>

⁴⁶ Argyle. School Liaison Officer.

⁴⁷ Meighan De Pass, Robert Cleveland, Brad Kelley, and Stephanie Duggan. "Panel discussion: How can police presence in schools help with prevention?," *Gazette* 80, no. 2 (2018): 12-14.

https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2018/gre-rcmp/JS62-126-80-2-eng.pdf

schools. In some cases, police officers are assigned to one school. In other cases, several schools share the same SLO officers.^{48,49,50,51,52}

In general, SLO programs are guided by community-based principles that encourage proactive policing. This orientation aims to discourage criminal activity by increasing police visibility within schools and promoting routine engagement between students, school staff and police personnel.^{53,54,55} While SLO programs vary with respect to implementation strategies, common goals include ensuring school safety and promoting positive youth perceptions of the police.⁵⁶ An emphasis of most SLO programs is the establishment and maintenance of positive relationships between the police and both students and school officials.⁵⁷

SLO program objectives

The specific roles and responsibilities of SLOs can vary according to the individual needs of designated schools. However, in North America, standard SLO activities are heavily influenced by The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO). NASRO promotes a “triad model” which describes the SLO as law enforcers, counsellors/mentors and educators.^{58,59,60}

As law enforcers, SLOs patrol school property, respond to calls for service and conduct criminal inquiries. Law enforcement activities include the general surveillance of the student body as well specific criminal investigations. Investigations often involve interviewing student victims and witnesses as well as the interrogation of offenders. SLOs can arrest and/or ticket students suspected of law violations or divert offenders into alternative measure programs. SLO patrols are conducted to reduce students from engaging in minor offending, truancy, and loitering in and around school property. It is also argued that regular SLO patrols can

⁴⁸ Abela and Donlevy, “Violence.”

⁴⁹ Argyle. School Liaison Officer.

⁵⁰ Carl E. James. Students “at risk”: Stereotypes and the schooling of Black Boys. *Urban Education* 47 no. 2, 464-494. 2012

⁵¹ Carl E. James and Tana Turner. *Towards race equity in education: The schooling of Black students in the Greater Toronto Area*. Toronto, ON: York University, 2017. <https://edu.yorku.ca/files/2017/04/Towards-Race-Equity-in-Education-April-2017.pdf>

⁵² Gita Rao Madan. “Policing in Toronto schools: Race-ing the conversation.” Master’s Thesis, University of Toronto, 2016. https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/71685/1/Madan_Gita_R_201603_MA_thesis.pdf.

⁵³ Duxbury and Bennell, *Police in schools*.

⁵⁴ Broll and Howells, “Community policing in schools.”

⁵⁵ Merkwae, “Schooling the police.”

⁵⁶ Duxbury and Bennell, *Police in schools*.

⁵⁷ Broll and Howells, “Community policing in schools.”

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Merkwae, “Schooling the police.”

⁶⁰ Terrance J. Taylor, Kelly B. Turner, Finn-Aage Esbensen, and L. Thomas Winfree Jr. “Coppin’an attitude: Attitudinal differences among juveniles toward police.” *Journal of criminal justice* 29, no. 4 (2001): 295-305.

reduce more serious school-based offending including assaults, bullying and drug activity.^{61,62}

As counsellors, SLOs are tasked with engaging with students, teachers and school administrators to provide advice on personal and/or legal matters.⁶³ In this capacity, SLOs may engage in discussions about general student behaviour or advise school officials on how to deal with student disciplinary issues, including student criminality.⁶⁴ Furthermore, SLOs often have the power to refer or divert students to social, legal and/or community services if deemed necessary.⁶⁵

Finally, as educators, SLOs often provide in-class lectures on various public safety issues including bullying, cyberbullying, sexting, sexual assault and substance use. SLOs, it is argued, can also help students learn more about policing and the broader criminal justice system.^{66,67,68}

Despite the identification of these designated tasks, as a result of individual officer discretion there is a high level of variation in how SLOs operate in their schools.⁶⁹ Therefore some SLOs may engage more in enforcement as opposed to counselling or student education. Others may focus more on counselling and education and subsequently de-emphasize their role as law enforcement agents. It is this extreme variation in SLO roles and activities that contributes to scholarly debate and policy discussion.⁷⁰

American studies

While many school administrators, police officials, parents and students maintain that SLOs keep members of their school community safe,⁷¹ research on the benefits of SLO programs remains limited and contradictory.^{72,73,74} This is particularly evident in relation to studies that examine the impact of SLO programs on criminal activity

⁶¹ Duxbury and Bennell, *Police in schools*.

⁶² Merkwae, "Schooling the police."

⁶³ Broll and Howells, "Community policing in schools."

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Maurice Canady, Bernard James, and Janet Nease. *To protect and educate: The school resource officer and the prevention of violence in schools*. Hoover, AL: National Association of School Resource Officers, 2012.

<https://www.nasro.org/clientuploads/resources/NASRO-Protect-and-Educate.pdf>

⁶⁶ Broll and Howells, "Community policing in schools."

⁶⁷ Madan, "Policing in Toronto schools."

⁶⁸ Barbara Raymond. *Assigning police officers to schools*. Washington, DC: Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2010. <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-p182-pub.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Kathleen Nolan. "Policing student behavior: Roles and responsibilities." In *The Palgrave International Handbook of School Discipline, Surveillance, and Social Control*, pp. 309-326. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018.

⁷⁰ Gottfredson et al., "Effects of school resource officers on school crime."

⁷¹ Broll and Howells, "Community policing in schools."

⁷² Duxbury and Bennell, *Police in schools*.

⁷³ Gottfredson et al., "Effects of school resource officers on school crime."

⁷⁴ Chongmin Na and Denise C. Gottfredson. "Police officers in schools: Effects on school crime and the processing of offending behaviors." *Justice Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (2013): 619-650.

within schools.^{75,76} To illustrate, using national cross-sectional data from the 2006 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), Jennings and et al. (2011) observed a negative relationship between the number of SLOs and serious crime in high schools in the United States.⁷⁷ This led the researchers to conclude that SLOs may function as a possible deterrent to serious crime. Similarly, the Maskaly and et al. (2011) study of school safety measures also identified a possible relationship between the presence of SLOs and a reduction in gang-related activity within schools.⁷⁸ However, the authors acknowledge that school and neighbourhood characteristics, including school size and the prevalence of neighbourhood violence, better explain levels of school crime. They also acknowledge the impact of SLO programs is diminished once these factors have been taken into statistical account.⁷⁹

Gottfredson et al. (2020) and Petrosino et al. (2012) both argue that our knowledge about the relationship between SLOs and school crime is greatly limited by a lack of methodologically rigorous research.^{80,81} To illustrate, Gottfredson and colleagues note that as a result of the growing use of SLOs in schools, many studies prior to 2010 used variables privy to “temporal fluctuations in outcomes” and thus could not be used to determine program success.⁸² In response, the authors completed a systematic review of research—conducted between 2010 and 2019—that investigated SLO program effectiveness.⁸³

To be considered a methodologically sound study, the researchers sought research that: (1) includes pre-test and post-test measures for both schools with (treatment) and without (control) an SLO, (2) controls for pre-existing differences between the treatment and control schools, (3) isolates the effects of SLO programs as opposed to other school security procedures, (4) considers school-level variation as opposed to student variation, (i.e., attributing student perceptions of the program to student attitudes) and (5) includes a quantitative component.⁸⁴ The proposed criteria were used to distinguish high from low quality studies. High quality studies, the authors maintain, must employ a pre-test/post-test control group design that better controls for historical effects and thus enables conclusions about program attribution. Anything less can render a study’s results inconclusive.^{85,86} Ultimately, the researchers found

⁷⁵ Gottfredson et al., “Effects of school resource officers on school crime.”

⁷⁶ Na and Gottfredson. “Police officers in schools.”

⁷⁷ Jennings et al., “Evaluating the relationship.”

⁷⁸ Jon Maskaly, Christopher M. Donner, Jennifer Lanterman, and Wesley G. Jennings. “On the association between SROs, private security guards, use-of-force capabilities, and violent crime in schools.” *Journal of police crisis negotiations* 11, no. 2 (2011): 159-176.

⁷⁹ Maskaly et al., “On the association between SROs.”

⁸⁰ Gottfredson et al., “Effects of school resource officers.”

⁸¹ Anthony Petrosino, Sarah Guckenburg, and Trevor Fronius. “Policing schools’ strategies: A review of the evaluation evidence.” *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation* 8, no. 17 (2012): 80-101.

⁸² Gottfredson et al., “Effects of school resource officers on school crime,” 909

⁸³ Gottfredson et al., “Effects of school resource officers on school crime.”

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Na and Gottfredson. “Police officers in schools.”

⁸⁶ Gottfredson et al., “Effects of school resource officers on school crime.”

that only 13 American studies conducted during this period satisfied the “high quality study” criteria.

Using longitudinal data spanning three years from the SSOCS, a number of researchers explore a comparative sample of schools both with and without an SLO, to examine whether the presence of an SLO leads to a reduction in various criminal activities including bullying⁸⁷ as well as serious and nonserious violent, property, drug and weapon-related crimes.^{88,89,90,91} These studies consistently show that schools with SLOs report more crime than schools without an SLO. Thus, there is minimal evidence to suggest that police in schools contribute to school safety. But, as Kupchik (2010) suggests, SLOs may reframe disciplinary incidents, typically dealt with by school administrators, as a criminal offence.⁹² Therefore the notion that SLOs serve as a proactive measure and engage with youth with the aim of reducing crime is questioned. Instead, researchers argue school-based officers may be reactive, increasing the likelihood students will be charged with a criminal offence.⁹³ This finding is consistent with the argument that SLOs can increase incidents of student criminalization.

Data from other American studies further suggest that schools with SLOs have higher arrest rates and out-of-school suspensions than schools without SLOs.^{94,95} Studies also demonstrate that SLOs have a disproportionate effect on arrest rates for Black students.⁹⁶ Zhang (2019), however, suggests these higher rates were typically found in schools that recently implemented a SLO program.⁹⁷ They argue that schools with well-established programs (i.e., an officer in the school three years or longer) did not have significantly higher arrest rates. This finding suggests that, upon implementation, SLO programs may increase school-based arrests. However, this

⁸⁷ Deanna N. Devlin, and Denise C. Gottfredson. "The roles of police officers in schools: Effects on the recording and reporting of crime." *Youth violence and juvenile justice* 16, no. 2 (2018): 208-223

⁸⁸ Na and Gottfredson. "Police officers in schools."

⁸⁹ Jason P. Nance "Students, police, and the school-to-prison pipeline." *Washington University Law Review*, 93 (2015): 919.

⁹⁰ Christina Pigott, Ami E. Stearns, and David N. Khey. "School resource officers and the school to prison pipeline: Discovering trends of expulsions in public schools." *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 43, no. 1 (2018): 120-138.

⁹¹ Kristin Swartz, Dustin L. Osborne, Cherie Dawson-Edwards, and George E. Higgins. "Policing schools: Examining the impact of place management activities on school violence." *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 41, no. 3 (2016): 465-483.

⁹² Aaron Kupchik. *Homeroom security: School discipline in an age of fear*. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2010.

⁹³ Swartz et al., "Policing schools."

⁹⁴ Emily G. Owens. "Testing the school-to-prison pipeline." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 36, no. 1 (2017): 11-37.

⁹⁵ E. K. Weisburst (2019). Patrolling public schools: The impact of funding for school police on student discipline and long-term education outcomes. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 38(2), 338-365

⁹⁶ See Emily M. Homer and Benjamin W. Fisher. "Police in schools and student arrest rates across the United States: Examining differences by race, ethnicity, and gender." *Journal of school violence* 19, no. 2 (2020): 192-204

⁹⁷ Gary Zhang. "The effects of a school policing program on crime, discipline, and disorder: A quasi-experimental evaluation." *American journal of criminal justice* 44, no. 1 (2019): 45-62

initial increase may diminish after the program is established and the SLO becomes part of the school community.

As such, to date, the most methodologically rigorous studies exploring the effects of SLOs in school consistently demonstrate that the presence of an SLO is “related to increased recording of drug crimes, crimes involving weapons and serious violent crimes.”⁹⁸ Furthermore, in their own analysis of the data, Gottfredson et al. found that increasing the number of police officers in schools did not lead to a reduction in school violence.⁹⁹ In fact, SLOs contributed to an increase in the number of students arrested and later referred to a criminal justice intervention. The authors conclude that there is no evidence to support the notion that SLO programs make schools safer.^{100,101}

Perceptions of safety

The argument that perceived safety is an important characteristic of the school environment stems from studies that reveal a positive relationship between perceptions of school safety and academic achievement.^{102,103} Students who feel safe at school may experience less anxiety and thus have an increased capacity to concentrate on schoolwork and extracurricular activities. Research also suggests that students who feel that their school environment is unsafe are significantly more likely to skip school as a violence-avoidance strategy.¹⁰⁴ As such, proponents of SLO programs suggest that a police presence in school can help staff, students and parents feel safe.¹⁰⁵

However, American studies have found little or no connection between the presence of SLOs and student perceptions of school safety.¹⁰⁶ Some of these studies note that teachers and school administrators often feel safer after the establishment of an SLO program but that there is no effect for students.^{107,108,109,110} Most studies find that students feel very safe in school both before and after the establishment of SLO

⁹⁸ Gottfredson et al., "Effects of school resource officers on school crime," 910.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Na and Gottfredson, "Police officers in schools."

¹⁰¹ Nance, "Students, police, and the school-to-prison pipeline."

¹⁰² Ratner et al., "Violence exposure."

¹⁰³ Ripski, and Gregory, "Unfair, unsafe, and unwelcome"

¹⁰⁴ Suzanne E. Perumean-Chaney and Lindsay M. Sutton. "Students and perceived school safety: The impact of school security measures." *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 38, no. 4 (2013): 570-588

¹⁰⁵ National Association of School Resource Officers. "Frequently Asked Questions." <https://www.nasro.org/faq/>.

¹⁰⁶ Gottfredson et al., "Effects of school resource officers on school crime."

¹⁰⁷ Ida M. Johnson. "School violence: The effectiveness of a school resource officer program in a southern city." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 27, no. 2 (1999): 173-192

¹⁰⁸ David C. May, Stephen D. Fessel, and Shannon Means. "Predictors of principals' perceptions of school resource officer effectiveness in Kentucky." *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 29, no. 1 (2004): 75-93.

¹⁰⁹ Theriot and Orme. "School resource officers and students' feelings of safety at school."

¹¹⁰ Madan, "Policing in Toronto schools"

programs.^{111,112} In other words, SLOs do not enhance or diminish feelings of safety. Research suggests that other factors—including neighbourhood crime and victimization history—have a much stronger impact on student perceptions of safety than SLOs.^{113,114}

Criminalization of student behaviour: The school-to-prison pipeline

A major area of concern around SLOs continues to be the potential criminalization of student misconduct.^{115,116,117} As noted above, research suggests that schools with SLOs have a higher rate of student charges and arrests than schools without SLOs. In other words, research demonstrates that police in schools can, in fact, turn common student indiscretions on school property into criminal offences.^{118,119,120,121,122} Thus, critics of SLO programs argue that an increase in punitive disciplinary responses and measures that involve law enforcement can push students out of the education system and into the criminal justice system.^{123,124,125,126} This process, which is often referred to as the “school-to-prison-pipeline,” suggests that students who are charged or disciplined by SLOs also face school suspensions or expulsions. Suspensions and expulsions, in turn, damage academic performance and ultimately lead to barriers with respect to access to higher education and employment opportunities.^{127,128} Furthermore, there are concerns that an increase in unsupervised free time (as a result of school removal) can increase students’ risk of engaging in criminal activity, creating a cycle of involvement in the criminal justice system.¹²⁹ To illustrate, Pigott, Stearns and Khey (2018) argue “experiencing only one suspension [...] increases an individual’s risk of dropping out of school by over 77 per cent.”¹³⁰ Furthermore,

¹¹¹ Nicole L. Bracy. "Student perceptions of high-security school environments." *Youth & Society* 43, no. 1 (2011): 365-395

¹¹² Nathan James and Gail McCallion. *School resource officers: Law enforcement officers in schools*. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2013. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43126.pdf>.

¹¹³ Jack McDewitt and Jenn Panniello. *National Assessment of School Resource Officer Programs: Survey of Students in Three Large New SRO Programs*. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, 2005. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED486271.pdf>

¹¹⁴ Theriot and Orme. "School resource officers and students' feelings of safety at school."

¹¹⁵ Theriot and Cuellar, "School resource officers and students' rights."

¹¹⁶ Merkwae, "Schooling the police."

¹¹⁷ Nance, "Students, police, and the school-to-prison pipeline."

¹¹⁸ Theriot and Cuellar, "School resource officers and students' rights."

¹¹⁹ Nance, "Students, police, and the school-to-prison pipeline."

¹²⁰ Amanda Petteruti. *Education Under Arrest: The Case Against Police in Schools*. Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute, 2011.

http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/educationunderarrest_fullreport.pdf.

¹²¹ Merkwae, "Schooling the police."

¹²² Gottfredson et al., "Effects of school resource officers on school crime."

¹²³ Petteruti, *Education Under Arrest*.

¹²⁴ Merkwae, "Schooling the police."

¹²⁵ Amanda Gebhard. "Schools, prisons and Aboriginal youth: Making connections." *Journal of Educational Controversy* 7, no. 1 (2013): 4.

¹²⁶ Theriot and Cuellar, "School resource officers and students' rights."

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Merkwae, "Schooling the police."

¹²⁹ Nance, "Students, police, and the school-to-prison pipeline."

¹³⁰ Pigott, Stearns, and Khey, "School resource officers and the school to prison pipeline," 123.

those who drop out of school have a higher risk of criminality as “nearly 40 percent of people in state prisons left school before earning a high school diploma, compared to 18.4 percent of the general population.”¹³¹

There are also allegations that the consequences associated with SLO charge practices have a disproportionate impact on racialized youth and youth who identify as having a disability. While very few SLO studies centre race and racism,^{132,133} it is well established that in the U.S., Black and Hispanic youth are both overrepresented in school suspensions/expulsions as well as arrests and convictions within the criminal justice system.^{134,135,136} Thus, there are concerns that the intersection of school and police discipline will have a greater impact on marginalized youth. To illustrate, in the United States, Black youth make up only 16 per cent of those aged 10 to 17, but represent “twenty-nine percent of juvenile court referrals, thirty-six percent of youth detained outside of their homes, and thirty-five percent of youth waived into the adult criminal court system.”¹³⁷

To highlight concerns over the treatment of racialized students by SLOs, recent studies suggest that Black students receive harsher treatment from SLOs than their White counterparts. For example, when faced with the same behavioural infractions, SLOs are more likely to arrest or charge Black students while White students are more likely to be cautioned or diverted into an informal conflict resolution or treatment program.^{138,139} Merkwae (2015) raises concerns over the level of race-based discretion SLOs have in “seizing a student on the grounds for the purpose of maintaining school order or security.”¹⁴⁰

Furthermore, youth with disabilities (those who identify as having a learning, emotional or behavioural disorder) constitute “a disproportionate number of the school-based arrests and referrals to law enforcement that result from an increased

¹³¹ Petteruti, *Education Under Arrest*, 18.

¹³² Shabnam Javdani. “Policing education: An empirical review of the challenges and impact of the work of school police officers.” *American journal of community psychology* 63, no. 3-4 (2019): 253-269

¹³³ E. O. Turner and Abigail J. Beneke. “‘Softening’ school resource officers: the extension of police presence in schools in an era of Black Lives Matter, school shootings, and rising inequality.” *Race Ethnicity and Education* 23, no. 2 (2020): 221-240

¹³⁴ Merkwae, “Schooling the police.”

¹³⁵ Kochel, Wilson, and Mastroski. “Effect of Suspect Race”

¹³⁶ Eric A. Stewart, Eric P. Baumer, Rod K. Brunson, and Ronald L. Simons. “Neighborhood racial context and perceptions of police-based racial discrimination among black youth.” *Criminology* 47, no. 3 (2009): 847-887.

¹³⁷ Merkwae, “Schooling the police,” 152.

¹³⁸ See Gottfredson et al., “Effects of school resource officers on school crime.”

¹³⁹ See Homer and Fisher, “Police in schools and student arrest rates.”

¹⁴⁰ Merkwae, “Schooling the police,” 164.

police presence in schools.”^{141,142,143,144,145,146} Thus, many academics, activists and policy officials are raising concerns over the negative consequences of SLO programs on youth with disabilities.¹⁴⁷ Consistent with these concerns, May, Rice and Minor (2012) conducted a study to explore whether SLOs hold discriminatory beliefs about students with disabilities.¹⁴⁸ Data collected from a sample of 130 American SLOs suggest the majority believe students with disabilities negatively impact the school environment: 55 per cent of SLOs believe students with disabilities are among the most problematic in the school, 79 per cent believe that youth with disabilities should not be treated differently than students with no reported disabilities and 85 per cent of the SLOs believe students with a disability use their diagnoses as an excuse for disorderly conduct to avoid accountability.¹⁴⁹

Disability advocates argue the police are neither equipped nor trained to tend to students who suffer from emotional, physical or psychological disorders.^{150,151} Police are undertrained compared to teachers and other specialized school staff: they are less likely to have an advanced degree or diploma in teaching, child development or psychology, and as such they are less informed about the various disciplinary measures that can be used to informally deal with youth who have behavioural problems.^{152,153,154}

Studies have found that SLO training does not include instruction on “detecting symptoms and behaviours of youths who have been exposed to violence, trauma or abuse” or offer techniques for defusing student conflict and engaging in mediation.¹⁵⁵ Studies have also found that SLO training varies across states and school board jurisdictions, with some SLO training being conducted by schools and other training conducted by police services or independent SLO training organizations.^{156,157} Such

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 149.

¹⁴² Gottfredson et al., "Effects of school resource officers on school crime."

¹⁴³ Paul J. Hirschfield. "Preparing for prison? The criminalization of school discipline in the USA." *Theoretical Criminology* 12, no. 1 (2008): 79-101.

¹⁴⁴ Russell J. Skiba, Mariella I. Arredondo, Chrystal Gray, and M. Karega Rausch. "Discipline disparities: New and emerging research in the United States." In *The Palgrave international handbook of school discipline, surveillance, and social control*, pp. 235-252. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018

¹⁴⁵ U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. *Civil Rights Data Collection – Data snapshot: School discipline*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2014.
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-discipline-snapshot.pdf>.

¹⁴⁶ Kelly Welch and Allison Ann Payne. "Zero tolerance school policies." In *The Palgrave international handbook of school discipline, surveillance, and social control*, pp. 215-234. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018

¹⁴⁷ Gottfredson et al., "Effects of school resource officers on school crime."

¹⁴⁸ David C. May, Corrie Rice, and Kevin I. Minor. "An examination of school resource officers' attitudes regarding behavioral Issues among students receiving special education services." *Current Issues in Education* 15, no. 3 (2012).

¹⁴⁹ May, Rice, and Minor. "An examination of school resource officers' attitudes

¹⁵⁰ Merkwae, "Schooling the police."

¹⁵¹ Theriot and Cuellar, "School resource officers and students' rights."

¹⁵² Merkwae, "Schooling the police."

¹⁵³ Nance, "Students, police, and the school-to-prison pipeline."

¹⁵⁴ Theriot and Cuellar, "School resource officers and students' rights."

¹⁵⁵ Merkwae, "Schooling the police," 162-163.

¹⁵⁶ Merkwae, "Schooling the police."

¹⁵⁷ Abela and Donlevy, "Violence."

training disparities contribute to inconsistencies in how SLOs address behavioural issues within their schools. Such inconsistencies may place youth who are both racialized and identify as having a disability at greater risk of arrest and of the physical harms often associated with arrest incidents. Indeed, recent reviews of lawsuits and news stories involving SLOs find that a high proportion of allegations of excessive use of force by SLOs involve Black students and students with disabilities.^{158,159,160,161} Proponents of SLO programs argue that excessive use of force is rare and often justified. However, Shaver and Decker (2017) suggest that the growing number of lawsuits and civil rights cases filed against SLO programs by racial minority and students with disabilities demonstrates a growing problem.¹⁶² Thus, contrary to the intended objective of making schools safer, the regular presence of SLOs in schools may be creating an unsafe and hostile environment for these students.

Canadian research

The vast majority of studies that explore SLO programs have been conducted in the United States. Unfortunately, very little research has been conducted in the Canadian context. To help identify research from a Canadian perspective, a systematic search was conducted on various academic databases using the following search terms: “school liaison officer,” “school resource officer,” “neighbourhood police officer,” “police in schools” and “school-to-prison pipeline.” As of May 7, 2021, only five peer-reviewed research studies and two theoretical examinations were identified. The peer-reviewed publications include: an analysis of the roles and duties of SLOs,¹⁶³ an evaluation on the value of Peel Region’s SLO program,¹⁶⁴ SLO perceptions of violence in Alberta schools,¹⁶⁵ SLO perceptions of cyber-bullying^{166,167} and two theoretical explorations of the school-to-prison pipeline hypothesis as it pertains to Black and Indigenous students in Canada.^{168,169} An additional search was conducted using the same search terms through a Master’s and Doctoral theses database. An additional two sources were found, including a theoretical exploration of police in Toronto schools¹⁷⁰ and a thesis that explored the role of SLOs in fostering resilience

¹⁵⁸ Perry A. Zirkel. “School resource officers and students with disabilities: A disproportional connection?.” *Exceptionality* 27, no. 4 (2019): 299-314

¹⁵⁹ Elizabeth A. Shaver and Janet R. Decker. “Handcuffing a third grader: Interactions between school resource officers and students with disabilities.” *Utah L. Rev.* (2017): 229.

¹⁶⁰ Madan, “Policing in Toronto schools”

¹⁶¹ Joseph B. Ryan, Antonis Katsiyannis, Jennifer M. Counts, and Jill C. Shelnut. “The growing concerns regarding school resource officers.” *Intervention in School and Clinic* 53, no. 3 (2018): 188-192.

¹⁶² Shaver and Decker, “Handcuffing a third grader.”

¹⁶³ Broll and Howells, “Community policing in schools.”

¹⁶⁴ Duxbury and Bennell, *Police in schools*.

¹⁶⁵ Abela and Donlevy, “Violence.”

¹⁶⁶ Broll, “Collaborative responses to cyberbullying”

¹⁶⁷ Broll, and Huey, “Just being mean to somebody isn’t a police matter.”

¹⁶⁸ Gebhard, “Schools, prisons and Aboriginal youth.”

¹⁶⁹ Abigail Tsionne Salole and Zakaria Abdulle. “Quick to punish: An examination of the school to prison pipeline for marginalized youth.” *Canadian Review of Social Policy* 72/73 (2015): 124.

¹⁷⁰ Madan, “Policing in Toronto schools”

among LGBTQ+ youth in Alberta.¹⁷¹ A Google search uncovered additional government sources including a survey conducted by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) that explores student, parent and school administrator perceptions of SLOs.¹⁷² Finally, a search uncovered a few consultant reports conducted on behalf various school boards, including the Vancouver School Board and the Winnipeg School Board. These reports also explore student and parent perceptions of their local SLO programs.

The results of the above-described literature search highlights a shocking lack of Canadian research designed to evaluate the effectiveness of SLO programs and explore their impact on marginalized students.¹⁷³ This is especially problematic since scholars suggest policing in Canada differs greatly from policing in the U.S.¹⁷⁴ If true, American evaluations of SLO programs cannot be easily generalized to the Canadian context.

Although there are SLO programs in most Canadian provinces, the available research is limited to jurisdictions in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. Furthermore, the only study that explicitly explores the perceptions and experiences of Black, Indigenous and other racialized students is not a peer-reviewed study; rather, it is a 2021 consultant report developed for the Vancouver School Board. Thus, with respect to SLO programs, there is a glaring absence of empirical insight into the experiences of racialized students and parents in Canada. As the Ontario Association Chiefs of Police (2020) notes, much of the Canadian literature on SLOs is descriptive and takes a “colour-blind” approach that not only avoids any discussion of race or racism, but also provides very little insight into the perspectives of students who experience SLOs in their schools. A review of the limited Canadian research is explored further in the next section.

Examining the SLO role in Canada

Studies conducted by Broll (2016) and Broll and Huey (2015) use interviews with 34 police officers to gain insight into how SLOs perceive and address cyberbullying in schools.^{175,176} The authors conclude that Canadian SLOs like to take a preventative approach to cyberbullying by educating students on internet safety.

These findings closely relate to Broll and Howells’ (2019) exploration of the non-enforcement side of SLOs and the role of community engagement.¹⁷⁷ This study is based on eight semi-structured interviews with SLO officers, from both high school

¹⁷¹ Emily Pynoo. "How Do School Resource Officers Foster Resilience in Sexual and Gender Minority Youth?," Master's Thesis, University of Alberta, 2020. https://era.library.ualberta.ca/items/97675540-9b02-4e88-9ae9-a0fe46332296/view/7aa511f8-ca67-4a3c-8fe9-8f155abd9bbd/Pynoo_Emilv_202007_MEd.pdf

¹⁷² Toronto District School Board. School Resource Officer Program Review.

¹⁷³ Madan, “Policing in Toronto schools”

¹⁷⁴ Duxbury and Bennell, *Police in schools*.

¹⁷⁵ Broll, “Collaborative responses to cyberbullying.”

¹⁷⁶ Broll, and Laura Huey. “Just being mean to somebody isn’t a police matter”

¹⁷⁷ Broll and Howells, “Community policing in schools.”

and elementary schools, from a mid-size Ontario city. Broll and Howells suggest that SLOs in high schools mainly take on the role of law enforcer while SLOs in elementary schools, which report lower levels of criminal activity, largely work as educators and mentors. The authors suggest that a collaborative relationship between school administrators, school staff, students and parents can foster positive relationships with the police and increase perceptions of school safety. They suggest that SLOs can build positive relationships with students in particular through active involvement in student life. They argue that police should further engage with youth by participating in school dances, class outings, coaching sports teams and in-class presentations.¹⁷⁸ The authors suggest SLOs can be effective if they closely follow the “triad model” (as outlined on page 6), but with an emphasis on counselling and education. However, Broll and Howells do not provide any data from students to support this claim.¹⁷⁹

A study exploring how SLOs promote resilience among five youth from two Edmonton high schools who identify as LGBTQ2S+ suggests SLOs can build relationships with vulnerable students through mentorship.¹⁸⁰ Youth participants in Pynoo’s (2020) study favour SLOs who promote “positive and inclusive school environments.”¹⁸¹ Pynoo argues that in comparison to heterosexual and cisgender youth, sexual and gender minority youth are at a higher risk of experiencing bullying in school. Thus, by intentionally making space for LGBTQ2S+ students that are at a high risk of bullying victimization, the study’s participants suggest SLOs can indeed increase positive perceptions of the police among youth who traditionally report higher levels of distrust.^{182,183,184}

Broll and Howells argue initiatives that focus on building relationships can both increase trust in the law enforcement and help with police investigations.¹⁸⁵ The authors argue that the relationships that SLOs foster with students can be useful for other police units as it may encourage students to report crimes or serious incidents that take place on or around school grounds. For example, Broll and Howells found that the SLOs in their study believed students would report personal victimization to them and not traditional police.¹⁸⁶ However, the authors once again do not provide an analysis of actual student perspectives to support this claim.

Furthermore, Broll and Howells argue that a regular police presence in schools can enable SLOs’ access to information about students who may be engaging in gang or other criminal activities outside of school.¹⁸⁷ They suggest this inside information can

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Pynoo, “How Do School Resource Officers Foster Resilience.”

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 80.

¹⁸² Duxbury and Bennell, *Police in schools*.

¹⁸³ Pynoo, “How Do School Resource Officers Foster Resilience.”

¹⁸⁴ Theriot and Orme. “School resource officers and students’ feelings of safety at school.”

¹⁸⁵ Broll and Howells, “Community policing in schools.”

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

help law enforcement officials solve crimes faster and more efficiently. Ultimately the authors conclude that SLO programs that encourage positive student engagement can not only help increase positive perceptions of the police but also aid in community safety.

The research conducted by Broll and Howells, however, ignores all concerns that suggest SLOs target and thus over-surveil Black and Indigenous students. Thus, Broll and Howells' research provides little insight into the unintended consequences associated with SLOs in schools. The following section reviews these concerns in more detail.

Toronto police evaluation

After the shooting death of Jordan Manners, at a Toronto High School in 2008, both the Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic School Board agreed to place SLOs in a number of their "high priority" schools.¹⁸⁸ The initial implementation saw dedicated police officers placed in 29 schools. By 2011, this number had increased to 47 schools. The Toronto Police Service (TPS) conducted an internal review of the SLO program in 2009, one year after implementation of the program, and again in 2011.^{189,190} The review sought to explore whether the SLO program improved school safety, improved perceptions of school safety and improved the relationship between Toronto high school students and the police. Data was drawn from over 11,000 survey respondents interviewed during 2009 and 2011 and captures the perceptions of students, school officials, parents and SLOs. Furthermore, the TPS reviewed crime data to explore whether there was a reduction in school-reported crime and victimization following implementation of the program.

To gather student perceptions in 2009, the TPS administered surveys to all 29 schools involved in the SLO program. Surveys were completed in October 2008 and again in May 2009 to explore any differences in perceptions before and after program implementation. The TPS randomly selected two classes from each grade (grades 9–12) for a total of 6,960 surveys. To gather information on teacher perceptions, teachers from each randomly selected class were provided with a survey (sample size=319 teachers). To gather information on parental perceptions, a parent survey was sent to the addresses of the randomly selected students, for a total of 4,350

¹⁸⁸ Louise Brown and Karen Rushowy. "Jordan Manners shooting death led to school safety changes," *Toronto Star*, May 20, 2011.
https://www.thestar.com/life/parent/2011/05/20/jordan_manners_shooting_death_led_to_school_safety_changes.html

¹⁸⁹ Toronto Police Service, Toronto District School Board, and Toronto Catholic District School Board. *School Resources Officer Program: 2008/2009 Evaluation*.

¹⁹⁰ Toronto Police Service, Toronto District School Board, and Toronto Catholic District School Board. *School Resources Officer Program: 2011 Follow-Up Evaluation*. Toronto, ON: Toronto Police Service, Toronto District School Board, and Toronto Catholic District School Board, 2011.
http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/publications/files/reports/2008.2009-sro_program_follow-up_evaluation.pdf.

surveys. Finally, each SLO was required to complete a one-time survey at the end of the school year.

To capture the SLO program's impact on local crime, the TPS examined crime incidents that took place either at SLO schools or within 200 metres of school property. The crime analysis compared crime rates one year prior to program implementation with crime rates one year after implementation. A similar methodology was used in 2011. However, only one class was randomly selected from each school for the 2011 review, and that review did not identify how many surveys were administered or returned (from students, parents, administrators or SLOs).

Key findings from the 2009 review suggest the SLO program produced no significant changes in perceptions of safety among students. Most students (over 90 per cent) already felt safe at school prior to the implementation of the SLO program. This finding is consistent with previous American research, which also suggests that most youth feel safe at school regardless of the presence or absence of an SLO.^{191,192} The TPS review also found that students who frequently interacted with their SLO did not feel safer than students who had no interaction. Unfortunately, the study did not examine whether attitudes towards the SLO program varied by student race or other personal characteristics.

The review's findings also suggest there was no change in perceptions of safety among school officials. The vast majority of school staff felt safe both before and after the implementation of the SLO program. Parents, however, reported an increase in perceptions of school safety after the implementation of the SLO program. As for reported crime and victimization, the data suggest there was a slight reduction in reported offences on school grounds one year following implementation of the SLO program. However, the findings also reveal a slight increase in victimization and offending within 200 meters of school property. This finding suggests that the SLO program may not have eliminated crime but rather displaced crime and victimization from school property to the immediate vicinity of the school.

Similar findings were reported in the 2011 review, however the TPS also reported a reduction in weapons-related crimes and an increase in the number of youth who expressed a willingness to report criminal incidents to the police. Based on these findings, the TPS concluded the SLO program had a positive impact on both students and school safety. They conclude that an increase in the number of students who are willing to report crime and a reduction in reported weapons-related crime suggest

¹⁹¹ James and McCallion, School resource officers.

¹⁹² Na and Gottfredson. "Police officers in schools."

SLOs can build positive relationships with youth and that this stronger relationship can contribute to an overall reduction in crime.^{193,194}

While seemingly positive, findings from the TPS review did not demonstrate a causal relationship between SLOs and reductions in school crime or increased perceptions of safety. The TPS only included data from schools with an SLO; data from comparative TDSB schools without SLOs would have allowed for a higher quality evaluation. For example, as Gottfredson et al. note, perceived differences in crime and safety may be a result of external factors unrelated to an SLO program. Program attribution is thus impossible to determine.¹⁹⁵

Furthermore, the TPS failed to provide any insight into the characteristics of their youth sample. Only gender and school district were considered in their analysis. Important demographic characteristics—including race, age, socio-economic status and disability—and as contextual factors—like previous experiences with victimization or previous contact with police—were excluded.^{196,197} Furthermore, the TPS report fails to explore the potential negative impacts of the SLO program and whether the program is perceived and experienced differently by racial minority students and parents.¹⁹⁸ The exclusion of race, class and experiences with disability is important as there is evidence to suggest these factors can influence police interactions and perceptions of police legitimacy. As Madan (2016) notes, “there is reason to believe that some students feel unsafe, not in spite of [SLO] presence, but because of it.”¹⁹⁹

Concerns over racial bias

In Toronto, concerns about the selective deployment of the police to working class, predominantly racialized schools has been widespread since the implementation of the SLO program.^{200,201} Some suggest that these communities were already highly policed through targeted intervention strategies leading to disproportionate police contact and the use of violence against members of the Black community.²⁰² The placement of SLOs in Black students’ schools continued this trend. While there is no Canadian data exploring Indigenous youth perceptions of SLO programs, Gebhard (2015) makes a similar argument about Indigenous communities’ experiences with policing and suggests that police in schools contributes to “Canada’s ongoing colonial

¹⁹³ Toronto Police Service, Toronto District School Board, and Toronto Catholic District School Board. *School Resources Officer Program: 2008/2009 Evaluation*.

¹⁹⁴ Toronto Police Service, Toronto District School Board, and Toronto Catholic District School Board. *School Resources Officer Program: 2011 Follow-Up Evaluation*.

¹⁹⁵ Gottfredson et al., “Effects of school resource officers on school crime.”

¹⁹⁶ Toronto Police Service, Toronto District School Board, and Toronto Catholic District School Board. *School Resources Officer Program: 2008/2009 Evaluation*.

¹⁹⁷ Toronto Police Service, Toronto District School Board, and Toronto Catholic District School Board. *School Resources Officer Program: 2011 Follow-Up Evaluation*.

¹⁹⁸ Madan, “Policing in Toronto schools.”

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 80.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ James and Turner, Towards race equity in education.

²⁰² Madan, “Policing in Toronto schools.”

project.”²⁰³ She notes that encounters between Indigenous peoples and law enforcement are often characterized by routine verbal and physical harassment, assault and racist practices.²⁰⁴

For many Black and Indigenous students, police in schools mark the “unwelcomed collision of their life in school with their life outside of school.”²⁰⁵ Madan further argues that the mere presence of SLOs who are both armed and uniformed serves as a “constant visual reminder” of White colonial power.²⁰⁶ SLOs can also contribute to the construction of racialized students as criminals within the wider school community. Indeed, the deployment of police officers within predominantly racialized populations can lead to stereotypical perceptions of targeted schools.²⁰⁷ To illustrate, McCrimmon Middle School in Brampton, Ontario, previously home to an SLO officer, was often referred to as “McCriminal,” even by school board trustees.²⁰⁸ Scholars suggest the deployment of police officers at racialized schools serves to reinforce the stereotypical association of Black and Indigenous youth with criminality.²⁰⁹

Limited data from Ontario suggests that Black and other racial minority students are more likely to experience harsh disciplinary measures—including suspensions, expulsion and police intervention—than their White counterparts. Importantly, research suggests harsher school discipline is related to lower levels of school engagement, higher dropout rates, unexplained school absences and poor academic performance.²¹⁰ Thus, consistent with the school-to-prison pipeline argument, there is a valid fear that reliance on law enforcement to address school disciplinary issues may further contribute to the marginalization and criminalization of Black and other racialized youth.^{211,212,213}

In response to concerns about racial bias within the Toronto SLO program, the Toronto District School Board decided to conduct their own SLO study. In collaboration with researchers from Ryerson University, the review sought insight from all current TDSB students, some former students, community members and representatives from various community agencies. Between September and October 2017, data were collected through a survey and through small focus groups with students and community members.

²⁰³ Gebhard, “Schools, prisons and Aboriginal youth,” 157.

²⁰⁴ Gebhard, “Schools, prisons and Aboriginal youth.”

²⁰⁵ Salole and Abdulle, “Quick to punish,” 145.

²⁰⁶ Madan, “Policing in Toronto schools,” 72.

²⁰⁷ James and Turner, Towards race equity in education.

²⁰⁸ E. Chadha, Suzanne Herbert, and Shawn Richard. *Review of the Peel district school board*. Toronto, ON: Ontario Ministry of Education, 2020. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/new/review-peel-district-school-board-report-en.pdf>

²⁰⁹ James and Turner, Towards race equity in education.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Gebhard, “Schools, prisons and Aboriginal youth.”

²¹³ Salole and Zakaria Abdulle, “Quick to punish.”

While there were many positive responses about the program, TDSB officials were alarmed by a number of negative findings that demonstrated potential student harm as a result of SLO presence.

Over 15,500 respondents completed the SLO Program Student Survey.²¹⁴ Key findings include:

- A majority of students (71 per cent) had no interaction with the SLO at their school.
- 41 per cent of respondents felt the SLO at their school was trustworthy while 53 per cent were unsure of whether or not they could trust their SLO.
- 42 per cent of respondents felt that the SLO at their school was helpful while 53 per cent were unsure about SLO effectiveness.
- 57 per cent of respondents stated having an SLO made them feel safer at school while 10 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed and 33 per cent were not sure.
- When asked whether they would like the SLO Program to continue at their school, 47 per cent of respondents said yes, seven per cent said no and 46 per cent said they were unsure.

An alarming number of students also expressed that they felt uncomfortable or intimidated in the presence of their SLO. The student focus groups provided additional insight. They expressed feeling “intimidated, and frequently mentioned feeling that they were under continual surveillance and suspicion, leading many of them to stay away from school.”²¹⁵ Many other students “spoke of the stigma associated with having an [SLO] assigned to their school, and the impact of this perception on both the school and their community as a whole. They were keenly aware of the fact that [SLOs] were mostly deployed to schools with a high proportion of racialized students and within communities which were already overly policed.”²¹⁶ This made many students feel they “were targets for discrimination.”²¹⁷ Many also shared that they felt the police were using the opportunity to “gather personal information and data which could later be used against them or their friends.”²¹⁸ Finally, many felt the “presence of the [SLO] in the school was not welcoming.”²¹⁹

Once again methodological flaws persist as the survey data did not allow for an examination of racial, gender, socio-economic or disability differences among the student sample. However, the survey is the first Canadian study to clearly identify and highlight negative perceptions of an SLO program. Thus, contrary to previous

²¹⁴ Toronto District School Board. *School Resource Officer Program Review*, 2.

²¹⁵ Ibid, 3.

²¹⁶ Toronto District School Board. *School Resource Officer Program Review*.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

TPS reviews, the results from the TDSB's study demonstrated a sense of unease or discomfort with Toronto's SLO program. This finding is consistent with a growing body of Canadian research that suggests Black and Indigenous communities have less trust in the police and are more likely to experience negative police encounters.²²⁰ Shortly after the release of the report, TDSB's SLO program was dismantled.²²¹ However, a study that followed the Board's decision suggested SLO programs were valuable for Canadian schools, thus questioning the TDSB evaluation's results.²²²

The Peel Regional Police Resource Officer study

A major review of Peel Regional Police's SLO program, conducted by Duxbury and Bennell (2019), is described as a longitudinal study that explores the value SLO programs through the perceptions of students, school administrators, police executives and SLOs using quantitative, qualitative and ethnographic methods.²²³ Furthermore, the study employs a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis—an "outcomes-based measurement tool that helps organizations understand and quantify the social, environmental, and economic value they are creating"—in an effort to help determine the value that the assignment of police officers to Peel Regional high schools provides to stakeholders.²²⁴

For context, the Peel Region, located in Ontario, has a population of approximately 1.5 million, which the authors state includes "people from many different cultures."²²⁵ The SLO program was implemented by the Peel Regional Police Service, the second largest police service in Ontario, in 2003. The program saw a dedicated police officer stationed in all 60 secondary schools within the region. The police funded the program, which cost the service approximately nine million dollars per year.

Results from the study were overwhelmingly positive. The authors suggest that students, school administrators and SLOs who participated in the study had positive perceptions of the program. For example, there was a general belief that the SLO program deterred crime, provided a quick response to school-safety issues, helped de-escalate potentially violent situations and contributed to overall school safety.²²⁶

The evaluation consisted of interviews with eight Grade 9 students from five schools in the region. In addition, over 600 surveys were administered to Grade 9 students

²²⁰ Kanika Samuels-Wortley. "To serve and protect whom? Using composite counter-storytelling to explore Black and Indigenous youth experiences and perceptions of the police in Canada." *Crime & delinquency* 67, no. 8 (2021): 1137-1164.

²²¹ Nasser, "Canada's largest school board votes."

²²² Rosie Dimanno. "Carleton University study proves TDSB was wrong to remove cops from schools," *Toronto Star*, January 18, 2008. Retrieved from <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/2018/01/18/carleton-study-proves-tdsb-was-wrong-to-remove-cops-from-schools.html>.

²²³ Duxbury and Bennell, *Police in schools*.

²²⁴ Ibid, 191.

²²⁵ Ibid, 2.

²²⁶ Duxbury and Bennell, *Police in schools*.

within these five schools during the first week of school (Time One: September) and five months after first exposure to the SLO program (Time Two: March). The authors however provided minimal insight into their youth sample.

For the one-on-one interviews, the authors note the group consisted of seven young men and one young woman where “none of the students [...] were Caucasian.”²²⁷ Few other demographic details were provided. Five of the students acknowledged they knew of their SLO; however, the other three reported that they had no contact with their SLO and did not know them in any way. Based on these eight student interviews, the authors conclude that “all” students feel safer as a result of their SLO and would trust their SLO enough to report a crime.²²⁸ The authors highlight that all students believe the SLO program should stay in schools and cannot report any issues with the program. However, they do state that one participant “felt the presence of the SLO stopped students from acting freely because they felt they were being watched by the officers.” This student also “worried about possible overreaction by the officer to small things.”²²⁹ The authors did not provide any additional insight into this student’s concerns.

Furthermore, the survey data used to explore overall student perceptions of the program did not identify race, age, or socio-economic background of the respondents. At Time One 610 students completed the survey and at Time Two 655 students responded. The authors acknowledge that due to “confidentiality requirements”²³⁰ they were unable to determine whether the same students responded to the survey during both time periods. They were also unable to match Time One with Time Two responses and thus observe evidence of individual change. As such, the longitudinal quality of the study is, at best, questionable.

Based on the survey data, the authors conclude the majority of students support the SLO program and believe the police in school are effective at reducing crime. The authors base this claim largely on the fact that fewer students reported fear of bullying at Time Two than Time One. It is interesting that the authors attribute this reduction in fear entirely to the SLO program and not the fact that Grade Nine students may naturally become more comfortable in their high school environment after the initial first year jitters.

Nonetheless, the authors report that 75 per cent of students feel safer with police at their school and later claim that “all” students feel safer at school and less stressed as a result of officer presence.²³¹ The survey data did, however, capture that at Time 1, 18 per cent of youth felt that school-based police officers “pick on young people and visible minorities.” This figure increased to 20 per cent by Time 2. However, the authors do not discuss this finding or provide any insight into why this perception

²²⁷ Ibid, 39.

²²⁸ Ibid, 45.

²²⁹ Ibid, 50.

²³⁰ Ibid, 54.

²³¹ Ibid, 76.

exists among one fifth of their respondents. Furthermore, the study does not explore whether perceptions of SLO bias are more prevalent among racialized students than White students.

The National Association of School Resource Officers continue to endorse the Peel study as evidence that school liaison programs are valuable additions to protect local communities. Canadian evaluation of an SLO program²³². However, the study is deeply flawed and limited in its analysis. The researchers relied upon interviews and surveys of SLOs, police sergeants, school officials and 655 Grade 9 students to conclude that all Peel Region high school students benefit from the SLO program.²³³ This claim is, however, grandiose. As noted by Na and Gottfredson (2013), it is problematic to conclude the impact of an intervention based on survey data and minimal interviews.²³⁴ Without a control group (a comparative school without an SLO) researchers cannot make strong claims about program effectiveness. Furthermore, the authors do not explicitly identify the specific objective measures they aimed to study, which is necessary for a high quality study.^{235,236} The authors simply state they aim to “examine the value of SLO programs.”²³⁷ As a result, concrete data, such as a recording of changes in criminal activity in and around the high schools, were not obtained.

An additional issue relates to the sample of youth in the study. The authors only focus on Grade 9 students, thus excluding all other students in the region. The authors justify their focus on Grade 9 students due to an inability to conduct a comparative sample of schools without an SLO as every secondary school had a designated SLO. Therefore, a focus on Grade 9 students who had never had an SLO in their elementary school provided an alternative comparison group. However, a reliance on Grade 9 students renders the results as an attribute of a cohort (i.e., Grade 9 students) rather than all Peel Region students as implied by the researchers. Duxbury and Bennell do not account for alternative reasons that may lead Grade 9 students to view an SLO presence positively,²³⁸ which as noted earlier may include anxieties around entering a new school and thus a feeling of reassurance when seeing an authority figure.

What is most problematic about this study, and what drew a great deal of critique, was the absence of a race-based analysis.²³⁹ Despite the researchers’ claims that the study accurately represented the religious, cultural and socioeconomic composition of the Peel Region, only a quarter (24 per cent) of the students in the study identified themselves as a “visible minority.” This is significantly lower than the 62 per cent of

²³² National Association of School Resource Officers. Frequently asked questions: What evidence exists that school resource officers are valuable? <https://www.nasro.org/faq/>.

²³³ Duxbury and Bennell, *Police in schools*.

²³⁴ Na and Gottfredson. "Police officers in schools."

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Gottfredson et al., "Effects of school resource officers on school crime."

²³⁷ Na and Gottfredson. "Police officers in schools," 2.

²³⁸ Duxbury and Bennell, *Police in schools*.

²³⁹ Danielle Foppiano. "SRO Programs in Ontario's Public Schools," *Public Policy and Governance Review*, December 16, 2019. <https://ppgreview.ca/2019/12/16/sro-programs-in-ontarios-public-schools/>.

the Peel Region's population that identifies as a visible minority according to the Canadian Census.²⁴⁰ Furthermore, the analysis in the study does not directly compare the perceptions of visible minority youth with the perceptions of white youth, nor does it provide a disaggregated racial analysis that would compare Black and Indigenous youth with youth from other racialized groups.

In light of the conclusion that all Peel high school students benefit from SLOs, the failure to include disaggregated race-based data is especially concerning considering the findings of a consultation meeting conducted by the Region prior to the release of the SLO study, which revealed many Black youth perceive police in schools to be racially biased. A report stemming from this meeting holds that, "[a]lthough police presence in school is supposed to make students feel safe, for some Black students, police presence has the opposite effect due to the racial profiling they have experienced."²⁴¹ Black students often describe incidents where they were accused of vandalism, being stopped around school property for wearing headphones or stopped when driving their parent's car.²⁴² Therefore, the failure of Duxbury and Bennell to include and publicize any negative perceptions or experiences of racialized students undermines their broad claims to the success of the program.

The Peel SLO study aftermath

Following the release of Duxbury and Bennell's study, Chadha et al. (2020) released a report into concerns over racism within the Peel District School Board.²⁴³ After more than 110 consultations with community members and students conducted between December 2019 and February 2020, Chadha and colleagues found sufficient evidence to suggest that anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and anti-South Asian racism was in fact ingrained within the culture of the PDSB. To illustrate, despite South Asian, East Asian and Black people representing 72 per cent of the secondary student population, 67 per cent of Peel School Board staff are white. The authors were also able to identify a number of concerns raised by students, including ethno-cultural violence, high suicide rates among South Asian LGBTQ+ youth and concerns over Islamophobia, which were often treated indifferently by school staff.

The authors also report many incidents of anti-Black racism including issues with school curriculum, academic placement (i.e., being placed in remedial classes as opposed to advanced classes) and an overall strained relationship between Black students, parents and teachers and staff. However, the authors also noted a number of disturbing incidents involving police in schools. During community consultations, Black students often shared experiences involving arrest and in-school suspensions where parents were neither called nor provided any information about the suspension or the return-to-school process. Data shows that Black students as young as four years

²⁴⁰ Region of Peel. "2016 Census Bulletin: Immigration and Ethnic Diversity." Peel, ON: Region of Peel, 2017. <https://www.peelregion.ca/planning-maps/CensusBulletins/2016-immigration-ethnic-diversity.pdf>.

²⁴¹ Gray, Brady, and Tecle. Perspectives of Black male students in secondary school, 9.

²⁴² Gray, Brady, and Tecle. Perspectives of Black male students in secondary school.

²⁴³ Chadha, Herbert, and Richard, Review of the Peel district school board.

old were being suspended. Troubling statistics suggest that while Black students make up 10 per cent of the secondary school population, they represent 23 per cent of all suspensions. Many of the suspensions were arbitrary; as the authors note, “some principals use any excuse to suspend Black students from schools including hoodie—suspension, hoop earrings—suspension, doo rag—suspensions.”²⁴⁴ Often police were involved during these suspensions.

The authors conclude that for Black and South Asian students, the PDSB maintains a culture of fear and has failed to create a safe and inclusive environment for its students. Shortly after the review into PDSB culture, Peel Regional Police permanently ended their SLO program in the district citing the negative impact of police in schools on racialized students.²⁴⁵ Police Chief Nishan Duraiappah expressed concern over issues of systemic racism and “the disproportionately punitive effects [police in schools] programming can produce” and thus felt it was best to gain community trust by ending the long-standing program.²⁴⁶

Provincial context: Vancouver School Board School Liaison Officer student and stakeholder engagement program

In response to concerns over anti-Black and Indigenous racism within Canadian policing and growing calls to remove police from schools, the Vancouver School Board (VSB) initiated a third-party public review into their SLO program. Established in 1972, the Vancouver School Board’s SLO program led to a police officer stationed in each of the board’s secondary schools. According to the Vancouver Police Department (VPD), the program was an integral resource for both students and the wider community. VPD argue their program helped increase school safety, provided programming for “at-risk youth” and also helped divert youth, who were in conflict with the law, away from the formal court system.²⁴⁷

A review of the program conducted by Argyle (2021) included one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions with students, parents, school administrators and staff, community members and members of the Vancouver Police Service.²⁴⁸ Argyle also administered a survey, during a two-week period in 2021 which was open to students, parents, school staff and community members. In addition, the authors collected written submissions from members of the public. The goal of the report was to “gather feedback on the experiences and impacts of the SLO program.”²⁴⁹

²⁴⁴ Chadha, Herbert, and Richard, Review of the Peel district school board, 8.

²⁴⁵ Jiang, “Peel Police end controversial program”

²⁴⁶ Nick Westoll, “Peel Regional Police end school resource officer program after community consultation,” *Global News*, November 18, 2020. <https://globalnews.ca/news/7471721/peel-regional-police-school-resource-officer-program-dissolved/>.

²⁴⁷ Vancouver Police Department. *VPD statement on school board vote*. April 27, 2021. <https://vpd.ca/news/2021/04/27/vpd-statement-on-school-board-vote/>.

²⁴⁸ Argyle. School Liaison Officer.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, 6.

The authors intentionally centred responses from Black, Indigenous and other persons of colour in an attempt to gain a better understanding of their concerns and experiences. Overall, the findings suggest mixed reviews of the program. While there are positive perceptions of SLOs, the authors note that Black and Indigenous participants are more likely to express negative experiences and concerns about bias. To illustrate, a few students of the 60 students consulted through six focus groups expressed discomfort with police in their school and feelings that “race, gender, identity, sexuality, immigration status and geographic area” could exacerbate negative interactions.²⁵⁰ As one student stated, “I thought the main reason for the SLO program was to make students feel safe (and to help with any legal matters at the school of course) but so many of my peers and myself don't feel safe when the SLO is around.”²⁵¹ There are however some positive expressions as well. As one student stated, “The SLO program changed my high school life forever and I'll never forget that. If there's a kid like me in Grade 8 who doesn't know what to do who can't talk to an SLO because the program was dismantled, that kid would be lost. That would've been me, if not for the SLO program.”²⁵²

The authors note that, overall, students were indifferent to the program, however a few either expressed a strong desire to retain the program or a strong desire to have the program removed from Vancouver area schools.

One-on-one consultations with 31 school staff, community members and Vancouver police also produced mixed results. While most police and school officials expressed strong interest in seeing the program continue, a number of officials expressed concerns over potential racial bias and how policing impacts feelings of safety among racialized students.

Members of the community, however, felt very strongly about ending the program. Many felt the program was a reflection of institutional racism and maintained historical systems of oppression. To illustrate, a community member expressed that the “RCMP were used in the past to enforce residential schools; this is a longstanding history that has led to distrust and fear.”²⁵³ Thus, for some, police in schools are unwanted and “not a response that was asked for by the community in our jurisdiction. It's been around for decades, was started by a cop, was never about responding to parents coming forward asking for [support] in identifying issues to be addressed in schools.”²⁵⁴

The review also included a survey that was open to VSB students, parents, school staff and community members. The survey produced a racially diverse sample where four per cent self-identified as Indigenous, four per cent as Black, 47 per cent as a person of colour (Asian, East Asian, South Asian, Middle Eastern, and Hispanic) and

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 15.

²⁵¹ Ibid, 16.

²⁵² Ibid, 16.

²⁵³ Ibid, 19.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 19.

33 per cent as white. An additional 26 per cent did not answer the race question or identified themselves as “other.”

Interestingly, 41 per cent of student respondents reported not being familiar with the SLO program, which calls into question how involved some SLOs are with their student population. The lack of connection between the SLOs and the students they work with could undermine the program’s goal to develop a positive relationship between students and the police. Of those who were familiar with the program, many students reported positive perceptions of the program, including feelings of safety, building community relationships and access to supports for students. To illustrate, a student stated they “personally feel more safe. I love knowing that there’s a liaison officer that I can talk to and share anything. It was always a positive experience. I just felt more safe.”²⁵⁵ Another expressed the importance of the program as “vital to the building of trust and a positive relationship between communities and the police. SLOs have a positive impact and provide volunteer hours through coaching or various programs that have a great impact on schools.”²⁵⁶

However, there were also students who expressed concerns over safety and systemic biases. For instance, one student expressed the SLO “makes me feel more scared than protected. It makes me feel like the school is saying the kids are dangerous, when I know they aren’t. It feels like I am being criminalized for something I didn’t do. I would say these experiences are negative.”²⁵⁷ For some racialized students, seeing police creates a feeling of unease. As noted by one participant, “As a black student, when the first thing I see when I walk into school in the morning is an armed police officer, it automatically gives me the message that “you aren’t really welcome.”²⁵⁸ The survey results suggest Black students are more likely than Indigenous students to express perceptions of discomfort and feeling “unsafe” in the presence of their SLO.

The authors note that not all Indigenous or racialized participants express negative perceptions of the program. Some Indigenous students expressed feeling safer in the presence of their SLO and most other students of colour expressed general positive feelings about the program. They stressed that the presence of the SLO increases perceptions of safety, encourages friendly encounters with the police and a contributes to the general belief that SLOs have a positive impact on their school community.

Overall, most expressed interest in keeping the program. However, Black students were more likely to suggest an end to the program. By contrast, most Indigenous and students of colour suggested keeping the program with minor changes. These changes include a removal of the police officer’s firearm and uniform, increased respectful engagement and more sports programs.

²⁵⁵ Ibid, 26.

²⁵⁶ Ibid, 26.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, 26.

²⁵⁸ Ibid, 26.

The authors did not provide a final recommendation but highlight the diversity in responses which include both positive and negative perceptions of the SLO program. They highlight that there continues to be a lack of familiarity with the program and equate this to expressions of indifference and uncertainty when it came to exploring participants feelings about next steps. The authors do highlight that both Black and Indigenous students are more likely to report negative perceptions of the program and equate their experiences to a historic cycle of systemic oppression. Other students of colour, however, expressed positive perceptions of the program, and expressed a “personal connection to SLOs with whom they related—i.e., being from the same ethnocultural background.”²⁵⁹

As with other SLO program evaluations, Argyle’s evaluation suffers from some methodological flaws. As the evaluation set to “gather feedback on the experiences and impacts of the SLO program,” the short study period (two weeks to complete the online survey) likely impeded a collection of insights from more members of the racialized community (as was expressed in a number of written submissions from community members). Furthermore, as the survey was only available on the internet, it could have excluded students, parents and community members with little or no access to a computer. Understandably, during the COVID-19 pandemic, online interaction would have been the preferred, and perhaps safest, method for survey administration. However, the authors must acknowledge, that some of the most marginalized voices will continue to be excluded from the evaluation. However, the report took an important step in explicitly highlighting the voices of Black, Indigenous and other persons of colour, which had not been done in previous Canadian SLO evaluations.

The Vancouver evaluation aftermath

After a release of the report in March, the VSB as well as the New Westminster School Board voted to end their SLO program over concerns about the potential negative impacts on the racialized and LGBTQ2S+ student population.²⁶⁰ However, iterations of “police in school” programs remains in other British Columbia school boards, including the Burnaby School District²⁶¹ and Delta School District.²⁶²

Summary

American research suggests that SLO programs may lead to more school-based arrests and thus the criminalization of youth.²⁶³ Some research suggests that Black and other racialized youth and youth who identify as having a disability are more

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 44.

²⁶⁰ Aspiri, “New Westminster school board ends police liaison program.”

²⁶¹ Cornelia Naylor. “Burnaby school board making no sudden moves on police in schools,” *Burnaby Now*, April 28, 2021. <https://www.burnabynow.com/local-news/burnaby-school-board-making-no-sudden-moves-on-police-in-schools-3674263>.

²⁶² Sandor Gyarmati. “Delta School District, Police comment on liaison program,” *Delta Optimist*, May 11, 2021. <https://www.delta-optimist.com/local-news/delta-school-district-police-comment-on-liaison-program-3766533>

²⁶³ Gottfredson et al., “Effects of school resource officers on school crime.”

negatively impacted by SLO arrest activity than their White counterparts and those who do not identify as having a disability. Unfortunately, there is no Canadian research that examines the impact of SLOs on the number of school-based arrests or charges for these vulnerable populations. Furthermore, there is no substantive data to suggest that SLO programs increase students' perceptions of school safety. Most students feel safe at school with or without the presence of an SLO officer. However, there is some evidence that school staff feel safer when there is an SLO at their school. Similarly, many parents feel that their children are safer when an SLO program has been implemented.

Canadian studies have been few and far between. The studies that have been conducted have been limited to small, non-random samples or have other methodological limitations. Nonetheless, some Canadian studies suggest that SLO programs are popular among many students, parents and school staff. However, limited research suggests that Black, Indigenous and other racialized students and parents are far less enthusiastic about SLO programs than their white counterparts. Many fear that biased police practices will extend from the street to the school but unfortunately most Canadian studies, especially those led by the police themselves, have avoided the "race question" and silenced the concerns of minority communities, allowing for little insight into their experiences.

Future research must employ high quality evaluation strategies to determine the effectiveness—and possible negative impacts—of SLO programs. Studies should employ a pre-test/post-test control group design to isolate the impact of SLOs from other school, police and community factors. This is the only way we will be able to draw strong conclusions with respect to program attribution.

Based on concerns raised by racialized community members, it is clear that some students, parents and community members are highly uncomfortable with police in schools. These stakeholders often fear that SLOs will contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline and further impede the life chances of marginalized students. Although some may favour SLO programs, schools are supposed to support and nourish all students. Thus, even if a small minority of the population demands the removal of police from schools, this is sufficient to support the disbanding of SLO programs in Canadian schools.

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5. [SPLO Agendas, Minutes, Correspondance, Presentation](#)

6. [SPLO Additional Documents](#)