

MEMO

Date: May 13, 2024

To: Superintendent Michael Tolley

From: Principal Juan Price and Heather Miller, Assistant Regional Superintendent

Subject: 2024 School Resource Program Officer Program Review and Recommendations, Bothell High School

Background

2019-20 legislation (House Bill 1216) outlined requirements and definitions around School Resource Officer programs in Washington State schools. In 2020-21, this legislation was expanded to include any campus safety personnel. Districts with School Safety and Security Staff Programs are required to 1) ensure common training, 2) annually review their SRO programs, and 3) adopt an annual agreement, if applicable, with the law enforcement agency or a security guard company providing safety and security services. The agreement must be adopted using a process that involves parents, students, and community members. The only school in Northshore to currently host an SRO program is Bothell High School (BHS). The contract is managed by the Bothell Police Department and all interlocal agreements must be approved by the Northshore School Board.

The attached SRO Program Review Report and monthly incident reports (September 2023 - April 2024) reflect the data gathered during the required program review. Below is a summary of the engagement findings, summary of SRO interactions during the 2023-24 school year, and recommendations to the Superintendent for school year 2024-25.

School Resource Officer Program Review Engagement and Findings

Northshore used the program review as an opportunity to gather community feedback about the SRO program. Engagement was conducted through two vehicles - a BHS community survey and Town Hall.

SURVEY

The survey was distributed to BHS students, parents, and staff about the SRO program and the current SRO. The survey solicited community beliefs about the influence of an SRO program on student safety and the educational climate. The survey also solicited community beliefs about the current BHS SRO. The anonymous survey was administered to staff and families from April 5 to April 26, 2024. The anonymous student survey was administered on April 18, 25, and 26 during school in an effort to reduce barriers to participation and support a strong response rate. The survey was also human translated into Spanish and distributed by the school's Family Engagement Specialist directly to Latino/Hispanic families. The response rate was strong, with close to 600 parents and staff responding and close to 800 students responding - just under 50% of the student population and across student demographics.

TOWN HALL

In addition to the survey, a Town Hall was hosted on May 2, 2024. Approximately fifty parents, staff, and students attended the meeting. The stated purpose of the meeting was to:

- Share requirements related to hosting a School Resource Officer (SRO) program
- Ensure common knowledge about the Bothell Police Department SRO program
- Provide an opportunity for the community to provide public comment and ask questions
- Gather qualitative feedback from the community to inform the required program review

Participants had the opportunity to share anonymous feedback about any benefits or concerns associated with the SRO program, but also share comments verbally with Northshore leadership and the Bothell Police Department.

FINDINGS

- **Students, parents, and faculty members reported strong support for the SRO program and for the current SRO via the survey items.**
 - The obtained results suggest that parents and staff members have more polarized beliefs about the SRO program and current SRO than do students, although support for the SRO program and current SRO was consistently high. Students were more likely to provide neutral responses or more moderate levels of positive endorsement than were parents and staff members.

Given the general support for the SRO program and the current SRO, the analysis strategy turned toward examining whether specific student groups might experience heightened levels of discomfort regarding the SRO program. The analysis strategy involved a series of cross-tabulations to examine whether students with different genders, ethnicities, primary home languages, and service needs reported notably different levels of support for the SRO program or the current SRO.

- **Students also expressed positive responses across ethnicity, gender, home language, and services.**
 - The obtained results provide some suggestion that students identifying their gender as “other” and students who did not provide a response for gender exhibited slightly less positive responses than did females and males, but the small sample sizes prohibit strong conclusions.
 - The elevated percentage of strong disagreement about the SRO program promoting student safety among students identifying as Black or African American is based on two participant responses. The smaller size of the BHS student population identifying as Black or African American combined with positive sentiment about the SRO program makes this statistic highly variable.

The typed, open-ended responses provided during the Town Hall about the SRO program were consistently positive.

- All 50 sets of responses indicated support for the SRO program and the current SRO.
 - The main professed benefits included student safety and the relationships the current SRO builds with students.
 - The typed responses to the question about concerns indicated overwhelmingly that there were no concerns about the existing SRO program other than the program possibly being removed. One respondent acknowledged the cost associated with the program and expressed that the SRO program was worth the cost. Other concerns included the amount of capacity (i.e., time, resource) going into the SRO program review.

Responses about what else Northshore needs to know to sustain the SRO program reiterated the positive sentiment already provided in the public comments and the responses to the other open-ended items.

MONTHLY INCIDENT REPORT ANALYSIS

Per the City of Bothell contract and on a monthly basis the SRO produces a report outlining student engagement. This is an internal interaction report but is included in the program review as it is descriptive of the program services.

FINDINGS

SRO activities highlighted in the attached reports indicate a high level of supportive interactions between the SRO, students, and staff. During the 2023-24 school year, the SRO program and or SRO haven't resulted in any Bothell students being arrested on campus.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPERINTENDENT TOLLEY FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2024-25

In light of the positive student, parent, and staff response to the SRO program and current SRO, **it is recommended that the program continue for 2024-25 and a contract executed in support with the City of Bothell.**

Additional recommendations to consider:

- Clarify the role of a School Resource Officer by developing a joint job description between the Bothell Police Department and Northshore School District. Currently the job is only described in an internal job announcement document and the City of Bothell and District SRO contract.
- Publish a description of the SRO Program on the Bothell Police Department website including contact information and how to share a concern or any other feedback about the SRO program. Distribute SRO Program information with the Bothell High School community on an annual basis through a variety of communication channels.
- Determine how to make the SRO program review sustainable for future years and provide some level of stability and commitment for Bothell High School.
- Create an agreed upon job selection process, that includes students, staff, and families, if for some reason the current SRO leaves the position. The process would be developed in collaboration between the City of Bothell and the Northshore School District.