

Poudre School District Community Advisory Council

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

PRESENTED BY THE CIVIC CANOPY
APRIL 2021



Table of Contents

Introduction	2
The Charge of the CAC and Overview of Recommendations	2
Current State	3
Overview	3
School to Prison Pipeline	4
School Discipline	4
Policing in Schools	5
Safety in Schools	7
Evidence of Safety - Zero Tolerance Policies	7
Evidence of Safety - Policing in Schools	7
State of Behavioral Health	8
Ideal State: Elements of Safety	9
Supportive School Culture	10
Direct Prevention	10
Preparedness and Response	10
Recovery and Accountability	10
Evaluating SRO Roles and Responsibilities	10
Principles to Inform the Use of Law Enforcement in Schools	13
Recommendations	14
Law Enforcement in PSD Schools	14
Places Where Law Enforcement Should NOT Play a Role In PSD School	15
Rationale	15
Implementation	19
Majority Opinion on Implementation:	19
Dissenting Opinion on Implementation:	20
Appendices	21
Community Engagement	21
CAC Members	23
Meeting Schedule and Charge	24
Group Norms	24
Concerns about Scope and Process	25
Additional Considerations	26
Review of SRO Data	27
Interview Summary/Discovery Report	29

INTRODUCTION

In spring of 2020, members of PSD communities expressed concerns about the presence of school resource officers in PSD schools and their impact on some students, particularly BIPOC, undocumented, and LGBTQIA+ students. The PSD Board of Education directed the district to conduct a comprehensive review of the issue. A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was established to conduct this review and share its recommendations with the PSD Board of Education. The fifteen members of the CAC included students, community members, and district staff who reflect the broad diversity of the Poudre District was launched in fall 2020 and then met 11 times from January through April in virtual sessions to fashion a shared vision of safety within PSD schools, evaluate the current realities of having SROs placed in schools, and make recommendations around any changes they felt were needed in the SRO program to better achieve that vision of safety. What follows is a report of those recommendations.

While the specific recommendations contained in this report reflect the exact wording the CAC reached agreement on, the larger report is written from the vantage point of The Civic Canopy facilitation team as part of our contracted role to serve as facilitators for the CAC's efforts. Every attempt has been made to facilitate and capture the process fairly and faithfully, but we acknowledge there is no objective way to synthesize so many divergent and passionate viewpoints and that our facilitation and framing will fall short of how any one CAC member might have wanted the process to unfold and its story told. In the end, we hope any shortcomings are overcome by the remarkable amount of common ground the CAC was able to achieve on one of the most polarizing discussions in our society, and that their recommendations will provide sound guidance to the School Board for determining law enforcement's proper role in the Poudre School District.

The Charge of the CAC and Overview of Recommendations

The CAC began meeting in the Fall of 2020, with what many understood to be a broad and comprehensive charge of exploring a vision of school safety broadly defined, including a focus on dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline in PSD. When The Civic Canopy was brought on board to take over the design and facilitation of the process in January, we believed that the group's desire to develop a comprehensive plan for school safety and discipline in the district would not be possible given the scope of such an undertaking, the practical requirement of making concrete recommendations regarding what to do about the SRO program in the Poudre School District, and the limitations of the timeline requiring those recommendations to be submitted by April. In an attempt to honor the intent of the former, while still accomplishing the latter, we adjusted the process to develop at least a vision

statement suggesting what comprehensive safety in schools should look like and then use that vision to review the current state of the SRO program. While this adjustment to scope remained disappointing to a number of CAC members (see [Concerns about the Process and Scope](#)), it did allow the CAC to develop both a vision for safety and make substantive recommendations regarding the SRO program in Poudre Schools.

The following recommendations include four key elements:

- A vision for school safety within PSD that includes the four dimensions of Supportive School Culture, Direct Prevention, Preparedness and Response, and Recovery and accountability
- A set of principles the district should use as it makes decisions about when and how to involve law enforcement officers in schools
- A list of current roles played by SROs that the CAC believes should no longer be played by law enforcement officers in schools, and guidance on how those roles can best be fulfilled by other staff and outside professionals
- A list of roles the CAC believes law enforcement should play in schools in accordance with the principles outlined above

All of the above recommendations were supported by the full CAC using a “Fist to 5” consensus model, where a 0 or “fist” vote meant the member did not consent to support the recommendation, and a vote of 1-5 showed increasing levels of support. Each of these recommendations was approved with the agreement of the full group to support them, even if they might have had some reservations.

The final question addressed by the CAC relates to implementation of these recommendations. Eleven of the CAC members believe the PSD SRO model needs to shift to more of a response model where law enforcement is not embedded on-campus. Four members did not agree with this proposal, offering a brief rationale for their dissent, but agreed to include the recorded vote as part of the full report for the Board to consider.

CURRENT STATE

Overview

The broader context that led to the CAC’s work begins with a concern for overall student well-being, not just the specific issues related to a narrow definition of school safety. Students face a host of challenges to be able to fully engage in their education. A few of these directly associated with CAC conversations include:

- **Emergencies:** In emergencies, law enforcement response time is critical. Seconds can matter. Emergencies as well as emergency preparedness cause stress and anxiety in many students.
- **Behavioral Health:** In the case of behavioral health concerns, sufficient resources and capacity is not available to meet student needs and students are left with insufficient supports.
- **School to Prison Pipeline:** There is concern based on a growing body of evidence that the persistent presence of law enforcement in the school environment and the current practices around student discipline contributes to the school to prison pipeline, especially for BIPOC students. Both discipline and interactions with law enforcement take students away from school, leading to lack of engagement, higher dropout rates, and potentially higher incarceration rates.
- **Educational Engagement:** The persistent presence of law enforcement negatively impacts the ability for some students to fully engage in their education and feel safe at school.

The summary of the literature cited below seeks to provide clarity on the research of the School to Prison Pipeline, safety, and the state of behavioral health.

School to Prison Pipeline

Incarceration of young people has gone down over the last couple decades along with arrest rates in general. At the same time, Colorado and the nation continue to incarcerate the BIPOC community at higher rates.

Members of the CAC are deeply concerned about the school to prison pipeline, which can be defined as “a social phenomenon where students become formally involved with the criminal justice system as a result of school policies that use law enforcement, rather than discipline, to address behavioral problems” ([Owens, 2016, p.1](#)).

The literature suggests that there are two primary ways in which schools contribute to the involvement of young people in the criminal justice system: School Discipline and Policing in Schools.

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

First, school discipline measures, especially those associated with suspension and expulsion, lead to decreased engagement and higher dropout rates. These are associated with higher incarceration rates. Nationwide, there are deep racial and ethnic disparities in school discipline, as summarized in [The School-to-Prison Pipeline](#) by King, Rusoja, and Peguero

(2018). The authors indicate that “scholars have found that Black/African American students are at least three times more likely to be suspended, and are at least 3.5 times more likely to be expelled than White students, while Black girls are at least six times more likely to be suspended than White girls.” They also point out that “nascent research on the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) populations shows that these students are up to three times more likely to experience school punishment than those who do not identify as such.”

While school discipline was not a focus of the CAC, PSD has disproportionate rates of school discipline for students of color and those from low income households (those students with free or reduced lunch). For the 2018/19 and 2017/18 school years, Black and Latino/a students were each about twice as likely to be disciplined as the average student. This is a trend that was seen with suspensions and expulsions with services. There does appear to be more variability in some of the more extreme forms of discipline: expulsion without services and referrals to law enforcement. For instance, in the 2018/19 school year, the latest for which CAC was provided data, Black students were more than 6 times as likely to be expelled without services and 3.4 times more likely to be referred to law enforcement. In 2017/18, no Black students were expelled without services and had lower rates than average of referrals to law enforcement. It should be noted that disparities among American Indian / Alaskan Native students were also as high or similar to overall discipline rates as Black and Latino/a students. For Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and multiracial students, the disparities were not as high and in some cases rates of discipline were lower.

While researchers point out that the existence of disparities does not in itself prove bias, the CAC expressed deep concern over the disparities around discipline and the impact to PSDs students of color.

POLICING IN SCHOOLS

Second, arrests and tickets in the school are also associated with higher rates of incarceration. This is the focus of the CACs work. In Devlin and Gottfredson’s 2018 literature review entitled [*Policing and the School-to-Prison Pipeline*](#), they list numerous theoretical and descriptive statistics studies that point to an increase in incarceration rates associated with school arrests. In addition, they cite disparities heightened for subjective offenses such as disorderly conduct. However, they also point to a lack of rigorous research with control groups and mixed results. Furthermore, impacts of policing in schools on the school to prison pipeline is difficult to dissociate from school discipline impacts.

The state of Colorado has a [2019/2020 interactive database](#) of summons and arrests for each school district. This data was not reviewed by the CAC as it was provided after the meeting where Fort Collins Police Department data was reviewed. PSD is served by three police departments. The data is summarized in the table below:

Race / ethnicity	Summons & Arrests	Student Population	Rate	Ratio (rate compared to average)
White	111	22,391	0.5%	0.85
Hispanic	47	5,717	0.8%	1.41
Black	12	359	3.3%	5.74
Other	9	2,260	0.4%	0.68
Total	179	30,727	0.6%	1.00

As indicated in the table, there are deep disparities, with Latino/a students having 41% more summons or arrests than average and Black students experiencing nearly six fold summons and arrests.

Across the last three years for which data is available, disparities are clear with Latino/a students, but it is less clear for Black students. In the [2018/19](#) school year, for instance, there were no reported incidents for Black students. Latino/a student incidents were 80% more than the average student. In [2017/18](#), Latino/a students had 28% more summons or arrests than the average student and Black students experienced summons and arrests at 3.76 times the rate of average students.

Furthermore, 1/3 of incidents were associated with subjective crimes like disorderly conduct. Another 29 percent of incidents were associated with drug, alcohol, and tobacco use. Without knowing the details of each case, approximately 16 percent of incidents were associated with the types of crimes the CAC identified as appropriate for law enforcement's involvement in the schools.

More students aged 14 to 15 are involved in summons or arrests than any other age group.

PSD does not allow for SRO coordination with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. However, some CAC members indicated the impact that an arrest or ticket can have on whether an undocumented student is deported, can receive DACA status, or whether a refugee can receive citizenship.

As a final note, the effect on summons and arrests of the new Standard Operating Procedures for SROs have not yet been fully tested due to Covid-19.

Safety in Schools

After the Columbine school shooting school safety in Colorado became a growing concern. Colorado school districts, including PSD, followed the national wave of zero tolerance school discipline policies and bringing law enforcement into schools through the SRO program.

EVIDENCE OF SAFETY - ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES

According to King et. al. (cited above), "Increasingly, scholarship on school equity has critiqued harsh punishment practices or policies, arguing that it does not make schools safer and that it

pushes students out of schools and into the criminal justice system." Some members of law enforcement expressed to the CAC that Zero Tolerance policies should be reviewed.

Concerns over these policies have been known for some time. In 2008, the American Psychological Association formed a task force to examine the evidence for zero tolerance policies, and they concluded in their paper entitled [*Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations*](#):

Zero tolerance has not been shown to improve school climate or school safety. Its application in suspension and expulsion has not proven an effective means of improving student behavior. It has not resolved, and indeed may have exacerbated, minority overrepresentation in school punishments. Zero tolerance policies as applied appear to run counter to our best knowledge of child development. By changing the relationship between education and juvenile justice, zero tolerance may shift the locus of discipline from relatively inexpensive actions in the school setting to the highly costly processes of arrest and incarceration. In so doing, zero tolerance policies have created unintended consequences for students, families, and communities (pg. 271).

Evidence of Safety - Policing in Schools

Perhaps surprisingly, there is also little evidence that SROs increase school safety. Devlin and Gottfredson, cited above, note that there is only one rigorous study that indicates SROs increase school safety and the same study indicates that safety is at the cost of increasing student arrests. The full quote is worth reading:

Deploying police officers in schools is an expensive security procedure (Addington 2009; Na and Gottfredson 2013). Millions of dollars are being invested in a strategy without full knowledge of its effects, as only one rigorous study to date has demonstrated that police in schools are associated with improvements in school safety (Owens 2016). Based on the current available evidence, using police officers in schools may not be the best investment. There are far less costly preventive

intervention programs targeting student misconduct and behavioral problems that rigorous research has demonstrated to be effective (Cook et al. 2010; Drake et al. 2009; Gottfredson et al. 2002; Hahn et al. 2007; Wilson and Lipsey 2007). Rather than police potentially criminalizing these behaviors, these effective prevention and intervention programs

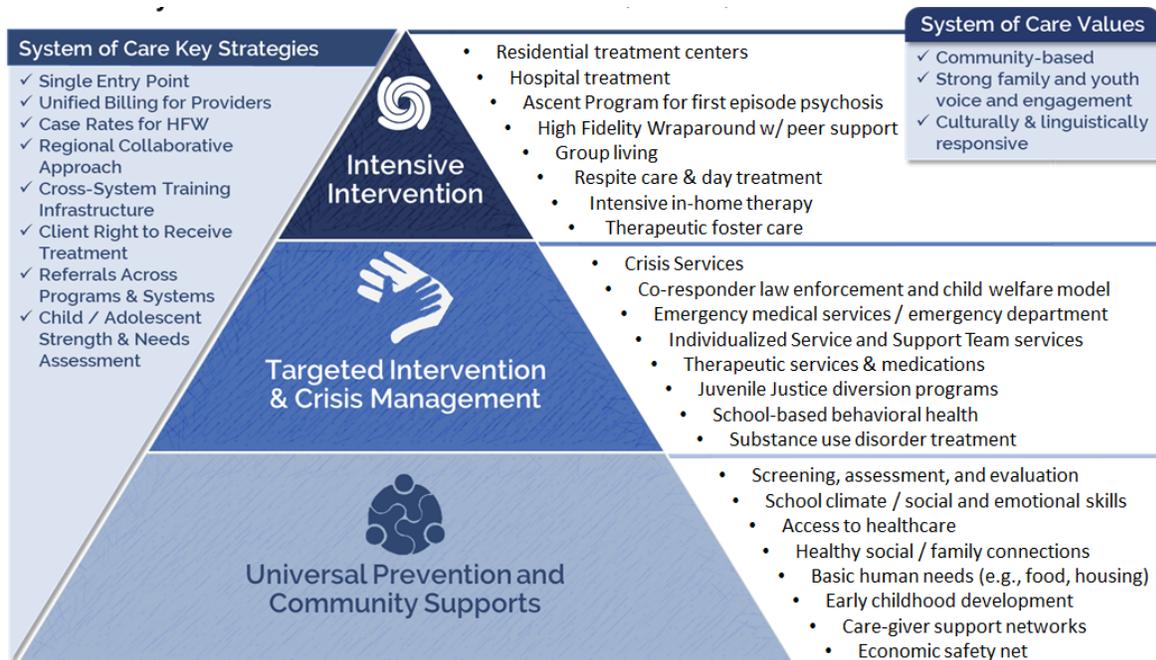
can be used to reduce the behaviors without removing the youth from school. Unless future research demonstrates that schools are safer when police are added, the potential for negative consequences suggests that effective prevention programs be implemented as an alternative to police in schools (pg. 303).

There are numerous programs with strong evidence based practices for reducing violence and other problematic behaviors in schools. One of the best sites for identifying evidence based programs was led by the University of Colorado's Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence: <https://www.blueprintsprograms.org/>. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) lists this resource as well as other resources on their School Violence Prevention Resources page: www.samhsa.gov/resources/school-violence-prevention-resources.

State of Behavioral Health

We are in an extraordinary time, facing a confluence of interrelated challenges that impact the mental health of children, youth, and their caregivers across Colorado and beyond. In 2020 Mental Health in America ranked Colorado as 34th in the nation for youth mental health among states and almost at the bottom (48th) for substance use disorder among youth (click [here](#) for details). Behavioral health in schools is a microcosm of this challenge.

Colorado is currently undergoing a transformation in its behavioral health system. As part of this transformation, the state's Office of Behavioral Health is seeking to further develop the system of care for Colorado's children, youth, and families. The vision for an integrated children, youth, and family system of care in Colorado is captured in the figure below.



Colorado System of Care Model for Children, Youth and Families, Bornstein, 2020

Colorado does not currently have an integrated continuum of care that is culturally and linguistically responsive. Providers are often weeks out from seeing a young person, and there are not enough in-patient and out-patient services available. Schools across Colorado have made some inroads in recent years with additional funding, but many are still falling short.

Although it was not within the purview of the CAC to study the state of PSDs behavioral health systems, student reports indicate that it can take weeks to get an appointment with the school mental health counselor. Many students feel stigma associated with seeing a mental health professional. In some cases students are trained to be supports, which can help overcome stigma. The City of Fort Collins recently reworked its critical response program and we do not have any information about how this change will impact the community and mental health calls in schools.

IDEAL STATE: ELEMENTS OF SAFETY

As noted above, in order to honor the initial understanding of many CAC members about the charge of the group, and to provide a point of reference for evaluating the current SRO program, the group formulated and reached consensus on an initial framing of a comprehensive vision for safety within PSD schools, consisting of the following four components.

Supportive School Culture

Our vision for a supportive, accessible, and inclusive school culture is that all students should know they are safe and that they belong. This includes those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), students with physical and/or intellectual disabilities, undocumented students, those not fully literate in the dominant language, LGBTQ+, and young people experiencing homelessness or in need of behavioral health supports.

Direct Prevention

We envision a PSD where all students have inclusive, accessible, and equitable access to safety. This includes expansive access to the continuum of language-specific and culturally appropriate behavioral health supports, strong relationships with supportive adults in the school and that these adults have appropriate training, physical campus safety infrastructure, and that students are active participants in keeping themselves and others safe.

Preparedness and Response

Our vision for preparedness and response is that teachers, staff, and students are protected from harm that originates inside or outside a school setting. When law enforcement is needed, they should be able to be onsite rapidly. At the same time, student rights should always be upheld, and situations should be de-escalated and a trauma-informed response used at all times.

Recovery and Accountability

We envision a future where students and staff have the resources necessary to heal and return to a supportive school culture without stigma, harms are acknowledged, relationships are repaired, responsible parties are held accountable, and the systems that contributed to the harm are transformed. Our vision is that the school to prison pipeline is dismantled, which includes tackling the upstream disparities of discipline that currently exist in PSD. That said, while we understand some serious cases warrant law enforcement involvement, our vision is that most cases end up in diversion.

Evaluating SRO Roles and Responsibilities

The members of the CAC worked to gain a full understanding of the current roles, responsibilities, and daily activities of SROs in order to develop recommendations for any necessary changes. This process proved frustrating for many members who felt that the inconsistent roles and responsibilities across schools, and the lack of clear data on the specific activities of SROs--especially as they related to disparate impacts of different groups of students--made it difficult if not impossible to truly understand the "current state" of the SRO program. But while some remained convinced that if only they had more data, it would

be possible to objectively evaluate the effectiveness or harm of the SRO program, others observed a different pattern emerging. As new data came in, whether in the form of conversations with SROs themselves, survey data, or even research findings highlighting the positive¹ or negative² impact of SROs on school safety, most members were not using this body of evidence as reason to shift their perspectives so much as further reason to confirm the perspectives people brought into the process. It is the opinion of the facilitation team that this was not necessarily due to closed mindedness or resistance to new information among CAC members but because the very nature of the question does not lend itself toward a single, objective resolution derived from empirical data.

Those who see SROs as a positive force in schools tend to focus on their role in addressing, or potentially addressing, *threats to safety*, such as the often cited value of responding immediately in the case of an active shooter. Those who oppose SROs tend to focus on their detrimental impact on *overall school climate*, and how the presence of armed law enforcement personnel is traumatizing and threatening in itself. That the very same armed person in a building can be a source of comfort to some and a threat to others suggests this is not a technical *problem to solve* with a single, evidence-based answer but rather a *polarity to manage* that requires balancing different and often competing concerns. Furthermore, since the negative experience with law enforcement tends to be concentrated among those whose voice is least often heard in decision making, the question does not lend itself to simply surveying majority opinion or relying on precedent and past policy, but requires an intentional centering of marginalized voices and a commitment to incorporating dissenting viewpoints that push against a dominant narrative.

After framing the discussion using a [polarity management model](#), the CAC evaluated the competing concerns that have to be addressed when considering the role of law enforcement in schools. Since maintaining or reducing the presence of SROs in schools will have upsides and downsides for different people depending on the perspective they hold, the CAC was faced with the challenge of striking a balance that maximizes the collective upsides and minimizes the collective downsides of these competing perspectives.

¹<https://www.routledge.com/Police-in-Schools-An-Evidence-based-Look-at-the-Use-of-School-Resource/Duxbury-Bennell/p/book/9780367198855>

²

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

	More police presence in schools	Less police presence in schools
Upside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves response time • Enables closer relationships with school staff and students • Deters some potential infractions • Creates a feeling of safety for many staff and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces stress for those who experience trauma when in contact with law enforcement • Incentivizes schools to take a mental health-related approach to issues first • Helps reduce factors associated with the school-to-prison pipeline
Downside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases likelihood of trauma and criminalization for many students • Issues that might stem from mental health related issues are more likely to be entangled in juvenile justice system • Increases reliance of SROs rather than school staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law enforcement has less understanding of important context when intervening • Increases response times when police are needed • Reduces sense of safety for those who find the presence of law enforcement an asset

This framing helped shift the discussion from a stalemate among opposing views to a search for a dynamic balance that benefited from the strengths of differing perspectives and using the opposing view as a way to guard against downsides. This made finding common ground easier, aided in part by the fact that the SROs themselves had identified some areas in their current roles that they believed would be better served by other school personnel, and areas where even those strongly opposed to law enforcement in schools could acknowledge the value of having a police officer involved to ensure the protection of students and staff. These discussions led to the following set of principles that acknowledge the unique tools and training that law enforcement officers have that can be of benefit to schools while trying to limit their presence to only those roles when they are most vitally needed.

PRINCIPLES TO INFORM THE USE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IN SCHOOLS

- **Law enforcement should be used only in specific circumstances.** Law enforcement officers are trained, equipped, and charged with addressing situations where direct threats to safety are present. They should be utilized in circumstances that call for that training and preparation.
- **Law enforcement should be used as a last resort.** While their role is important, it should also be limited to situations where school-based personnel are not trained or equipped to intervene. Too often, law enforcement personnel have been relied on to address issues that are better handled by mental health professionals, or through more restorative models of discipline. Finally, just because law enforcement personnel might need to play a role in certain circumstances (e.g. concerns of a weapon on campus) doesn't necessarily mean they should be involved in all such circumstances (e.g. an elementary school student using a rock as a weapon on the playground).
- **Relationships between schools and law enforcement can improve how well issues are resolved.** Law enforcement personnel who interact with schools need strong interpersonal skills, and should be trained in building rapport with students, parents, and staff. The more effectively law enforcement works with school administrators, the more successfully issues will be addressed.
- **Increased contact with law enforcement can cause trauma and unnecessary involvement in the criminal justice system, especially for BIPOC and LGBTIA+ students.** A growing body of evidence suggests that increased contact between law enforcement and historically marginalized student groups does not lead to strong relationships but to inequitable outcomes that contribute to the school to prison pipeline. Teachers and other school personnel should understand and be trained on this dynamic, including the repercussions of calling law enforcement on undocumented students and/or their family members or guardians.
- **Mental, Socio-Emotional and Behavioral Health Support should be increased and used as the go-to for response in schools.** There are a cluster of issues in the recommendations that follow that involve mental health issues that should be supported by increased levels of support already offered or the creation of new resources/supports. In these models, intentional peer support where students can be trained, and/or social emotional learning resources that are aimed at prevention of

several issues arising like drugs, peer pressure, etc. are established. These could also be supportive of issues in students' lives like divorce, economic instability at home, etc. We believe PSD needs to provide easy access for mental health services with community-based services and providers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing the current roles of SROs in PSD, reviewing community feedback, examining discipline data, and studying alternative models to SROs, the SRO CAC is making the following recommendations on how the Poudre School District should involve law enforcement in the school environment.

Law Enforcement in PSD Schools

Law Enforcement Roles: While many of the roles SROs currently play are essential, many of them would be better served by mental health professionals or social workers. The CAC therefore recommends the role of law enforcement in schools should be focused on the following essential duties:

- Emergency response to violence INSIDE of school (including weapons use)
- Serious drug sales offenses and investigations
- Emergency response to violence OUTSIDE of school grounds, but involving students
- Investigations of crimes with a victim (e.g., sexual assault)
- Implementation of risk/threat assessments (if deemed necessary)
- Initial emergency planning (and implementation when called for)
- Missing children/runaway investigations
- Co-responder checks (home visits, welfare checks)

Data and Accountability: Expectations for how police are to respond to incidents should be jointly agreed upon by the school, community, and law enforcement, and detailed reports kept of these interactions for community review and continuous improvement. Data collected should include both law enforcement and PSD data.

Broader Training: In addition, the CAC recommends additional training with patrol officers who might respond to particular schools, including meeting and understanding expectations of school administrators.

Places Where Law Enforcement Should NOT Play a Role In PSD Schools

The CAC believes that adults in the school community need to be prepared to recognize and respond to those who have been impacted by traumatic stress, including when they are a danger to themselves or others. Teachers and paraprofessionals should be trained to de-escalate situations, respond to traumatic responses, and mental health realities - and these roles should not be outsourced to law enforcement. Roles or programs that specifically focus on site-based behavioral support like counselors, behavioral specialists, cultural brokers to the school, etc. should be established at every PSD school. Specifically, the CAC would remove law enforcement representatives from involvement in the following currently defined SRO roles:

Role	RATIONALE
Assistance teaching as a guest speaker in classes	<p>The presence of law enforcement can cause fear, anxiety, and even trigger a trauma response in some students, all of which harm young people’s ability to learn and can influence their behavior negatively. This fact, along with the existence of many alternative resources for teaching students about topics law enforcement may sometimes speak about in classes (i.e. “sexting”, cyber bullying, sexual harassment, etc.) leads us to recommend that those alternative resources be used instead of inviting law enforcement as guest speakers in classrooms.</p> <p>If teachers feel law enforcement is the most appropriate guest speaker, for an educational purpose, law enforcement should , wherever possible, wear “street clothes” and students should be able to opt-out or parent permission should be obtained. Students who opt out should be provided alternative assignments to gain understanding of the topic if warranted.</p>

<p>Nonviolent response in school</p>	<p>Principals and staff should have increased latitude in how they respond to nonviolent offenses. These should be handled by the administration (principals and vice-principals) and counselors. Relationships with other support staff and teachers can also be leveraged to support specific students. If there is a specific threat of violence, this would no longer be a response to "nonviolent" situations. We could consider resourcing our schools with folks trained in conflict de-escalation or some other kind of neutral third party involvement that can support these kinds of situations, and we've heard even from SROs that they don't see it necessarily as their role to respond to such situations</p>
<p>Minor drug offenses</p>	<p>In our conversations with law enforcement, they also agreed that law enforcement should not be involved in these minor infractions. They run the risk of unnecessarily entangling students in criminal legal processes, and are better handled by the school personnel with consistent responses. Schools can handle these as treatment issues, not criminal issues, thus the "Code of Conduct" and "zero tolerance policies" should also be revised to emphasize preventative measures for promoting healthy and positive school environments over reactive or punitive measures. We want to give school personnel the discretion and flexibility to respond to situations in ways that promote student health, but that are also consistent across school settings and across student groups. PSD should review / revise the list of "drugs" and reconsider penalties for possession of over the counter substances.</p>
<p>Questioning students under 18 as part of an investigation without a parent present</p>	<p>At times when there are law enforcement personnel in a school, everyday student-officer conversations are always fine. However, in situations where a law enforcement officer needs to speak with a student as part of an investigation into a crime that may result in charges for the student or anyone else, all students should be supported to understand their legal rights against self-incrimination and possible consequences of such conversations. Students who are still under 18 must be informed and allowed to have a parent or other adult of their choosing present when being questioned by any law enforcement representative. It is critical that children have an adult</p>

	<p>present--ideally in person but by phone or video if necessary--who fully understands the consequences of what they may say or present in these situations. This is especially true for students with intellectual disabilities. We understand that there may be some extreme circumstances of life and danger, and mandatory reporting laws that mandate where law enforcement needs to talk with a student without a parent. In such circumstances a parent, guardian, designated caretaker, or trusted adult identified by the student should be alerted immediately.</p> <p>In any case, PSD must ensure student's full rights under law are protected and students are offered a lawyer or advocate if warranted. All parents/guardians should be made aware of the contact plans and procedures between the SRO and students through resources the district provides like the Code of Conduct and SRO SOPs. Parents/Guardians should have a procedure for alerting the SRO of contact concerns with their child.</p> <p>However, none of the above should be understood as discouraging students from seeking out law enforcement for conversation, and we believe students who explicitly do not want their parents or guardians to be involved in or informed of conversations they seek out with PSD staff or law enforcement should have their wishes respected to the fullest extent allowable within the law.</p>
<p>Serious drug use/substance use disorder</p>	<p>Similar to minor drug issues, more serious drug issues should be considered a mental health issue and should be treated as such, not as a law enforcement issue.</p>
<p>Build relationships with students</p>	<p>All adults who come into a school building should seek to build positive relationships with students, and whenever law enforcement are present in schools, they should seek to develop positive relationships with students, too. However, given the negative impact that police presence in schools has on some students and the existence of several other spaces and opportunities for law enforcement to build positive relationships with young people in the community that allow youth to exercise choice in whether and how they want to build those relationships, we do not believe that relationship building with youth is</p>

	<p>something the district should continue to explicitly invite law enforcement into schools to do. Law enforcement should seek alternative spaces and methods for building relationships with young people in non-school settings.</p>
<p>Emergency drills with students present</p>	<p>While we understand that law enforcement can oftentimes be helpful to administration in the planning of emergency response, law enforcement officials should not be involved in practice drills as their presence during already frightening drills can cause unnecessary stress trauma to our students. If law enforcement needs to conduct trainings on school grounds, they should do so on weekends or at other times when students are not present. There should be one district person who approves requests for practice drills. The district should maintain a list for public review of what schools have had drills by law enforcement agencies.</p>
<p>Development of risk/threat assessments</p>	<p>There is already a team in the district that is assigned to work with principals on developing these types of assessments, and that team is already aware of the situations in which law enforcement must be involved in developing risk or threat assessments and when they are not needed. We recommend the district no longer include law enforcement in the development of such assessments by default and instead, allow staff to invite law enforcement support only when they see the need or when law or policy requires it. In addition, we recommend that the district add additional support for this assessment team and for coordination between schools.</p>
<p>Signing off on mental health holds</p>	<p>These are best handled by mental health professionals who can help de-escalate, rather than escalate, the circumstances. There are models such as co-location of licensed mental professionals or working agreements with mental health centers. The district should explore these options. If the concern is actually the safety of the mental health professionals as well, then it should be handled as a co-responder situation. A 72-hour mental health hold can be initiated by an intervening professional, including a certified peace officer, medical professional, registered professional nurse with training in psychiatric or</p>

	mental health nursing, licensed marriage and family therapist or counselor with training in mental health, or licensed clinical social worker. ³
Responding to threats of suicide	Law enforcement should not be the first go-to resource, but instead we should rely on trained school personnel who understand how to address suicidal ideation. If the student poses a threat to others, including the mental health professionals involved, it should be treated as a situation in which to use a police-mental health professional co-responder approach.

Implementation

As mentioned throughout the report, the CAC as a whole recognizes that the current SRO model is problematic and in need of change. As noted above, the CAC came to consensus on a number of shared principles and recommendations for the Board of Education governing the role of law enforcement in the schools. That being said, the CAC could not reach consensus on how to implement these changes moving forward. In lieu of a recommendation, we offer a report of the outcome of the committee's deliberations, which can be characterized by two opinions for consideration by the Board:

MAJORITY OPINION ON IMPLEMENTATION:

Eleven (11) CAC members believe that the role of law enforcement agreed to in the consensus parts of this report can be fully implemented without SRO's presence in schools. To reduce the likelihood of potentially traumatic experiences for students the PSD SRO model needs to shift to a response model where law enforcement is not embedded on-campus. One option to explore could be for law enforcement officers to fulfill the roles outlined in this report but act more as a liaison to a school; officers would be assigned to patrol areas adjacent to their designated schools to reduce response time when called to the school to address issues consistent with the consensus recommendations.

³ See <https://codes.findlaw.com/co/title-27-behavioral-health/co-rev-st-sect-27-65-105.html>

The CAC understands that implementing this approach will take time, is likely to face challenges, and will require monitoring and oversight to ensure unintended consequences on response time and overall safety are addressed effectively.

DISSENTING OPINION ON IMPLEMENTATION:

Four (4) CAC members felt strongly that SROs remain embedded in the schools. They cited response time in the case of threats of violence as a concern and they are hopeful that the presence of SROs on campus will deter criminal or violent behavior. They agree the disproportionality of BIPOC students being referred to law enforcement is a large concern. They felt that the new SOPs are a step in the right direction and that continued data gathering to inform new practices is essential.

APPENDICES

Community Engagement

Community engagement subcommittee was established to gather input from parents, students, staff, and SROs across the district regarding the current perceptions of the SRO program.

Focus Groups

In conjunction with PSD staff, The Civic Canopy team facilitated three focus group conversations about SROs with three different groups: middle school students, high school students, and SROs serving in PSD.

In the focus group of six PSD middle schoolers, students offered a mix of feelings and opinions about SROs. While four students articulated feeling “safe” or “protected” when they see their school’s SRO, three described feeling “intimidation” and “fear” upon seeing their SRO, especially with regard to “what he’s capable of doing,” with one student expressing the nuance of feeling both safety and fear at the sight of their SRO. Though all but one of the focus group participants was white, two readily articulated a concern that an SRO’s treatment of a student might be different - and worse - if the student was non-white, had a disability, or was visibly Muslim or Sikh, while three - including the one who identified as Hispanic - expressed a belief that their SRO treats all students the same. The majority of the group expressed a real confusion about what the role of their school’s SRO really was and a desire to get more clarity and instruction from teachers and staff about what SROs are for or when they should turn to them, but in the end, when asked if they would feel more safe, less safe, or about the same if SROs were removed from their schools, three students said they would feel “less safe” and two expressed that they’d feel “about the same” (one student had to leave early and wasn’t present to answer). A fuller summary of the focus group results [can be found here](#).

In the focus group of four PSD high schoolers - two White, one Black, and one Hispanic - the opinions were similarly mixed, though their views seemed to be held more strongly than those of the middle schoolers. Two students believed that SROs did not make their schools safer or prevent mass shootings, while two students believed SROs did make school safer and prevent mass shootings. The split between feeling “safe” and “intimidated” or “nervous” when they see their SROs existed for the high school students, and similarly, the group was split on their perceptions of whether race made a difference regarding SROs’ treatment of students, with two being very concerned about unequal treatment from SROs based on race and two expressing that they did not perceive any difference in treatment based on a

student's race. However, the one thing all these students agreed on was that more mental health support was needed in their schools than is currently available. The high schoolers also expressed confusion or unclarity about the real role of SROs in their schools. And when it came to how they would feel if SROs were removed from their schools, two students said "more safe," one said "about the same," and one said "less safe." A fuller summary of the focus group results [can be found here](#).

In the focus group of nine SROs, police officers focused on working against the school to prison pipeline, focusing more on building relationships, connecting students to needed resources, restorative justice referrals, and supporting victims. Participants discussed having a welcoming demeanor, sharing personal stories, and playing sports with students as a way to build relationships, including BIPOC students. SROs indicated that they would lay down their lives for any student in the event of an active shooter situation. Participants also indicated that they believe students might be better supported by a mental health professional or social worker when it came to mental health holds. The focus group recognized the need for implicit bias training. Participants also expressed their support for the new Standard Operating Procedures as well as transparency of the data. Some participants mentioned the importance of teaching (e.g., internet safety), threat assessments, preparedness training, and being visible. Lastly, several participants stressed the importance of humanizing police.

Community Survey

The subcommittee worked with PSD staff to develop a comprehensive survey for families, students and staff on their feelings on SROs in PSD schools. A [summary of the survey results](#) was presented to the PSD Board of Education on April 13th, 2021 by PSD's Director of Research and Evaluation. Additionally, an [interactive dashboard](#) was created to better support the CAC in analyzing the results. 26.4% of families, 13.4% of 6th to 12th grade students, and 64.6% of staff responded. In other words, 76.6% of families, 86.6% of 6th to 12th grade students, and 35.4% of staff did not respond.

Overall, the data showed that the majority of respondents feel that SROs are "important" or "critical" to the overall safety of PSD schools. When separated for BIPOC responses, the family support actually increased while student support decreased, but only by about 1%. When asked about how SROs impact the school climate, again, the majority of respondents stated that SROs positively impact the school. However, we also see a larger percentage of respondents, both white and BIPOC state that they either didn't know or have enough information or contribute negatively to the school climate.

The data was also parsed following the Larimer County Sheriff's Facebook posting urging community members to fill out the survey in support of SROs and the Boulder King Soopers shooting to see if either event impacted the results in any significant way. Upon review of data before and after each event, it did not appear to dramatically change the overall results and themes.

CAC Members

Community Members

- Alicia Bono
- Chuck Yung
- Courtenay Daum
- Craig Woodall
- Eric Kearns
- Erin Wilson
- Israel "Izzy" Herrera Santos
- Johanna Ulloa
- Melanie Voegeli
- Rashida Perez
- Rena Trujillo
- Sean Neil-Barron
- Steve Apodaca
- Susan Lorimor
- Zoe Harmon

BOE Members

- Kristen Draper
- Naomi Johnson

PSD Non Voting Member

- John McKay

Meeting Schedule and Charge

Meeting Number	Date	Topic
0	12/15/20	Meet and Greet with the Facilitation Team
1	01/14/21	Kick Off
2	01/21/21	Current Role of SROs
3	01/28/21	What Does Safety Mean?
4	02/04/21	Safety Cont.
5	02/11/21	Current State
6	02/25/21	SRO Q&A
7	03/04/21	Managing Polarities and Scoping Solutions
8	03/25/21	Role of Law Enforcement in PSD Schools
9	04/01/21	Begin Forming Recommendations
10	04/08/21	Building to Consensus Recommendations
11	04/15/21	Final Recommendations

Group Norms

We, members of the CAC, commit to the following group norms. We will:

1. **Share the air intentionally** - make space AND take space in the conversation
2. **Assume positive intent** of everyone in the group

3. **Listen to understand first, rather than simply to disagree** - seek to understand another's intention or meaning when unclear
4. **Disagree with the idea, not the person**, and do so respectfully
5. **Use the "Platinum Rule"** - do unto others as they would want done to them
6. **Confidentiality** - "What's heard here, stays here. What's learned here, leaves here."
7. **Validate the experiences of ALL of our community members** - we won't treat any group as monolithic in their experiences, and we will acknowledge disparate impacts & experiences where they exist
8. **Remember why we're here** - acknowledge the significance of the impact our decisions can have on our community's shared future and the importance of our willingness to sit with the tensions, difficulties, and trade offs inherent in this group's work and decisions
9. **Use the "Oops / Ouch" approach** - use these terms to note when we've said or done something that might have been insensitive or harmful to others OR when something said or done hurt us and call for a pause to discuss it or use it as a learning moment. We will do our best to distinguish "hurt" vs. "harm" and their sources

Some ways our facilitators will help us will be to:

- Monitor the chat closely and don't leave out things said there
- Check in with our BIPOC and youth voices frequently and with intention
- Institute time limits on speaking turns if deemed necessary

Concerns about Scope and Process

Though the CAC began meeting in October 2020, The Civic Canopy did not step into the lead facilitation role until January 2021. It soon became clear that expectations established in the initial meetings had left some Council members feeling that the charge of the group was to address the deeper roots of the school to prison pipeline and to "reimagine schools more broadly." As the Canopy team stepped in to facilitate, focusing on the specific charge of reviewing the role of SROs, this caught many CAC members off guard who had joined with an interest in a much broader scope. Over the course of the next several meetings this disconnect became clear, and members expressed frustration about direction and process. In addition, many felt that the short timeline for the Council's work did not allow for adequate exploration of issues and true community involvement, and the sense of urgency signaled white supremacy culture. Several voiced concern that core issues are bigger than SROs - with

PSD discipline policies, mental health supports or lack thereof, school culture, and other factors also being at play - and initially voiced frustration around having to make recommendations solely about SROs to the board in April.

For some members, the discussion proved difficult, if not traumatic at times, given the deeply personal nature of the experiences and the response from other members that signaled to them a lack of understanding of the issues or a lack of concern for others' perspectives. One member shared feedback that they wished the facilitation team would have stepped in more assertively after remarks perceived as harmful were made.

While the majority of ongoing feedback and meeting evaluations suggest that members found the overall process to be successful, at least one member voiced the concern that the facilitation team was too "heavy-handed" in moving the group toward consensus. Additionally, many members expressed frustration that data that was asked for from the district was never provided, including disciplinary data about students on IEP plans compared to those not on IEPs.

Additional Considerations

In discussing a comprehensive vision of safety for Poudre Schools, certain CAC members identified additional steps that would help lead to achieving that vision but which are outside the scope of the current CAC charge. It is important to note that these are ideas noted by individual members of the CAC but were not collectively discussed at length or agreed upon as full recommendations.

- Provide support for adults who do not speak a common language (i.e. information is provided in many languages)
- Identify a person or people at each school who is/are responsible for reviewing school culture and climate survey data, determining the level of connection and inclusivity at the school among all student groups, and develops plans to improve the sense of safety and belonging for all students.
- Fully support all programs that provide food to students
- Fully support and promote all post secondary options
- Provide continuous professional development that centers BIPOC centered spaces, and teaching multicultural spaces
- Include curriculum, written by BIPOC persons, that includes the history of BIPOC communities

- Ensure the busing schedule ensures students can attend programs
- Provide the community with clear and concise data, especially in regards to our BIPOC community
- Provide students with executive functioning support

Review of SRO Data

Council members asked for a variety of documents, data, and research throughout the process. A public, shared google drive was created by the facilitation team in an effort to capture data from PSD, from Council members and their respective organizations, and from both Fort Collins Police Department and Larimer County Sheriff's Office. Information collected that answered the specific requests is linked below.

Data/Document Requested	Provided Information
<i>Statistics of SRO discipline per race and gender</i>	2018-2019 School Resource Officer Enforcement Data (race) Discipline by Race 2017-29 (provided by School Justice PSD) PSD CAC Arrest and Summons Data (provided by a CAC member)
<i>Data on SRO activity (student referrals to an SRO, an SRO dealing with a threat to the school, an SRO helping with a mental health crisis - anything and everything available) in PSD from when they were implemented until today.</i>	2018-2019 Safe2Tell Information 1st Semester 2020-2021 SRO Data 1st Semester 2020
<i>Similar data from other districts that don't have SROs- in this case of course looking at instances of violence at those schools, looking at what other security/mental health professionals do they have, looking at how they discipline, etc.</i>	Data not provided. The facilitation team provided the following research: Emerging models for Police Presence in Schools National Assessment of School Resource

	Officer Programs
<i>Levels of discipline, by race and male/female.</i>	Race was provided, see above. Male/female breakdown was not provided.
<i>SRO interactions by IEP/504, race, income and every other way the data can be divided. Expulsions that do not involve and SRO.</i>	Not provided
<i>Data on tasks performed by SROs and who is on the receiving end of SRO attention.</i>	1st Semester 2020-2021 SRO Data 1st Semester 2020
<i>Training requirements for SRO, length of time one serves. Does Fort Collins Police rotate SRO out of the job after a specific amount of time. Who are the SRO's used by each department, do they interact and train together - Does a Sheriff SRO respond to events in Fort Collins or Timnath? Can they or is it policy not to allow it?</i>	Training Memo Links to Relevant Articles and Videos from FCPD
<i>A physical list of specific roles assumed by an SRO to be created? Would it be possible for a physical list of specific roles of an SRO that cannot be dealt with by PSD Admin to be created?</i>	Roles are found in the SOPs linked below
<i>Standard operating procedure for SROs</i>	SRO SOPs
<i>PSD's contracts with all SRO providing police forces</i>	FCPD LCSO Tinmith
<i>Code of conduct/responsibilities for SROs</i>	Covered in the SOPs linked above

<i>SRO evaluation form</i>	Not provided
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Interview Summary/Discovery Report

To support the design of the CAC process, the Civic Canopy team was engaged in the fall of 2020 to prepare a summary report to build shared context for all partners on the project. The goal was to gather the diverse perspectives of all Council members via interviews, synthesize them into a shared frame of reference, and to make recommendations about the best design for the work of the Advisory Council. The full report can be found [here](#).