



**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY
MEETING AGENDA ITEM**

TITLE: School Resource Officers in Schools **DATE:** September 24, 2020

PRESENTER(S): Kevin Gilbert, Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Thomas McNeal,
Director Security, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Anissa Dennis,
Chief School Management and Instructional Leadership Officer

Strategic Call To Action Alignment: Organizational culture and climate are supportive and nurturing and provide a safe and healthy environment for all students and staff.

OVERVIEW:

The purpose of this Board report is to provide an overview of the history of the School Resource Officer (SRO) in the Howard County Public School System. In addition, this report will also include the roles and responsibilities of SROs as well as provide an outline of a timeline for a process to solicit stakeholder input. As we consider this very important issue regarding SROs in Schools, it is important to fully understand the experiences and needs of each of our stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION/FUTURE DIRECTION:

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School Resource Officers in Schools
A Report to the Board of Education of Howard County
September 24, 2020

The debate about School Resource Officers (SROs) in schools is not a recent phenomenon. There have been countless reports, articles, editorials, and books written on this subject. With the recent events surrounding the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade and the shooting of Jacob Blake, the debate surrounding the use of SROs has intensified. School districts across this country are wrestling with not only the impact of these events within their communities, but also the impact of the presence of law enforcement within schools on students, particularly the Black and brown students. The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is not immune to this debate around SROs, with a public discussion on the matter occurring in the 2017-2018 school year.

This report will attempt to provide the Board of Education of Howard County with a review of the ongoing debate. Within this report is background information on the national debate. Also included is information on the current state of police presence in HCPSS, and national and district specific data. The report will conclude by highlighting next steps for HCPSS and the Board of Education on engaging the community and taking action, if so desired on the SRO program in Howard County.

Background

For more than fifteen years, government policy and funds supporting the use of SROs in schools have risen substantially. The first widely reported use of an SRO was in Flint, Michigan in the 1950s as part of the community policing strategy. In 1975, only about 1% of schools reported a regular police presence (Dignity in Schools, 2016). The use of SROs grew nationally in the mid to late 1990s after the passage of several safety related laws and a large 1999 U.S. Department of Justice grant program to hire SROs. More recent school shootings, along with policy trends related to the more formal treatment of student discipline, have further increased federal and state funds to support police and security officers in schools (Na & Gottfredson, 2013).

Federal legislation for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program (42 U.S.C. §3796dd-8), defines a School Resource Officer as a career law enforcement officer, with sworn authority, deployed in community-oriented policing, and assigned by the employing police department or agency to work in collaboration with schools and community-based organizations. The purpose of the officer is:

- a) to address crime and disorder problems, gangs¹, and drug activities affecting or occurring in or around an elementary or secondary school;
- b) to develop or expand crime prevention efforts for students;
- c) to educate likely school-age victims in crime prevention and safety;
- d) to develop or expand community justice initiatives for students;
- e) to train students in conflict resolution, restorative justice, and crime awareness;
- f) to assist in the identification of physical changes in the environment that may

¹ Scholars and civil rights proponents caution the use of the word “gang” as it is discriminatory language typically used to over identify some activities involving Black and brown youth. In many instances, the activities identified as “gang” or “gang” related are subjective.

- reduce crime in or around the school; and
- g) to assist in developing school policy that addresses crime and to recommend procedural changes.

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) further synthesizes the roles of SROs as educator, informal counselor/mentor, and a law enforcement officer. NASRO recommends that SRO program goals include “providing safe learning environments in our nation’s schools, providing valuable resources to school staff members, fostering positive relationships with youth, developing strategies to resolve problems affecting youth and protecting all students, so that they can reach their fullest potentials” (NASRO, 2018).

The State of Maryland through its Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018 (Senate Bill 1265) offers a succinct SRO description: a law enforcement officer assigned to a school in accordance with a memorandum of understanding between a local law enforcement agency and a local school system.

Literature Review on Police in Schools

Many schools across the country have some type of police presence in schools. This can typically show up in one or two ways. First, some school districts have established their own police force within their district. The other way districts establish a police presence is through an SRO program, where the district enters into a memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement to provide a police officer who maintains an everyday presence at schools within the district. The latter is the method currently in use within HCPSS.²

While it is widely understood that a police officer’s role is to provide safety, some scholars express concerns that “strategies designed to make schools safer-particularly the growing number of SROs might actually criminalize student behavior and lead to a substantial increase in the number of school-based arrest” (Theriot, 2009, p.280).

In 2018, the Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality and the National Black Women’s Justice Institute conducted three focus group sessions with SROs and four focus group sessions with girls of color. Fifty-seven SRO and other law enforcement participants were interviewed to discuss their experiences working with girls of color. Key findings include:

- Racial tensions in local communities appear to affect the dynamics between SROs and girls of color.
- Many participants believed that students’ negative interactions with white officers in their communities are sometimes reflected in attitudes toward law enforcement in school.
- SROs described their most important function as ensuring safety and responding to criminal behavior, yet they report that educators routinely ask them to respond to disciplinary matters.
- SROs do not receive regular training or other support specific to interactions with girls of color.
- Girls of color view relationship building as essential to officers’ effectiveness in maintaining safety.
- Participants believed that SROs fail to recognize underlying structural factors and

² This report contains not only the word SROs but also the phrase police in schools to signify all interactions student may encounter whether with SROs or local law enforcement in schools.

issues in their families or broader community, resulting in inappropriately punitive responses to their behavior.

- Student participants perceived that racial bias negatively influences SROs' interactions with them, especially African-American girls.
- Girls of color report that SROs attempt to modify their behavior and appearance to conform with mainstream cultural norms regarding gender roles and sexuality.

Theriot (2013) surveyed 1,956 middle and high school students in a southeastern U.S. school district about their experiences with school violence, their feelings of safety at school, and their perceptions of school and the police. Regression analysis shows that the more interactions students have with an SRO, the better attitudes³ they have about SROs. On the other hand, analysis also associated increased SRO interactions with lower levels of school connectedness.⁴ The author offers that this finding may be explained by students' experiences observing SROs discipline classmates or make arrests for relatively minor behaviors that historically have been handled by school principals and teachers and thus creating a feeling of disconnect.

A more recent Theriot & Orme (2014) survey of 2,015 middle and high school students in a southeastern U.S. school district found no significant relationship in students' number of SRO interactions and feeling of safety. The authors acknowledge that the lack of effect may be due to the low percentages of students in the sample who reported interacting with SROs as well as student experiences when they do interact. Pentek & Eisenberg (2018) who conducted a secondary analysis of the Minnesota Student Survey data discovered different findings in a larger sample of 126,868 students in a study. Pentek & Eisenberg found after adjusting for race and other covariates, students in schools with SROs had significantly higher odds of feeling safe at school compared to students without an SRO. Nonetheless, the awareness of an SRO in the school was associated with a small increase in school discipline experiences.

Using the U.S. Department of Education's School Survey on Crime and Safety, Na & Gottfredson's (2013) created a longitudinal sample containing records for 470 schools and found that as schools increase their use of police, they record more crimes involving weapon and drugs and report a higher percentage of non-serious violent crimes (physical attack without a weapon and threat of physical attack) to law enforcement. Theriot's (2009) analysis of three years of arrest data from fifteen schools in one southeastern U.S. school district is partly aligned with Na and Gottfredson and found that the use of SROs dramatically increases the rate of arrest for disorderly conduct. However, unlike Na and Gottfredson, Theriot found that when controlling for economic disadvantage, there is a 72.9% decrease in the rate of arrest for possession of a weapon per one-hundred students. The differences in the findings may be due to Theriot's focus on one school district instead of the nationally representative sample used by Na & Gottfredson.

Instead of studying one district, May et al.'s (2018) analyzed 57, 017 referrals in the southeastern state's web-based system used to track juveniles at various phases of the juvenile justice system. The researchers found that in a three-year period only 3% of the referrals were from SROs. Of the referrals made by SROs, 5.7% were for minor offenses only. Schools actually referred four times as many juveniles to the system as SROs. Therefore, the influence of schools practices should be a consideration in the pipeline to prison phenomenon.⁵

³ Measures of attitudes toward SROs included statements about officers' fairness, helpfulness, and competence.

⁴ Examples of connectedness measures included student and teacher work ethic, school pride, their sense of belonging at school, if they liked school, and their willingness to confide in school faculty about their problems.

⁵The school-to-prison-pipeline is a process whereby juveniles are arrested in school and then entered into the juvenile justice system (May et al., 2018).

Na & Gottfredson (2013) study found that students in schools that had police officers were no more likely to be removed, transferred, or suspended from school as a result of an offense than are students in schools without an SRO. Additionally, students in minority groups or receiving special education had no increase in discipline responses in schools with an SRO. Similarly, Pigott, Sterns, & Khey's (2017) examination of 950 high schools that participated in the 2009-2010 School Survey on Crime and Safety found that the number of SROs present in a high school does not have a statistical relationship with the level of student removals.

Analysis of data from SROs that participated in the Georgetown Law Center and National Black Women's Justice Institute Study noted that "SROs primarily define their role as ensuring safety in school — which they define broadly to include a positive school environment, healthy relationships with students, and keeping students in school — not responding to disciplinary infractions" (Morris, Epstein, Yusuf, 2018 p. 21). However, in Wolf's (2013) statewide survey with SROs in Delaware, it was found that SROs desire to maintain a safe and orderly school environment was a paramount concern that guided arrest decisions. Having said that, some of the SROs noted that the school context provided formal and less severe disciplinary responses than are available on the streets. One officer reported, "I tend to arrest less inside the school because of the involvement of school punishment. Additionally, SROs indicated that the relationships they formed with students affected their arrest decisions. One SRO noted, "A rapport is established in school more often than on the street. Oftentimes because there is a rapport you can almost always work things out." As a whole, the SROs revealed that a variety of circumstances beyond the mere occurrence of an arrestable offense might lead them to make an arrest or not to make an arrest. For example, the data from Wolf's survey found:

- 37% of SROs reported that they had arrested students to calm down a group of students who were disrupting classes.
- 55% of SROs polled indicated they had arrested students for minor offenses because teachers wanted the arrests to occur.
- 68% of the SROs reported that they sometimes arrests students for minor offenses only to teach them that "actions have consequences."
- 77% of SROs polled reported that they sometimes arrested students simply to calm them down.⁶

Rhodes (2014) survey of fifty-two SROs in a statewide Midwestern region revealed that SROs felt less ambiguity about their roles compared to patrol officers and that while they maintain law enforcement and order maintenance activities, they engage in more service tasks in schools as compared to patrol officers. Clarity of role appears to be important as indicated in Barnes (2016). Barnes administered in-person interviews with a randomly selected sample of SROs across twenty-five North Carolina schools. SROs expressed feelings about school personnel's lack of understanding about the role of the SRO in the school. Officers expressed being used as gophers, restroom smoker watchers, others asked to just "stand in the lobby and walk the halls," enforce school policies and procedures, and handle discipline that would typically be a teacher role. The indistinctness of the SRO role does not support procedural justice

⁶This data was part of the report *Be Her Resource: A Toolkit About School Resource Officers and Girls of Color* published by the Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality and the National Black Women's Justice in 2018. The article referenced was written in 2013 by Kerrin C. Wolf and titled "Arrest Decision Making by School Resource Officers." An extended note indicated that "while these responses do not indicate how often SROs face these particular scenarios, they do indicate that SROs exercise discretion when facing a variety of circumstances that may lead to arrest."

theory that stipulates that those who perceive the police to exercise their authority in a procedurally fair manner are more likely to view officers as legitimate authority figures. Wolfe et al.'s (2015) survey of 487 school administrators suggest that SROs who treat students and staff with respect and dignity influence perceptions of legitimacy from the principal. "Principals' support for a policy that would place an SRO in every public school (even if entirely district funded) and the degree to which principals are satisfied with SRO services appears to be shaped largely by the perceived quality of treatment and decision making SROs engage in" (Wolfe et al, 2015, p. 127).

Current Debate on Police in Schools

As the information above indicates, the debate on the police presence in schools typically falls into two main buckets: safety v. criminalization of students (primarily Black and brown students).

Safety

The need for safety is often a key reason given for those who support having an SRO in schools. Typically there is a sharp increase in police presence at schools following high profile school shootings, such as the 1999 shooting at Columbine High School (Colorado); 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School (Connecticut); and the 2018 shootings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (Florida), Great Mills High School (Maryland), and Santa Fe High School (Texas). This in turn has led to some informed research on whether or not having police officers in school in fact makes the school safer.

Following the shootings in 2018, the Congressional Research Service (2018) found very mixed results in studying the effectiveness of SROs, and specifically as it pertains to school shootings. One of the reasons given was that most of the studies they found focused on more common crimes and not school shootings. The report concludes, "the extent to which the presence of an SRO has prevented a school shooting, however, is unknown." Consequently, the report did find that the presence of SROs "might" increase the chances of students being arrested for minor offenses such as "disorderly conduct."

Stern and Petrosino (2018) suggest in a recent report that it is too soon to determine whether or not the data supports the hypothesis that having police in schools actually makes school safer in that research is just coming out, and there are a number of "methodological challenges" when it comes to determine the effects of SROs on safety. One of the challenges is that much of the completed studies are "descriptive" and not "evaluative." Further complicating things is that the research often does not report outcomes. When outcomes are reported, most of the data comes from research designs not deemed credible in establishing the impact of police in schools (Fisher & Hennessy, 2016). Another challenge is that the most rigorous studies have centered on the effects of "police-taught prevention curricula (such as D.A.R.E. or G.R.E.A.T.) on student outcomes such as self-reported drug use but, as previously mentioned, not specifically on whether these programs have improved school safety."

After reviewing 12 studies, Stern and Petrosino concluded that there was "no conclusive evidence that the presence of school-based law enforcement has a positive effect on students' perceptions of safety in schools;" furthermore, their review found "that common non-curricular policing strategies have no overall effects on measures of crime or discipline in schools."

Mo Canady, executive director of the National Association of School Resource Officers, believes there is a difference between SROs and officers who are just on the beat. He states that:

“... well trained SROs operate more like “counselors and educators” and suggest that disproportionate discipline and arrest rates could be driven by beat officers responding to schools, or off campus officers who lack adequate training in implicit bias...” (Goldstein, 2020).

Meyer and Leone (1999) believe that having a police presence in schools has the reverse effect in terms of safety. Their research indicates that in many instances police in schools raise the level of disorder and take away from the authority of school staff. Beger (2003) and Nolan (2011) both support this conclusion. They found that police in schools can “initiate, rather than mitigate, misbehavior by increasing anxiety, alienating students, creating a sense of mistrust between peers, and forming adversarial relationships with school officials.”

Criminalization of Students

Advancement Project and the Alliance for Educational Justice (2018) call for the removal of police in schools because of “the disparate impact that policing has on students of color, students with disabilities, and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA).” They further state that police in schools force Black and brown students to “interact with a system that views them as a threat and not as students.” In one of the more pointed statements in their report, Advancement Project and the Alliance for Educational Justice say:

“Young people of color are systematically denied the right to be safe in school when police officers are deployed in hallways and classrooms. The presence of police in schools threatens student safety and denies students the opportunity to learn because it leads to criminalization for age appropriate behaviors. This is especially true for children of color, students with disabilities, and LGBTQIA students ...”

According to data from the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2016, 2018), Black and brown students are more likely to be arrested by school police. In 2013-14, Black and Latino youth constituted for 58% of school-based arrests while only representing 40% of the school enrollment. In the 2015-2016 school year, 31% of Black students were arrested or referred to law enforcement, but only made up 15% of the student population; additionally, special education students also showed a high rate of arrest or referrals to law enforcement. Although representing only 12% of enrollment in the same school year, special education students made up 28% of arrests or referrals to law enforcement.⁷ The National Women’s Law Center and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund (2014) noted a disproportionate rate of arrest with Black girls as another example. They found that Black girls represented 43% of girls arrested at school while only comprising 17% of school enrollment. Furthermore, research conducted by Developmental Group Incorporated (2014) found that the presence of police in schools further funnels LGBTQIA students into” the youth justice system where they are twice as likely to arrested and detained for a nonviolent offense.”

Other Data to Consider

There is other national, state, and local data to consider when examining the role of police in schools. As mentioned earlier, the United States Department of Education Office for

⁷ The United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights puts out a report every two years highlighting school climate data, which includes data on student in school arrests or referral to law enforcement. The data is two years behind the year of publication and represents the most recent national data available.

Civil Rights (2016, 2017) produces a report every two years highlighting national data on school climate. In addition to the student arrest and referral to law enforcement data discussed earlier, they also report that 24% of schools K-6 have some sort of police presence in schools and 42% of schools grades 9-12 have police in schools. Additionally the Office for Civil Rights reports that 51% of schools with high enrollment of Black and Latino students have police in schools.⁸

In 2018, the Maryland State Department of Education released school related arrest data for the first time, and an analysis of this data was done by Sunderman & Janulis (2018). They found that “Maryland’s arrest rate is 3.1 arrests for every 1,000 Maryland K-12 public school students compared to the national rate of 1.2 per 1,000 students.” Using data from this report, The Maryland Commission on the School to Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices (2018) found that:

“Black students were the only racial group arrested at a higher rate than their proportion of school enrollment at the state level and across districts. Black students represented 66% of 2015-16 school-related arrests while comprising 34.6% of the K-12 public school population ... Students with disabilities (SWD) were also disproportionately arrested. SWD represented 11% of the student population but comprised 22% of school-related arrests and were 2.45 times as likely to be arrested at school than students without disabilities...”

In terms of HCPSS, Superintendent Michael J. Martirano (2020) recently updated the Board on school arrests with the following data:⁹

HCPSS Student Arrests Data¹⁰

| School Year | Paper Arrests | Physical Arrests | SRO Arrests | Local Enforcement Officer Arrests |
|-------------|---------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2015-2016 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2016-2017 | 93 | 22 | 109 | 6 |
| 2017-2018 | 71 | 17 | 73 | 15 |
| 2018-2019 | 60 | 12 | 64 | 3 |

⁸ This information is found in the 2013-14 USDE Office for Civil Rights Data Collection, “A First Look: Key Data Highlights on Equity and Opportunity Gaps in our Nation’s Public Schools.” This represents the most recent data on the presence of police in schools because the Office of Civil Rights did not include this data in the 2015-2016 data collection released in 2018.

⁹ At the time of this report, there was no demographic breakdown of this data.

¹⁰ The Howard County Police Department counts both paper arrests and physical arrests as arrests in their statistics. The first two columns represent the arrest made. The last two columns represent whether the arresting officer was a SRO or local law enforcement. Also note that a paper arrest means there are charges being requested against the subject but they are not physically taken. A physical arrest means the subject is taken into custody and transported to a correctional facility or hospital.

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|----|---|----|---|
| 2019-2020 ¹¹ | 22 | 6 | 25 | 2 |
|-------------------------|----|---|----|---|

HCPSS Arrests Data Percentage by Demographic¹²

| School Year | Total Number of Arrests | American Indian/Alaska Native | Asian | Black/African American | Hispanic/Latino | White | Two or More Races |
|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------------------|
| 2015-2016 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2016-2017 | 115 | 7% | 5.2% | 67.8% | - | 18.3% | 1.7% |
| 2017-2018 | 88 | 3.4% | 5.7% | 61.4% | 4.5% | 14.8% | 10.2% |
| 2018-2019 | 72 | 4.2% | 4.2% | 63.9% | - | 20.8% | 6.9% |
| 2019-2020 | 28 | - | 10.7% | 75% | 7.1% | 3.6% | 3.6% |

SROs in HCPSS¹³

In 1996, the SRO program began in HCPSS with a goal to build positive relationships with students and staff while providing a safe school environment and deterrence to crime. Originally known as the High School Liaison Program, the first orientation of the program only consisted of one sergeant and two police officers who split time between 10 high schools. The emergence of the program was in response to a large fight at one of the high schools in the district. An unfortunate result of the fight was the death of a staff member who experienced a medical emergency while intervening in the fight. Following a review of the incident, the school system and the Howard County Police Department (HCPD) formed a partnership to deter these types of incidents on school property and prevent Howard County youth from becoming involved in “gang¹⁴ like behavior.” The officers assigned to the schools were focused on prevention, intervention, and zero tolerance of “gang like” activity; furthermore, it was hoped the officer’s presence would ensure the protection of students and staff and provide positive support for students through mentoring. In 2001, the police department and school system received a federal grant expanding the High School Liaison Program into the present SRO program within HCPSS.

SROs Role in HCPSS

SROs in HCPSS have several intended roles:

- Bridge the gap between youth and law enforcement,
- Create positive impressions that transcend the school environment,

¹¹ In 2019-2020, there was no record of whether one of the arresting officers was a SRO or local law enforcement, so the chart indicates one less officer arrest than total number of arrests.

¹² There were no arrests of any Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students during any of the school years shown in the chart.

¹³ Tom McNeal, HCPSS Director of Security, Emergency Preparedness and Response, and Kevin A. Burnett, HCPSS Coordinator of Security, provided this information.

¹⁴ Please refer to footnote 1 on the use of the word “gang” or “gang related.”

- Deter behaviors that may lead to youth involvement in criminal justice system,
- Assist in the creation and execution of school emergency plans,
- Promote overall safety and security on campus,
- Assist in investigations as needed,
- Facilitate daily positive interactions and mentoring with students and staff to set positive examples and model methods for handling stressful situations and resolving conflicts,
- Use their experience and expertise about the law to teach law-related content in the classroom, which includes government classes, health and safety classes, driver safety classes,
- Investigate and assist in stopping the formation and involvement of “gangs,”
- Participate in structured, after-school programs that promote community oriented, policing strategies and positive student behavior,
- Act as a resource with respect to delinquency prevention,
- Serve as a liaison between the HCPSS and the HCPD, and
- Coach sports at the high school and/or youth level.

Additionally, SROs promote the HCPD’s youth programs to parents, staff and students to include, but not limited to:

- P.L.E.D.G.E Leadership Camp
- Community Athletic Program (C.A.P.) mobile summer program
- BEARTRAX Program, including a week-long camp in August for incoming 6th graders
- Youth Police Academy
- Explorer Post Program
- Police Cadet Program
- Youth Advisory Council
- Diversion Program
- Teen Court

SROs in HCPSS Training

Currently, as officers of HCPD, SROs receive training on crisis intervention, fair and impartial policing, cultural awareness, cell phone investigation and procedures, sexual and physical abuse of children, youth services, mental health, active shooter, intellectual and developmental disabilities, critical incident stress management, verbal de-escalation techniques and active listening, LGBTQ, autism and hearing impairments awareness; furthermore, as SROs, they receive specialized training in the following:

- Threat response to prevent school violence,
- School safety and emergency operations plans,
- Diversity, ethics, students with special needs, bullying and social media,
- School law, informal counseling and mentorship,
- Understanding the teen brain, drugs and alcohol, violence and victimization,
- Sex trafficking, youth trends and school culture, and
- School instruction and guest speaking.

It should also be noted that Maryland State law (Senate Bill 1265) established an advisory board of stakeholders under the Maryland Center for School Safety that is tasked with developing guidelines and model policies in the area of Assessment Teams, School Resource Officer training and appropriate usage, coordination with local law enforcement, school-based drills, and

mental health services coordination. Under this law, all SROs receive certification through the National Association for School Resource Officers. The Safe to Learn Act of 2018 also mandates training for all SROs and security personnel through the Maryland Center for School Safety.

Changes to the Current SRO Program in HCPSS

Last year, there were a few changes to the SRO program in HCPSS that should be noted:

- The selection process focused on selecting SROs that represented the diversity of Howard County.
- A less formal police uniform was piloted at the Homewood Center to gauge student interaction with the assigned SRO.
- The Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) club was initiated. SROs meet with members to discuss destructive behaviors and good decision-making.
- A new Teen Court (diversion) model for the school system was developed and proposed. This is modeled after a currently successful diversion program the HCPD has in place in the community. In the proposed model, minor offenses would go before a trained student panel to impose sanctions in lieu of suspensions, citations, and arrests. HCPSS has not yet determined if the district will participate.
- A new block of instruction on the dangers of vaping was added.

Ongoing Re-evaluation of SRO program in HCPSS

HCPD works with HCPSS to regularly assess the SRO program and develop new approaches and joint training opportunities to make schools and students safer by applying best practices and program modifications. Working together, the program is refined in an effort to provide a safe learning environment, provide valuable resources for schools, foster positive relationships with youth, develop strategies to resolve problems affecting youth and protect all students, so that they can reach their fullest potential.

During the 2019-2020 school year, the Division of School Management and Instructional Leadership (SMIL) met with the SRO Commander and the SRO Supervisors to openly discuss any issues or concerns that needed to be addressed as it pertained to the role and responsibility of SROs. This was an opportunity to further collaborate with HCPD in identifying ways to more effectively collaborate and communicate. These meetings also allowed for a deeper understanding of the required SRO training and HCPD expectations for all SROs, while also providing opportunity to clarify any appropriate HCPSS policies and procedures.

Additionally, HCPSS representatives from SMIL, Office of Safety and Security, Special Education, School Psychology, and Student Services met with HCPD leadership and the Howard County States' Attorney's Office. The purpose of the meeting was to address the issue of student arrests and discuss the interventions and supports all the different participating agencies could provide to students in crises before or after an arrest occurred.

SRO leadership communicates almost daily with the Office of Safety and Security and SMIL. HCPSS receives information on issues within the community that could cause a safety or security concern within a school. The three leadership teams meet regularly to discuss concerns, improve communication, and make improvements to the program. SROs and the school

administrators they work with meet regularly to improve their communication and working partnerships. Through these meetings, roles and responsibilities have been clearly identified and a number of changes have been made to how to handle situations involving students. Particularly, situations, which have had a direct impact on the number of arrests made over the course of the last couple of years.

Police Presence at HCPSS Schools without SROs

As required by the Safe to Learn Act, HCPD has to provide adequate coverage for schools that do not have SROs. In April 2018, the HCPD initiated a mandatory foot patrol pilot program at all schools, which do not have SROs assigned to them. This mandate required patrol officers to check in with the schools in their assigned beat area allowing them the opportunity to establish a rapport with the school community; consequently, HCPD terminated the program after receiving community concerns around ‘un-trained’ officers walking through the schools.

While all HCPD officers receive extensive training in Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), youth issues, and anti-bias, they do not receive the additional training that SROs receive and are not as familiar with the staff, student population or school operations. Currently the only officers that are in a school are SROs or an officer who is there because of a call for service.

Finally, schools without a dedicated SRO have access to SRO leadership to provide support when they have a law enforcement related issues or questions. This gives school administrators a resource they may have been hesitant to ask for in the past because of a lack of familiarity or trust.

SRO Assignments in HCPSS

Currently, HCPD has one SRO Commander, three SRO Supervisors, and nineteen SROs assigned to HCPSS. There is one SRO assigned to each of the twelve high schools and Homewood Center. The remainder of the SROs are splitting time between twelve middle schools:

- Mayfield Woods/Patuxent Valley Middle Schools
- Wilde Lake/Harper’s Choice Middle Schools
- Lake Elkhorn/Oakland Mills Middles Schools
- Murray Hill/Hammond Middle Schools
- Thomas Viaduct/Elkridge Landing Middle Schools
- Bonnie Branch/ Ellicott Mills Middle Schools

Because one of the key components to the debate about SROs in schools centers on where SROs are placed, the following two tables break down the demographics of each school that has a SRO presence. The data is from school year 2019-2020 school profiles:

High School Demographic Data

| School | American Indian/Alaskan Native | Asian | Black/ African American | Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander | Hispanic/ Latino | White | Two or More Races |
|----------|--------------------------------|-------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Atholton | ≤5.0% | 19.7% | 25.3% | ≤5.0% | 9.4% | 39.7% | 5.8% |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| High School | | | | | | | |
| Centennial High School | ≤5.0% | 40.7% | 9.1% | ≤5.0% | ≤5.0% | 39.5% | 5.6% |
| Glenelg High School | ≤5.0% | 13.0% | ≤5.0% | ≤5.0% | ≤5.0% | 73.4% | ≤5.0% |
| Hammond High School | ≤5.0% | 10.5% | 40.6% | ≤5.0% | 16.7% | 24.7% | 7.1% |
| Howard High School | ≤5.0% | 16.9% | 22.1% | ≤5.0% | 7.0% | 47.0% | 6.6% |
| Long Reach High School | ≤5.0% | 12.9% | 36.2% | ≤5.0% | 22.9% | 21.8% | 5.9% |
| Marriotts Ridge High School | ≤5.0% | 37.2% | 9.2% | ≤5.0% | ≤5.0% | 45.9% | ≤5.0% |
| Mt. Hebron High School | ≤5.0% | 31.0% | 12.8% | ≤5.0% | 9.6% | 42.3% | ≤5.0% |
| Oakland Mills High School | 0.0% | 7.5% | 43.7% | 0.1% | 21% | 20.2% | 7.5% |
| Reservoir High School | ≤5.0% | 17.8% | 32.7% | ≤5.0% | 16.9% | 25.9% | 6.5% |
| River Hill High School | ≤5.0% | 34.1% | 9.9% | ≤5.0% | 6.1% | 43.5% | 6.5% |
| Wilde Lake High School | ≤5.0% | 8.1% | 46.6% | ≤5.0% | 12.9% | 25.0% | 7.0% |
| Homewood | ≤5.0% | ≤5.0% | 57.4% | ≤5.0% | 11.5% | 24.6% | ≤5.0% |

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|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Center | | | | | | | |
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Middle School Demographics (grouped by SRO split assignments)

| School | American Indian/Alaskan Native | Asian | Black/African American | Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | Hispanic/Latino | White | Two or More Races |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------------------|
| Mayfield Woods Middle School | ≤5.0% | 13.7% | 29.2% | ≤5.0% | 26.3% | 25.8% | ≤5.0% |
| Patuxent Valley Middle School | ≤5.0% | 15.6% | 42.3% | ≤5.0% | 18.2% | 17.8% | 5.7% |

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|-------------------------------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Wilde Lake Middle School | ≤5.0% | 7.4% | 46.1% | ≤5.0% | 13.3% | 23.9% | 9.0% |
| Harper's Choice Middle School | ≤5.0% | 7.3% | 47.9% | ≤5.0% | 16.2% | 18.5% | 9.5% |

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|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Lake Elkhorn Middle School | ≤5.0% | 8.7% | 51.9% | ≤5.0% | 18.8% | 12.6% | 8.1% |
| Oakland Mills Middle School | ≤5.0% | ≤5.0% | 36.8% | ≤5.0% | 24.3% | 26.9% | 8.2% |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Murray Hill Middle School | ≤5.0% | 16.1% | 43.7% | ≤5.0% | 21.2% | 12.0% | 6.8% |
| Hammond | ≤5.0% | 11.5% | 26.7% | ≤5.0% | 10.6% | 41.9% | 9.1% |

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|---------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Middle School | | | | | | | |
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|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Thomas Viaduct Middle School | ≤5.0% | 15.3% | 46.6% | ≤5.0% | 17.7% | 14.3% | 5.7% |
| Elkridge Landing Middle School | ≤5.0% | 15.8% | 25.8% | ≤5.0% | 8.1% | 43.7% | 6.0% |

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|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Bonnie Branch Middle School | ≤5.0% | 18.2% | 24.0% | ≤5.0% | 15.3% | 36.5% | 5.8% |
| Ellicott Mills Middle School | ≤5.0% | 32.6% | 16.8% | ≤5.0% | ≤5.0% | 39.7% | 5.7% |

Next Steps for HCPSS and the Board of Education of Howard County

Following a series of meetings with the Howard County Executive, HCPD, students, and administrators, HCPSS has developed the following timeline to engage as many stakeholders as possible so that the Board can make an informed decision on the SRO program in HCPSS.

| Date | Event | Action |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| September 24, 2020 | Initial Report to the BOE | Dr. Martirano will give an initial report on SROs in schools which includes not only national data, but also district specific data to frame the discussion about SROs. |
| October 5, 2020 6:30-8pm | HCPSS Student and Families Virtual Focus Group on SROs in Schools | Facilitated focus group of HCPSS students and families on SROs in schools. Interested participants will fill out an application and a randomly selected group of people will be chosen divided equally among those who support SROs, are opposed to SROs, and have no position on SROs. The number of participants will be a representative sample of the number of applicants who submit. Information on the number of completed applications and the percentage selected to participate |

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|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | will be made public; however, the names of the participants will not be identified to protect the validity of the data. |
| October 12, 2020 6:30-8pm | HCPSS Staff Virtual Focus Group on SROs in Schools | Facilitated focus group of HCPSS staff on SROs in schools. Interested participants will fill out an application and a randomly selected group of people will be chosen divided equally among those who support SROs in schools, are opposed to SROs in schools, and have no position on SROs in schools. The number of participants will be a representative sample of the number of applicants who submit. Information on the number of completed applications and the percentage selected to participate will be made public; however, the names of the participants will not be identified to protect the validity of the data. |
| October 15, 2020 6:30-8pm | HCPSS Community Virtual Focus Group on SROs in Schools | Facilitated focus group of community stakeholders on police in schools. Interested participants will fill out an application and a randomly selected group of people will be chosen divided equally among those who support SROs in schools, are opposed to SROs in schools, and have no position on SROs in schools. The number of participants will be a representative sample of the number of applicants who submit. Information on the number of completed applications and the percentage selected to participate will be made public; however, the names of the participants will not be identified to protect the validity of the data. |
| October 22, 2020 | BOE Meeting | Update to BOE on focus group engagements. |
| November 12, 2020 6:30-8 pm | Howard County Virtual Town Hall on SROs in Schools | A moderated town hall to provide the public an opportunity to share views on SROs in schools. |
| November 19, 2020 | BOE Meeting | BOE can begin having an open debate on the topic of police in schools. HCPSS and Howard County Government staff will be available to report on data collected from focus groups and town hall and answer any questions from BOE. Because this debate could happen over a series of meetings, it may be good to have newly elected board members present for this discussion as well to hear the report and/or debate by the current board. |
| December 7, 2020 (if necessary) | BOE Meeting | If BOE needs another meeting to continue public discussion. |
| January 21, 2021 | BOE Meeting | BOE to take an official action on police in HCPSS schools if so desired. |

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