

Northshore School District SRO Program Annual Review Report 6 May 2024

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1. Purpose

Northshore School District must review its School Resource Officer (SRO) Program annually to maintain compliance with Washington State law and with Northshore's contract with the City of Bothell. Northshore used the program review as an opportunity to gather community feedback about the SRO program. At present, Bothell High School (BHS) is the only Northshore school with an SRO.

This report reviews the results of a survey that 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. This report also reviews the feedback provided via a town hall meeting about the BHS SRO program.

2. Survey Description

Students

One version of the survey was distributed to BHS students. Students received an email explaining the need to solicit their perspectives about the SRO program. The email explained that the students would have three days on which they could complete the survey: April 18, 25, and 2. On those days, the survey was opened at 7 a.m. and closed at 5 p.m. Students were also provided time during Cougar Cast on those days to complete the survey.

The survey asked students to indicate (a) whether they attended BHS, (b) their home zip code, (c) their grade level, (d) their gender, (e) their ethnicity, (f) their primary home language, and (g) any educational services in which they are enrolled. Home zip code was included to examine who was responding to the survey; no student responses were excluded based on home zip codes.

The survey included two items about the SRO program generally: *The SRO program at Bothell High School promotes student safety; The SRO program at Bothell High School improves the educational climate.* Potential responses were 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Somewhat Disagree, 4 – Neither Disagree nor Agree, 5 – Somewhat Agree, 6 – Agree, and 7 – Strongly Agree.

The survey included three items about the current SRO: *Bothell High School's current School Resource Officer provides useful classroom demonstrations, lessons, and or guest speaking in the service of education; Bothell High School's current School Resource Officer is an informal counselor to students; Bothell High School's current School Resource Officer is a positive role model.* Potential responses were 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Somewhat Disagree, 4 – Neither Disagree nor Agree, 5 – Somewhat Agree, 6 – Agree, 7 – Strongly Agree, and X – Not Enough Information to Respond. The “not enough information to respond” option was included to examine the possibility that respondents were unaware of SRO activity in the corresponding areas.

Parents and Staff

A similar version of the survey was distributed to BHS parents and staff. Parents and staff received a message via ParentSquare (sent April 5, 2024) that provided an overview of the need to solicit their perspectives regarding the SRO program. The message invited them to participate in the survey. Additionally, the survey was human translated into Spanish and the school's Family Engagement Specialist sent the survey directly to Spanish speaking families along with a reminder to complete it. Parents and staff received additional communications reminding them of the opportunity to complete the survey throughout the survey window.

Participants could be both BHS parents and staff members. Accordingly, the survey asked participants to indicate whether they were responding as a parent or staff member. Participants responding as parents were then asked to indicate (a) whether they currently had students enrolled at BHS, (b) their home zip code, (c) grades in which their children are enrolled, (d) their gender, (e) their ethnicity, (f) their home language, (g) whether they have more than one student at BHS, (h) their students' genders (up to three students), (i) their students' ethnicities, and (j) services in which their students are enrolled. Home zip code was included to examine who was responding to the survey; no parent responses were excluded based on home zip codes. Participants responding as staff members were asked to indicate (a) whether they currently work at BHS, (b) their gender, (c) their ethnicity, and (d) their home language.

These demographic items were followed by the same two items about the SRO program and the same three items about the current SRO that were provided to students.

3. Survey Results

Description of Respondents

Two students were omitted from analyses because they reported that they did not attend BHS. The remaining 786 students had the following demographic characteristics: Grade level (9 = 30.8%; 10 = 31.9%; 11 = 20.4%, 12 = 16.9%); Gender (Female = 46.1%; Male = 48.9%; Other = 1.7%; Prefer Not To Respond = 3.4%); Ethnicity (American Indian or Alaska Native = 0.4%; Asian = 15.5%; Black or African American = 3.9%; Hispanic or Latino = 9.7%; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander = 1.0%; White = 53.7%; Two or More = 12.5%; Prefer Not To

Respond = 3.3%); Primary Home Language (English = 79.1%; Spanish = 5.2%; all other languages represented less than 2.0% of the sample); Services (504 = 8.8%; 84.7% percent of respondents indicated none of the above services, being unsure, or both). As of May 1, 2023, BHS had 1,739 officially registered students making the estimated student response rate 45.2%.

Two parents were omitted from analyses because they reported not having a child who attended BHS. The remaining 447 parents had the following demographic characteristics: Gender (Female = 62.0%; Male = 29.8%; Other = 0.9%; Prefer Not To Respond = 6.3%, Missing = 1.1%); Ethnicity (American Indian or Alaska Native = 0.7%; Asian = 6.7%; Black or African American = 2.7%; Hispanic or Latino = 6.3%; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander = 0.4%; White = 56.6%; Two or More = 6.3%; Prefer Not To Respond = 19.9%); Primary Home Language (English = 88.4%; Spanish = 4.3%; all other languages represented less than 1.5% of the sample); Services (504 = 12.8%; 68.0% percent of respondents indicated none of the above services, being unsure, or both).

Three staff members were omitted because they reported that they did not currently work at BHS. The remaining 133 staff members had the following demographic characteristics: Gender (Female = 60.9%; Male = 27.1%; Other = 0.0%; Prefer Not To Respond = 9.8%, Missing = 2.3%); Ethnicity (American Indian or Alaska Native = 0.8%; Asian = 3.8%; Black or African American = 0.8%; Hispanic or Latino = 2.3%; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander = 3.0%; White = 63.2%; Two or More = 4.5%; Prefer Not To Respond = 18.8%); Primary Home Language (English = 92.5%; all other languages represented less than 1.0% of the sample).

Perceptions of the SRO Program

Table 1 shows the frequency of responses to the five SRO items for students, parents, and staff members. **Students, parents, and faculty members reported strong support for the SRO program and for the current SRO.** The obtained results suggest that parents and staff members have more polarized beliefs about the SRO program and current SRO than do students. Students were more likely to provide neutral responses or more moderate levels of positive endorsement than were parents and staff members.

Table 1: Frequency of Responses for Each Item								
Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Enough Info.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Students (N = 786)								
Program-Safety	1.7%	0.5%	1.8%	8.5%	8.9%	27.5%	51.1%	----
Program-Climate	1.9%	1.7%	2.3%	15.5%	13.2%	24.4%	41.0%	----
SRO-Education	2.4%	3.2%	2.3%	11.5%	10.9%	18.4%	34.6%	16.7%
SRO-Counselor	1.9%	0.8%	2.4%	7.5%	9.5%	23.5%	44.9%	9.4%
SRO-Role Model	1.7%	0.3%	0.6%	5.1%	4.2%	17.8%	66.8%	3.6%
Parents (N = 447)								
Program-Safety	3.1%	1.6%	0.0%	3.1%	3.1%	12.5%	76.5%	----
Program-Climate	3.6%	0.9%	0.7%	4.5%	4.7%	18.3%	67.3%	----
SRO-Education	1.8%	0.9%	0.2%	3.4%	2.5%	14.8%	49.0%	27.5%
SRO-Counselor	2.5%	1.3%	0.4%	2.5%	3.1%	19.5%	60.9%	9.8%
SRO-Role Model	2.2%	0.7%	0.2%	0.9%	1.8%	9.2%	79.9%	5.1%
Staff (N = 133)								
Program-Safety	3.8%	1.5%	0.0%	3.0%	3.8%	10.5%	77.4%	----
Program-Climate	5.3%	2.3%	1.5%	3.0%	3.0%	9.8%	75.2%	----
SRO-Education	3.0%	2.3%	1.5%	3.8%	4.5%	15.0%	61.7%	8.3%
SRO-Counselor	2.3%	0.8%	0.0%	3.0%	2.3%	15.0%	73.7%	3.0%
SRO-Role Model	1.5%	1.5%	0.0%	2.3%	3.8%	6.0%	85.0%	0.0%

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 focused on whether the presence of an SRO makes students feel safer given the centrality of this issue to discussions about whether schools should have SROs. The analysis strategy also focused on whether the current SRO serves as a role model because any anxieties students might have about the current SRO would likely be exhibited on this item. 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. It is important for the reader to remember that only one or two respondents can influence percentages notably when the overall number of responses is quite small.

Table 2 shows the response frequencies to the two items as a function of gender. Table 2 shows positive responses across students with different forms of gender identification. 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 these differences could reflect random error associated with smaller sample sizes.

Table 2: Frequency of Responses to Key Items by Gender									
<u>Gender</u>	<u>Row</u> <u>N</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Disagree</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Neither</u> <u>Disagree</u> <u>nor</u> <u>Agree</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Agree</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Agree</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Not</u> <u>Enough</u> <u>Info.</u> <u>%</u>
SRO program promotes student safety									
Female	362	0.8%	0.0%	1.4%	5.0%	10.2%	28.5%	54.1%	-----
Male	384	2.3%	0.8%	1.8%	11.2%	7.3%	25.5%	51.0%	-----
Other	13	0.0%	7.7%	7.7%	15.4%	7.7%	23.1%	38.5%	-----
No Response	27	3.7%	0.0%	3.7%	14.8%	14.8%	44.4%	18.5%	-----
Current SRO is a positive role model									
Female	362	1.7%	0.3%	0.3%	3.6%	3.6%	16.9%	71.0%	2.8%
Male	384	1.3%	0.3%	1.0%	5.7%	3.6%	17.4%	66.4%	4.2%
Other	13	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	7.7%	15.4%	46.2%	7.7%
No Response	27	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	18.5%	37.0%	25.9%	3.7%

Table 3 shows the response frequencies to the two items as a function of ethnicity. Table 3 shows positive responses across students with differing ethnicity identification. 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 student population identifying as Black or African American combined with positive sentiment about the SRO program makes this statistic highly variable.

Table 3: Frequency of Responses to Key Items by Ethnicity									
Ethnicity	Row N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Enough Info.
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
SRO program promotes student safety									
Am. Indian-AK	3	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Asian	122	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	8.2%	15.6%	36.1%	37.7%	-----
Black	31	6.5%	0.0%	3.2%	6.5%	9.7%	19.4%	54.8%	-----
Hispanic-Lat.	76	0.0%	1.3%	1.3%	11.8%	9.2%	23.7%	52.6%	-----
HA-Pacific Is.	8	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
White	422	2.1%	0.5%	2.4%	8.3%	7.6%	26.1%	53.1%	-----
Two or More	98	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	6.1%	31.6%	54.1%	-----
No Response	26	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	11.5%	7.7%	23.1%	53.8%	-----
Current SRO is a positive role model									
Am. Indian-AK	3	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Asian	122	0.8%	0.0%	1.6%	8.2%	7.4%	21.3%	55.7%	4.9%
Black	31	3.2%	0.0%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%	19.4%	64.5%	3.2%
Hispanic-Lat.	76	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	5.3%	2.6%	15.8%	68.4%	3.9%
HA-Pacific Is.	8	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
White	422	2.4%	0.2%	0.0%	4.5%	4.3%	17.5%	68.5%	2.6%
Two or More	98	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.1%	0.0%	18.4%	73.5%	3.1%
No Response	26	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	11.5%	7.7%	61.5%	15.4%

Table 4 shows the response frequencies to the two items as a function of primary home language. Primary home language was aggregated into three groups because most languages were represented insufficiently to be examined alone. Table 4 shows positive responses across students with differing primary home languages.

Table 4: Frequency of Responses to Key Items by Primary Language									
Ethnicity	Row N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Enough Info.
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
SRO program promotes student safety									
English	622	1.9%	0.6%	1.6%	7.4%	8.2%	26.4%	53.9%	-----
Spanish	41	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	17.1%	7.3%	31.7%	41.5%	-----
Other	123	0.8%	0.0%	2.4%	11.4%	13.0%	31.7%	40.7%	-----
Current SRO is a positive role model									
English	622	1.9%	0.2%	0.6%	5.0%	3.7%	16.6%	69.1%	2.9%
Spanish	41	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	2.4%	2.4%	24.4%	63.4%	4.9%
Other	123	0.8%	0.0%	0.8%	6.5%	7.3%	22.0%	56.1%	6.5%

Table 5 shows the response frequencies to the two items as a function of specific student services. Table 5 shows positive responses across all levels of specific student services. Again, the reader should remain mindful of the small sample sizes that allow one response to generate greater-than-normal levels of “strongly disagree” percentages.

Table 5: Frequency of Responses to Key Items by Specific Services									
Ethnicity	Row N	Strongly	Disagree	Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat	Agree	Strongly	Not
		Disagree	%	Disagree	%	Disagree	nor	Agree	Agree
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	Info.
									%
SRO program promotes student safety									
504 Only	69	1.4%	0.0%	2.9%	8.7%	10.1%	20.3%	56.5%	-----
ELD Only	12	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	41.7%	-----
Sp. Ed. Only	17	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	35.3%	58.8%	-----
None	561	0.7%	0.5%	1.6%	7.0%	8.4%	28.2%	53.7%	-----
Current SRO is a positive role model									
504 Only	69	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	1.4%	15.9%	72.5%	5.8%
ELD Only	12	8.3%	8.3%	0.0%	8.3%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	8.3%
Sp. Ed. Only	17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.6%	76.5%	5.9%
None	561	1.1%	0.2%	0.4%	5.3%	4.6%	16.8%	69.3%	2.3%

4. Town Hall Description and Results

The BHS community was invited to participate in a town hall about the SRO program. The town hall took place in the BHS gymnasium on May 2, 2024, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The town hall was hosted by the Northshore Communications and Engagement Department. In attendance were Superintendent Tolley, Principal Price, School Board Directors Cast and Tran, Bothell Police Department (BPD) Captain Mike Johnson, Officer Ware, and 50 to 60 community members.

The town hall was introduced by the Executive Director of Communications Carri Campbell. Campbell reiterated the need to engage in program review to meet state requirements and the local agreement with the City of Bothell. Captain Mike Johnson provided an overview of the SRO program and history at BHS, values of the BPD, SRO role and goals, and SRO program benefits to BHS. The audience was encouraged to share publicly their perspectives about the SRO program. Ten community members shared comments. Principal Price made concluding comments near 7:30 p.m. Audience members were encouraged to submit additional feedback via an anonymous survey accessed through a QR code before leaving.

Northshore obtained 50 responses to the brief survey. The survey asked if respondents if they were a Bothell parent, student, or staff member (Yes = 49, No = 1). This item was followed by three open-ended items: *What benefit, if any, do you see associated with the current SRO program?*; *And what concerns, if any, do you have?*; *What else would you like us to know?* Responses to each open-ended question were limited to 100 words.

The 10 publicly shared comments were uniformly supportive of the SRO program. The reported benefits included safety, positive relationships with the current SRO, the current SRO having a positive influence on students' lives, the current SRO not being a police officer that is on campus but an integrated member of the BHS community, and an observation that students from marginalized communities felt comfortable speaking to the current SRO. Some responses referred to the majority of the BHS community wanting an SRO. One BHS community member identified as Hispanic or Latino stated that some people believe that the Hispanic or Latino community does not want an SRO and that this claim is not accurate. This commenter was supported by a BHS parent interpreter.

The typed, open-ended responses about the benefits of an SRO program were consistently positive. All 50 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. One respondent noted an additional concern, but the intent of the concern was not clear. 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 reiterated the positive sentiment already provided in the public comments and the responses to the other open-ended items.

5. Summary

A few comments expressed during the town hall meeting indicated that some members of the BHS community find the review of the BHS program tiresome. This report will hopefully address those concerns by providing the methodological reasoning behind the survey and the town hall meeting.

The town hall sentiment about the BHS community having addressed the SRO issue before is clearly accurate. Previously obtained feedback showed strong support among BHS community members for the SRO program. Every form of assessment, however, contains certain strengths and weaknesses. When people agree with assessment results, they might be too quick to accept those results as representing some sort of definitive truth. When people do not agree with results, they are more likely to criticize the evaluation methodology and use those criticisms to question the value of the obtained results. Criticizing research design is entirely appropriate and expected.

An important lingering issue in the evaluation of the BHS SRO program is whether some members of the BHS community feel uncomfortable with the SRO program, the current SRO, or both. This is not to say that the minority should or should not overrule the majority. The point is only that Northshore benefits from understanding whether some members of the BHS community feel uncomfortable about the SRO program.

Obtaining trustworthy evidence about SRO-related anxiety is not easy. In the spirit of building understanding across different perspectives, it seems fair to recognize that the vocal, public BHS support for the SRO program could make it difficult for BHS community members to

share strong reservations about the SRO program. This might be especially true for students who worry about peer acceptance and staff members who worry about coworker acceptance. This anxiety about going against the norm might feel unfair to pro-SRO BHS community members who are prepared to discuss differences of opinion around the SRO program respectfully, but anxieties about going against the norm are well-established in psychological and sociological research.

The remedy to this problem is to design an assessment that provides results with enough reliability to allow Northshore and the BHS community to move forward with a better understanding around this issue. To that end, Northshore used the program review as an opportunity to delve deeply into potential SRO-related concerns in a manner that had not been achieved to date. It is important to understand that a single, strong research methodology is often more informative than several studies with weaker forms of research design. Accordingly, Northshore placed considerable effort into this evaluation design. Northshore made an anonymous survey as easy to complete as Northshore and BHS could reasonably achieve in the hopes of generating a sufficiently strong response rate.

The survey was in this respect a success. In particular, the student participation was strong enough to demonstrate that BHS students strongly support the SRO program across various student groups. It remains possible, of course, that students who did not respond to the survey could have greater levels of anti-SRO sentiment. It is important for Northshore and the BHS community to remain sensitive to this possibility. That said, the perspectives of students who did not respond to the survey is speculative. Furthermore, it is conceivable that many of the students who chose not to participate did so because they are tired of completing surveys.

Under the presumption that the SRO program continues at BHS, the survey results and town hall feedback continue to be informative. First, Northshore and the BHS community should not fall into the easy psychological trap of mistaking strong agreement for complete agreement. A small subset of respondents did express disagreement about the benefits of the SRO program and current SRO. The diversity of thought that the BHS community has about the SRO program is ultimately an advantage in that it safeguards against reckless courses of action in either direction. Northshore and BHS should continue cultivating a respectful, open-door policy about any concerns community members might have related to SROs. Captain Mike Johnson likewise explained that any SRO-related concerns can be shared with the BPD directly.

Second, the town hall feedback suggests that the BHS community and Northshore might need to come to a clearer understanding about evaluating the SRO program in the future. On top of the legal requirements to conduct SRO program reviews, it makes sense for Northshore to evaluate the SRO program because it is an important part of the BHS educational experience (as the BHS community notes). While evaluation can generate concern about negative repercussions, evaluation also provides an opportunity to demonstrate Northshore success. For example, Northshore educators are evaluated routinely, and this evaluation is generally viewed as a sensible part of program improvement, not as an agenda to try to rid Northshore of educators. Presuming that the SRO program continues, Northshore must develop a long-term assessment plan that balances meeting legal and contractual obligations, the internal benefits of program evaluation, and the costs associated with conducting evaluation. Clarity around this

process might help the BHS community view SRO program evaluation as a normal organizational process and beneficial to students, families, and staff.