

Nov. 17, 2021

Dear Honorable Public Safety Advisory Board and City Council Members,

As superintendent of Mountain View Whisman Schools, a resident of Mountain View, and an educator with more than two decades of experience, I feel that my observations, perception and interactions with Mountain View Police Department School Resource Officers (SROs) are unique, illuminative and hopefully insightful to your deliberations.

Just last week I was interviewed by a Doctoral student who was looking to understand the role of community policing in schools. I shared with her that one of my earliest memories of interacting with police occurred right in front of my house. On this day two police officers stopped their patrol car in front of my house and began to frisk me, without providing cause. I was an elementary school student who was locked out of the house, completing my homework and waiting for my mother to arrive. My belongings were “tossed,” and I was left feeling violated. The police left at the exact time that my mother was pulling up.

This was not the seminal event in my life that shaped my perception of police officers. Instead it was the African American SRO from my high school. He was more than a mentor. He served as a lighthouse for what I could achieve as a young black man. He was God-fearing, kind, supportive, and firm. He was my “brother, father figure and protector.” He taught me, without ever having to develop a lesson plan.

He and the countless other police officers, including the MVPD Youth Services Department, with whom I have had the privilege of working are the epitome of community policing. They serve as much needed role models for our students; ones that our students can personally identify with. They are relationship builders, advocates, mentors and coaches. They are caring men and women who share my belief that the best way to change a community's perception of police is through kindness, laughter and smiles.

Recent events have led to a call to action for the removal of police in schools. Officers all over the country, including our SROs, have been unjustly painted with a broad brush. Even worse, members of our own community have called for their removal without any data, conversations with our staff / Board, or observations of their work. While I appreciate the allyship, I was always taught that “the road to perdition is paved with good intentions.”

MVWSD understands the role of SROs in our school community. We seek their assistance with safety drills, which have helped save our students' lives in active shooting events; Gilroy and Six Flags. We rely on them to work with our at-risk students after school and during the summer. We ask for their assistance in keeping our students and staff safe. They talk to our students about bike safety, online bullying and the dangers of using drugs. They participate in our parent education events. In short, we ask them to do more than police, we ask them to serve as the glue for our community.

While having the honor of participating with Chief Max Bosel in the city's Human Rights Commission "Community Forum: Affirming Mountain View Values" on Feb. 11, 2017, I spoke about the roles of the police and the community. The death of George Floyd is a tragic stain on the fabric of American history, but it should have never been used as a referendum to remove police officers from our schools or reduce their presence in our community. Instead, it was a moment to begin to understand that the path forward will require all of us to listen more, set aside our differences and suspend our judgement of others. May 25 should not only serve as a moment of remembrance, but also as the moment when we realize that each of us plays a vital role in creating a safe environment for our kids.

Our schools need our SROs. Our kids need to see strong men and women who are not only service oriented but also vested in their success. We should be highlighting their work and applauding their efforts and kindness. If there are any changes needed, it should be finding ways to help them achieve their professional aspirations while staying within the Youth Services Department. These men and women, and MVPD's approach to community policing, should not only be lauded, but be recognized as a critical aspect of the work to create positive change in every community; especially those that are composed of low-income and minority families.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AR', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Ayindé Rudolph, Ed.D.
Superintendent

From: [Serge Bonte](#)
To: [PSAB](#)
Subject: re: Public Safety Advisory Board Recommendations on School Resource Officers
Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 7:30:51 PM

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Dear PSAB Members:

I wanted to first congratulate the PSA Board for a well written and well reasoned set of recommendations.

Looking at the survey results, it isn't clear how many students/parents were from Los Altos High School (if any). Nor how many students/parents were from Mountain View (roughly half of MVHS students are not from Mountain View).

I think both data points would help in analysing the survey results and in presenting the recommendations to the Mountain View community (since it's the focus of your board).

Hopefully you can add the data points before presenting your recommendations on December 14.

I also noticed that more parents than students answered the survey. As the parent of a LAHS alumni and a former MVLA HS Foundation Board Member, I am not surprised: parents in our community are as doting as they are opinionated. It's also clear that parents don't have anywhere close to the same lived campus experience as their children. In my opinion, students' answers carry much more weight and I hope you took into account the relative lived experience of the survey respondents.

I really appreciated that the recommendations zeroed in on clarifying the exact role of YSU and SRO. First, it's near impossible to evaluate the performance of a program so loosely defined. But I also think a lot of the misunderstandings stem from the lack of definition.

This sentence illustrates well the confusion (emphasis added):

" For example, it should be clear that the SRO program is about relationship-building, mentorship, and **law enforcement, when necessary, but not about providing a security presence** at schools and school events unless there is a known security threat that merits a law enforcement presence."

If you look at some of the survey feedback, it's clear that many think that the main benefit of an SRO is indeed to provide that security presence.

" Unfortunately, school shootings and bomb threats are a real and present danger. Having SROs **on campus** is a comfort to me as a parent, not a guarantee, but a comfort."
The letter from MVLA conveys a similar sentiment by contrasting 2 recent incidents one at LAHS with no SRO and one at MVHS with an SRO. In reality both incidents were handled with similar diligence and professionalism by LAPD and MVPD; the presence or absence of

an SRO was a non-factor.

As the SRO role gets clarified and I support the direction you're setting in the quoted example, I would like to make this suggestion.

If the focus is on relationship-building , mentorship, SRO should be considered as civilians when on campus. There is no need for weapons, probably no need for uniforms. Maybe the O should be dropped, in favor of an M for Mentor ?

When security and law enforcement is a requirement, then certainly uniformed LAPD or MVPD officers should be called. As we have seen in the 2 recent incidents mentioned in the MVLA letter, LAPD and MVPD alike are well equipped to respond quickly (regardless of having an SRO).

Sincerely,

Serge Bonte
Mountain View Resident
former LASD/LAH parent
former MVLA HS Foundation Board Member

From: [Dawn Scott](#)
To: [, PSAB](#)
Subject: SRO Removal
Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 8:34:05 PM

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Sent from my iPhone

Hello, my name is Dawn Scott and I'm a parent in the community. I'm writing because I would like to urge you to continue your commitment to Black Lives by keeping police out of our schools. Police officers on campus don't make our students safer. Police on campus only increases criminalization and pushout of Black and Brown students.

1. Many students, especially Black and Brown youth, feel unsafe around police
 - a. Police violence against Black and Brown communities has traumatized many young people
 - b. For undocumented and mixed status families police presence causes increased fear and anxiety around deportation.

2. Students and community advocates have been clear -- counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses and other support staff are the answer to making school safe NOT COPS
 - a. [CA public schools have 2x as many school police as social workers](#)

Don't take a step back by opening the door again to continued criminalization and policing of our students. Keep your promise of standing up for Black and Brown students by keeping police out of our schools.

Thank you,

Dawn Scott

From: [Tanya Maluf](#)
To: [PSAB](#); [City Council](#)
Subject: SROs on Mountain View High School Campus
Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 7:18:24 PM

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Hello,

I am a parent of two kids who were/are attending Los Altos High School (one graduated in 2020). I very much appreciate the work of the PSAB as well as the effort to reach parents and the community with a survey about SROs on campus at Mountain View High School.

As you compile the information and hear recommendations, please give priority to the students, mostly (if not all) Black or Brown, who feel unsafe with a police officer on campus. If there are positive results from the parent survey, it would be important data to know if the parents are white, Black or Brown. Without this knowledge the results cannot be interpreted accurately.

There are programs at Mountain View High School involving the MVPD that could take place after school hours and avoid having police officers on campus during school. There is enough data available to show that SROs are not a preventative tool. The SRO is called to an incident vs preventing an incident. Mountain View High School needs more counselors and social workers, and Restorative Justice programs can be explored in place of having a police officer on school grounds to deal with disciplinary issues. Dealing with an issue as it arises does not address the *why* or the current systems in place that need to be changed.

It is important to recognize that not all experiences with the SROs have been negative, but the negative experiences should outweigh the positive. ALL students on campus should feel safe at ALL times.

I urge you to discontinue the SRO program at Mountain View High School.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

Tanya Maluf

"History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again." - from Maya Angelou's poem, *On the Pulse of Morning*.

From: [Radhika Kamran](#)
To: [PSAB](#)
Subject: To the Members and Staff of the Public Safety Advisory Board
Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 6:40:52 AM

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Dear members and staff of the Public Safety Advisory Board,

My name is Radhika Kamran and I am currently a student at Mountain View High School. I would like to ask for your time and for you to consider why armed, uniformed officers may not be the best at providing students with the mentorship, counseling, and career-guidance resources that they need and deserve. As a student it can feel intimidating and anxiety-inducing to have an armed adult in a space that is supposed to be safe and conducive of learning. I understand that the diversion programs provided by SROs, like the Police Activities League and “Dreams and Futures”, have received positive feedback from participants, so I am by all means not asking you to discontinue them if they have been found to be beneficial to some. At the same time, having officers stationed on campus during passing periods and free time, even if their purpose is simply to get to know students informally, can be harmful and provide the opposite effect than those that you are intending. As a student who should have no fear or trepidation around police, having an SRO on campus can be intimidating and disruptive of the safe space that school provides. I cannot even begin to imagine how this might be harmful to students with personal and family trauma related to police officers. With the knowledge that we haven’t seen clear evidence that the presence of officers on campus meaningfully improves student outcomes, I really ask you to consider the benefit of having student resident officers on campus. I hope that your recommendations maintain the structured diversion programs that have proven valuable and these activities occur off campus when possible. SROs should be on campus when necessary for the work of the diversion programs or when called by a staff member for incidents that require police intervention. When officers are called to campus, we’d like the reasons and outcomes to be clearly and publicly documented, so that students can understand the jobs and benefits of these officers and their presence is not an intimidation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Radhika Kamran