

I saw the PTSA request for the return of the SRO and I want to share my significant concerns with that request. While it sounds like the prior SRO was an awesome community member, I am worried that if a different SRO were rehired that they could do significant harm. I would much rather see a lot of the great things he did turned into a job description for an non-SLE. The things I wondered when I read the description were as follows: 1- are there conflicts of interest for an SRO who is an SLE when it comes to whether or not someone's illegal activities should be reported. 2- what are the chances for abuse in a system where people are sharing sensitive details to someone who is an LEO? 3- the PTSA seems to think one guy alone will "fix" the problems without understanding the impacts of the pandemic on kids and one guy can't be responsible for all that 4- can a better job description be written with someone who could do a lot of the things the SRO did but with understanding about legal systems, juvenile justice etc. Thanks for reading.

I am Somerville resident, a parent, and a family therapist. The revised MOU document presented to you on Feb 28 is addressing the issue of policing in our schools in a very basic way. It is OBVIOUSLY NOT ENOUGH, and I hope you will vote in favor of this document, knowing that the premise of the option for an educator to call the police is not addressed.

The task forward is to challenge this premise. Police should never be part of education. If schools encounter difficult situations, with children and teenagers and feel overwhelmed, they should receive additional training and have access to more resource. Police is not a solution to violence in a school.

I can't attend the meeting, but I would love to contribute by sending written comments. Please send talking points and where to send the comments.

As a Somerville parent of two elementary-aged children and a Special Educator in a neighboring district, I wholeheartedly support the adaptation of the People's Policy for Police Interaction with Schools and Students. School should be a safe space for all students. Adaptation of this MOU will help ensure students are not criminalized for behaviors that are within the realm of "normal" for their age groups.

My name is Brittany Vetter. I am a Ward 4 resident, an educator of 15 years, and a parent. I'm here this evening to speak in support of the People's Policy MOU. We all support the goal of making school a safe place for all students. Unnecessary police contact and presence undermines students well-being and safety while also fueling the school to prison pipeline. Somerville's current MOU has 16 reportable offenses. I support eliminating the SRO program and limiting police involvement in schools to what is required by law. Let's support our students with experts in the field of education and youth mental health as they navigate this challenging time rather than criminalizing them. I urge you to adopt the People's Policy MOU to advocate for the well-being and futures of all of our students.

I provided the following at the Feb. 28 School Committee Meeting, and I'd like to offer the same comments to the subcommittee. Thank you.

I'm Marianne McPherson, and I live at 10 Grand View Ave. I'm parent to a 7th and 4th grader at the Argenziano School, where I am also a member of the School Improvement Committee. I'm here in support of the People's Policy for Police Interaction With Schools and Students MOU.

Earlier today, I was reviewing the SPS commitment to the whole child that's on the landing page of the website. It makes me proud to be part of this community, as a place that is "dedicated to the realization of the full ... potential of all students," and as a place that "shall maintain a safe environment that nurtures the curiosity, dignity and self-worth of each individual."

The People's Policy MOU is one very tangible and essential way to make real that commitment. I come to this recommendation first and foremost as a parent and resident and also drawing on my professional training and practice in public health, social policy, and systems improvement. Supporting school environments such that they can be places of dignity, safety and true learning and curiosity for each of our students requires policies that center student well-being and thriving.

Having police in the schools works counter to this purpose, undermining students' well-being, as they feel policed instead of safe, exacerbating or creating potential trauma rather than being trauma-informed. Unnecessary police contact fuels the school-to-prison pipeline, criminalizing typical adolescent behavior, particularly for Black and Latinx youth. This runs counter to the city's commitment to racial justice.

At present, Somerville's MOU requires significantly more police involvement than required by state law. Among the 16 "mandatory reportable incidents" are "annoying phone calls" that schools must immediately report to police, even if they happen at home and not school. Justice for Flavia's People's Policy MOU terminates the School Resource Officer program and limits police involvement to what is required by law.

I invite the School Committee to redirect the funds used on policing to provide additional supports—emotional support specialists, guidance counselors, and more—to ensure a healthy, safe, racially equitable learning environment for all students in our city.

Once again, I urge you to support the People's Policy MOU, and I thank you for your leadership in our schools and community.

My name is Erich Ludwig. I live on Berkeley Street in Ward three. I'm the father to two students at the Argenziano, one in kindergarten and one in third grade.

I am writing with some thoughts that I also shared with the full School Committee this week.

I want to express my desire that we in Somerville limit police in our schools to the legal minimum, as detailed in the draft MOU shared by the experienced juvenile justice team working with Peoples Policy team.

(The draft MOU is here :: <https://t.co/s4MqICZuuK> and if you'd like a paper copy, please reach out to me erichludwig@gmail.com - I'd be happy to get you a printed paper copy)

In the larger societal picture, we know that the job we have asked police to do has expanded and expanded into areas that they're just not trained to deal with.

Police are great at responding to incidents - at being a reactionary approach to breaches of public safety. We also know that, on a systems level, they are not great at creating conditions for calm communication and de-escalation.

We also know that students in our schools are facing a variety of challenges. Some just around being normal kids and teenagers, and some, the lingering effects of the pandemic that were still in.

The best way that we can support our children is by creating a series of systems that work to de-escalate and minimize the causes of any conflict before they happen.

We need to build on the amazing equity work being driven here in the district by Dr. Jessica Boston Davis and her team.

We need to more fully invest in programs to support social emotional and Mental health in our schools. We need to build better communications to our families about what's actually happening in our schools. And we need to work with our city council to fund efforts to teach & practice restorative justice in our schools and community.

If we do that, when we have incidents that require responses, we can respond to them with love as a community, rather than asking armed police to attempt to drop in and deal with a situation.

I know we've had great luck with an individual Student Resource Office (SRO) in our schools in the past - we've heard detailed testimony about his work. It seems like this person was just an amazing resource and most of his work was not at all related to his being an armed police officer.

Rather than trust that the police will be able to find & place these individuals in our schools, we should focus on hiring those folks directly as school staff.

We know that the interactions between police and students of color, students undergoing mental health crises, and immigrant students aren't always positive and can result in long term, serious implications to the health and wellbeing of those students. For these and other reasons we should not have armed individuals in our schools.

I look forward to continuing conversation and recommendations from this Special Subcommittee on

Policing, as well as larger holistic conversations around funding full support systems for our students.

I look forward to this special subCommittee, the full School Committee, the City Council, and the Mayor's Office contributing to creating a truly safe city for all our students and residents.

Thank you.

It is very important that we direct our resources to protecting students' mental health rather than criminalizing behavior that stems from the extreme trauma of the past two years. Please hire more counselors and create a fully functioning restorative Justice program instead of just adding more cops. I know you all have heard a lot about this from many people across the city. I just want to remind you that it is your job to listen with compassion and understand where we are coming from and why. I saw so much pain and struggle during my time at Somerville high that could have been prevented had the resources been available. The police were never and have never been one of those resources. Please. I ask again from the heart for you to listen to our voices and protect kids the way that they need protection. With love, Grace.

Hi my name is Matthew Kennedy. I live in ward 5. I'm writing to oppose police presence and schools and asking the committee to please accept the MOU produced by Justice for Flavia. The organization is composed of parents and organizers in Somerville who are among the most informed and most directly affected by police in schools. I'm concerned by the fact that the selection of members for the subcommittee on policing intentionally prioritized people who have not been organizing around this issue.

On no other issue would the school committee intentionally exclude those who were most impacted and informed from the discussion.

Cops in schools are a relatively new phenomenon. In 1975, only 1% of schools were policed. Now almost half of all schools are policed.

<https://www.aclu-wa.org/story/school-resource-officers-when-cure-worse-disease>

Most of us can agree that we don't want children to be arrested. We don't want officers to carry guns in schools.

Disciplinary issues have been cited by a minority of residents who would like to have police in schools, but by Massachusetts state law, it is illegal to use police officers as school disciplinarians.

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section37P>

If we don't want kids in jail, we don't want them to be around guns, and cops are legally not allowed to be disciplinarians, then there's no good reason to have cops in schools. Especially not when there's a lack of school counselors.

The American School Counselor Association recommends a ratio of 250 students per counselor. In 2018, Massachusetts had nearly twice that ratio, at 423 students per counselor. The National Association of School Psychologists recommends one psychologist for every 700 students and in 2018 MA had one per 981 students in the state.

<https://e4e.org/blog-news/press-release/educators-excellence-boston-reacts-passage-bill-s2325-missed->

opportunity

There is a need for additional staff to support our school children, but police officers do not have the skills that our students need and are actively harmful toward their development.

Please adopt the Justice for Flavia MOU that was sent to all of you on February 17th and reduce the presence of police in schools to the minimum required by state law.

You can find a copy of our MOU here:

https://storage.googleapis.com/gator-users/user-739597/documents/5417a034a8cf40e99d52a83f5e98c21a/PeoplesPolicyMOU_v3_finalcomplete_2-15-22%5B1650%5D.pdf

Hello, I have a student at the HS and I am in support of having an SRO at the HS. I understand why some of you may be hesitant about having SRO's in elementary schools - but the HS most definitely would benefit from having an SRO. There are fights almost daily. I have seen videos of teachers and security being knocked to the ground trying to break up the fights. I have heard stories of students trying to break up fights - which is extremely dangerous. I have heard stories of drugs and gang signs. I don't know how many people on the subcommittee have children at the HS or have seen the students at the HS. These kids are not small. Some of them are very large adult size - bigger and taller than some of the staff. It is not safe for teachers or students to be getting in the middle of these altercations.

Please allow the HS to have an SRO. Please allow this to happen ASAP - before someone, student or staff, gets seriously injured. Thank you.

My name is Sarah Haberlack, I'm a resident of Ward Two—I'm writing to urge the Special Policing Subcommittee to support the People's Policy MOU.

The MOU would end the use of an SRO at Somerville High School, and reduce police presence in Somerville schools to what is only legally necessary. While some school staff members and even some students may have had positive experiences with the previous SRO, there is nothing he has done that a professional trained in childcare couldn't have done better.

I'm a supporter of the People's MOU because I know that Massachusetts has more students per counselor and more students per psychologists than recommended by the national associations of school counselors and psychologists. Ending the use of SROs at Somerville high school and hiring more school psychologists and counselors would help all students thrive. And, as a resident of Somerville, I want all children in my school district to feel safe at school.

As members of the Special Policing Committee, you all have an important voice in shaping the future of policing in Somerville schools. I, along with all the supporters of the people's policy MOU, ask that you read the MOU to better understand the legal and evidential reasoning for our position, and implement it to ensure bright futures for all Somerville students.

I'm writing to invite you to join Justice for Flavia for the screening of "On These Grounds" in collaboration with the Somerville Theater. "On These Grounds" is an award-winning documentary from Garret Zevgetis that examines the impacts of school policing on communities of color. The event will be held on Monday, April 11, at 7:30pm at the Somerville Theater. The screening will be followed by a panel discussion moderated by Flavia Perea featuring the retired juvenile court judge Jay Blitzman, BPS educator Lena Papagiannis, and Executive Director of Citizens for Juvenile Justice Leon Smith. We believe this film and the discussion will broaden everyone's understanding of the issue of police in schools, which is essential right now as we weigh this decision here in Somerville. We believe this event

is essential for you as a decision maker on the issue.

Went to the screening of on these grounds tonight and it was really powerful! We highly recommend it to the committee. Let us know if you would like to see it and we will set up a private screening!

Hello!

I'm writing to give comment/feedback for a few reasons.

1) I would like to make sure that this sub-committee reports out to the main school committee in a timely manner. The last 2 meetings of this sub-committee I've had to miss have not been reported out in the following main school committee meetings, so I'm starting to feel like the larger community (including myself) is having trouble tracking the progress and goals of this sub-committee.

2) I'd like to understand what the plans for this committee are for the summer - we seem to be rapidly approaching a break without a clear plan for what this committee will recommend and how Supt Skipper and the School Committee will move forward.

3) I'd like to make sure that we learn the appropriate lessons from the horrible tragedy in Texas. As we have learned, this school had an armed SRO and had multiple police onsite, and still the massacre occurred. Armed cops & SROs don't keep kids safe, even in this kind of horrific incidents. This community had invested ~40% of their entire budget in policing, and could not prevent or minimize the harm. We must try different approaches to ensuring the mental & physical health of our children.

Thank you.

-erich ludwig (36 Berkeley St, parent to 2 children in the Somerville Public Schools)

I just submitted one comment earlier today but wanted to come back with some actual data.

Here is a paper from the journal of American medical association on "outcomes" of school shootings with and without armed school guards.

In it, the authors show that outcomes in schools with armed guards were worse (ie more children died)

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2776515>

Again, thank you!

In the wake of the Uvalde shootings, we've heard numerous calls to increase police presence in schools. If anything, this horrific shooting showed us that police are incapable of preventing or even stopping these violent attacks. Interventions with young people must happen much further upstream if we are to stop the consistent flow of gun violence that we've witnessed over the last decade and beyond. Simply increasing presence has only been proven to criminalize Black, brown, and disabled youth in our schools. Adopt the People's Policy MOU presented by Justice for Flavia immediately!

In the February Meeting there were several important data requested - it is not clear to the public that this data has been provided. If this data has been provided, please post it somewhere we can access.

If this data has NOT been provided, do we know when we can get it?

The specific data in question is:

* Dr. Phillips requested that SPD be asked under what circumstances they file a Form 100.

* Chair Green reviewed follow up questions for SPD: What happens when a contact is referred to SPD? What reports might be generated from these referrals? What results in a permanent record? What is later discoverable?

* Chair Green listed points where the subcommittee would like more information from the district: What is our full suite of mental health supports? Exactly what are we calling police for?

Dear Policing Sub-Committee -

I gave public comment on Monday June 13 School Committee and thought you might also be interested. Please find my expanded comments below.

Sadly I must miss the meeting on Wednesday June 15 to coach my son's Somerville Youth Soccer team, so I will look to the public record to learn more about what transpires.

My name is Erich Ludwig and I live at 36 Berkeley St in Ward 3.

I am the son of public educators, and the product of public education.

I'm speaking tonight with a bit of frustration. I've been closely following the School Committee for the past 2 years, and have 2 children in elementary school at the Argenziano.

It is abundantly clear from the evidence we have that police in schools will not keep our children safe.

We also know that safety cannot be viewed only through the lens of such violence as school shootings. AND - even if it was able to do that - we know the evidence suggests police do not bring safety. Following the tragedy at Columbine High School in 1999, the United States Secret Service partnered with the U.S. Department of Education and produced a report which has been updated several times in the intervening years. This report is readily available, but the key part for me is creating trusted connections between students and adults creates safety; and that placing police in schools and involving them in discipline destroys that trust.

I'm frustrated because it is appearing to me that the process and conversations around police in schools is set up to create the facade of participation, but is not actually about inclusion or safety.

The last policing sub-committee occurred on April 6, and the minutes & details of that meeting were NOT reported out until June 13 - despite 3 full school committee meetings in the intervening 2 months.

At the Feb 15 policing sub-committee, questions were raised by Chair Green, Dr Phillips and Principal Buchanan. As far as is reflected in the public record, these questions have not been answered. These questions included: Dr. Phillips requesting that SPD be asked under what circumstances they file a Form 100. Chair Green asking for follow up questions for SPD including What happens when a contact is referred to SPD?, What reports might be generated from these referrals?, What results in a permanent record?, What is later discoverable? Principal Buchanan wanted information on points particularly focused around undocumented children so that they feel safe and secure. Chair Green asked for more information from the district including What is our full suite of mental health supports? and Exactly what are we calling police for?

In that same Feb 15 meeting, Principal Soto and Equity Specialist Banda asked for student voice to be included in the process. Chair Green agreed, saying students would be involved & surveyed. As we heard on June 13, the plan is for a survey to happen in September or October of 2022.

And yet, on May 28, the lawyer for the district - Attorney Tobin - sent the Superintendent a memo in which the adoption of the bare minimum sample state MOU was recommended.

How are we, the public, meant to feel at this point? Students and the public are not being listened to.

While it is but a small sample, I have sought out HS students and teachers these past weeks to listen to them. It is abundantly clear to me that we can improve the safety for all of them through much simpler means than bringing cops back into educational environments. For example, our teachers want a clear cell phone policy in HS so students aren't distracted by social media during class. Our students want clear information, advice & guidance for a variety of situations, rather than being talked at during all-house lectures.

I have also learned about several *student driven* surveys around policing and discipline at Somerville High School that have happened in the past few years. Apparently these surveys were shared with administration and these surveys indicated a strong opinion opposing police presence in schools.

I recommend the policing sub-committee re-commit to a public process.

I also urge the sub-committee, the full school committee, and the Superintendent to look beyond the state's sample MOU. This MOU is *the floor* of what we must do - and here in Somerville we want to be better, more equitable, more inclusive, and create a broader definition of safety that includes more children.

There are many close at hand resources on these topics, including:

<https://www.cfjj.org/policing-in-schools> and

<https://www.aclu-wa.org/story/school-resource-officers-when-cure-worse-disease> as well as the juvenile justice experts that are working with Justice for Flavia and who helped draft the People's Policy MOU. If you'd like help accessing these resources please let me know and I'll be happy to help bring them to this group or to any of you individually.

Thank you.-erich (erichludwig@gmail.com)

Hi Policing Subcommittee,

I'd like to share this email I sent to the school committee recently because I'd like as many people with authority over police in SPS to see it.

In my last school committee meeting public comment, I failed to relate the importance of keeping police out of schools to the recent horrific murder of 19 children and 2 teachers in Uvalde, Texas. I'll do so here.

Uvalde, Texas spends 40% of its budget on policing.

After the massacre began, 19 police officers stood in a hallway while shots were being fired.

The first police officer arrived at the school at 11:31 am, but none of them entered the classroom the shooter was in until 12:50 which means 79 minutes passed.

Cops claimed the killer barricaded himself in the classroom when in reality he had just locked the door. Police didn't enter the room until a staff member gave them a key. When police murdered Breonna Taylor and 7 year old Aiyana Jones, they had no problem knocking doors down themselves.

While 19 officers stood in a hallway for over an hour, other officers took action outside by assaulting, handcuffing, pepper spraying, and tasing parents.

Additional training would not have helped because officers had received active shooter training just 2 months before the shooting took place. The police chief had also completed an 8 hour course on active shooters months earlier.

"Good guys with guns" were on the scene and their behavior was absolutely atrocious.

Although school shootings seem to dominate the headlines, they are still relatively rare. Here's some research on the proven harm that police in schools cause on a regular basis.

From the ACLU: "The arrest rates for schools with SROs were 3.5 times the rate of those without SROs, and in some states the arrest rates are as much as eight times the rate of schools without."

"Students of color are arrested or referred to law enforcement at significantly higher rates than their white counterparts. Moreover, students with disabilities are arrested or referred to law enforcement nearly three times the rate as their non-disabled peers.

School officers are also more likely to use force against these groups. Pepper spray, tasers, pain compliance techniques, use of police batons, hitting, kicking, slamming, and choking are all tactics that have been deemed too harsh for detention facilities, and yet, these tactics are used against students in schools."

Make the right decision and do it soon. Vote for the People's Policy MOU. Having police in schools does far more harm than good.

Thanks,
Matthew Kennedy

Justice for Flavia

Hi! My name is Angela Rodriguez, and I am a grade 3 teacher at AFA. I am completing an administrator licensure program and internship this year, and Glenda Soto is my mentor. I am trying to broaden my knowledge base over the course of the year, and I was hoping to observe a couple of these meetings. If possible, can you please send me the Zoom link for these meetings so that I can observe if that is alright? Thank you so much!

As a heads up, I'm not sure many people know about the upcoming forum since it wasn't advertised.

My name is Alethea Roy, I am a public school educator of almost 20 years, my grandfather was a chief of police in my hometown, my father in law was a police officer, my father is a retired probation officer, my mother is a public school teacher, and both of my children are public school students.

The placement of SRO in schools has become an overly politicized tool in the public sphere and a tool for leveraging votes across our country. As an educator, mother, a person who has had members of my family in law enforcement, and a resident of Somerville, I urge you not to reintroduce the police into our school system.

We know the statistics on police in schools- they do not make it safer, prevent, or stop school shootings. Throughout the country they often find themselves centered in conflict with children, escalate, and use excessive and unnecessary force. They make students feel less safe, in particular our Black, Brown, and special education students who are punished at higher rates than their white classmates.

If funding is available, invest it in counseling and restorative justice. Invest in the school community. Make class sizes smaller. Train teachers and school leaders how to approach supporting all students holistically. We know investing resources in schools and students is what prevents the "need" for SROs. Thank you to the School Committee for providing the community for this opportunity to give our input.

I stand with the group Safe Schools Somerville, working to limit police presence in Somerville Public Schools.

I urge this body to recommend the adoption of the People's MOU, to keep SROs out of our schools; and to fund additional counselors, restorative justice programs, and anti-racist and implicit bias trainings.

We know that police in schools cause harm, and yet don't prevent the biggest harms.

Our Somerville community has loudly and consistently demonstrated broad support for alternatives to Police. We don't want police in schools, we want to build community and provide mental health support.

We want our children and our teachers & staff to be safe - Police don't stop school shootings.

Thank you.

Donald Cronin
251 Summer Street
Ward 5 - Precinct 4

What can we say that has not already been said? The school to prison pipeline is well known and well documented with data that clearly shows the harm the policing of children causes and the disproportionate impact it has on the lives of children of color and marginalized communities. We've shown up with students, bravely speaking out against police inside their schools. We've heard from parents- who have signed on and spoken up to say NO to cops in our schools. Over 150 teachers from across the district, including many at the high school, have not only spoken up and out against police in our schools but also wrote a letter to the school committee and signed it urging the committee to not only pause the SRO program but to take 4 specific steps, 3 of which our outstanding currently:

2) Hire an external consultant who specializes in diversity, equity, and inclusion work within educational settings to conduct an equity audit of existing policies, programs, and practices.

a. Assess the current discipline systems and structures in place at a school-wide and district-wide level to evaluate how they disproportionately impact BIPOC students.

b. Review previous behavior and incidence data to establish which protocols should be adjusted or clarified.

c. Make public the results and recommendations of the audit.

3. Make immediate changes based on and informed by the audit, restorative justice practices and the most recent research and evidence-based best practices to lift-up all of our students and strive for equity. Including:

a. Clearly identify roles and responsibilities of staff and administration when handling issues regarding discipline, and be transparent with the outcomes of reporting incidences.

b. Provide clear guidance for how to handle specific incidents.

c. Set up a follow up process (as is allowed considering student privacy) for any teacher who reports an incident to ensure transparency between administration and staff.

d. Establish protocols for regular revision of both the MOU between SPS and the Somerville Police Department, and the discipline practices at both the school and district-wide level.

4. Identify and provide professional development and anti-racism training for ALL SPS staff members (administration, teachers, and other educational professionals) to ensure equity, transparency and understanding of the discipline processes.

We've provided a draft MOU authored by the legal experts in this specific field- those who the state leans: Matthew Cregor of the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee, The Honorable Jay Blitzman - a recently retired Juvenile Judge for Middlesex County, Leon Smith- the ED of Citizens for Juvenile Justice who specifically was named by statute to the Massachusetts Model School Resource Office Memorandum Commission, and finally Dave McKenna- an equal justice works fellow with greater boston legal services... not to mention the input of SHS community members.

The people have spoken clearly. Policing our children, criminalizing mental health and poverty is the last thing we need. SPS has the opportunity to show our children and our community that we care about their well being and their safety, and we value and respect evidence based research that shows the real harm policing of children causes. We can find mentorship, build young leaders, and form community in limitless other ways that don't involve the police. We have an incredible opportunity to make meaningful change. Please.

I am writing on behalf of myself and my husband, Joaquim Filho, as we have discussed these issues at length and are in agreement. We are parents of two SPS students in Kindergarten and 6th grade and live in Ten Hills in Ward 4.

I attended the Special Subcommittee on School Policing tonight (Nov 14, 2022) and I feel compelled to share my thoughts, though I didn't feel comfortable doing so in the forum.

For context, I have a personal history of extremely negative experiences of policing. I grew up with a father who had spent years in state prison before turning his life around and subsequently marrying my mother and having me. He taught me that police were to be avoided and that I always needed to follow the law to the letter to avoid ever being on the wrong side of police interactions. Unfortunately, my mentally ill father, then 64 years old and riding a bicycle, was severely beaten by a police officer when he was stopped for riding the wrong way on a one-way street in a predominantly Black neighborhood (in FL) and he didn't behave subserviently. He suffered severe injuries and intense mental trauma from the incident but he was not arrested, so we knew he hadn't done anything sufficient to explain the treatment he suffered. My ex-boyfriend was also severely beaten by police in the same city about a decade later when he got into a scuffle while intoxicated. I myself experienced a gun being pulled on me in the course of a traffic stop when I was 12 years old. My mother was stopped for rolling through a right turn at a stop sign and I didn't know any better and jumped out of the car to talk to the officer because we were late for a middle school Band concert and I was worried we were going to miss it. The officer overreacted and pulled his gun and aimed it at me and screamed at me to put my hands against the car. Once I started sobbing, instead of apologizing he screamed at my mother for allowing me to exit the car and berated us both for several minutes until he let her continue on her way without issuing a ticket.

Additionally, my husband was an undocumented immigrant (he's now a US citizen) and we lived for years "in the shadows," ever careful to avoid interactions with anyone in uniform lest he be deported. These experiences inform my expectations of police behavior and make me believe strongly that there is something deeply wrong with police culture that tends towards brutality and escalation.

Despite these experiences, my husband and I want our two half-Brazilian children of color (ages 6 and 11) to grow up not in fear of police but seeing them as a positive part of community life. We have both had many neutral to even positive experiences with the SPD and we generally trust that they tend to hold themselves to a high standard as a department. We do not want the SRO program to come back to Somerville Public Schools, but we would be in favor of there being some form of relationship between Community officers and the schools to be a compromise between the SRO program and not having any officers specifically assigned to respond if police are ever required on site. Additionally, I have not witnessed how the STEPS program played out in Somerville in person but having had some positive interactions with police officers during my public school education during school assemblies and workshops, I can see how normalizing and humanizing police officers can help to break down some of the cultural fears of police that my kids are currently absorbing. To be honest, I know there is a disconnect between what we *want* policing to be and what it is, but I worry that if we do away with all police interaction with SPS, we widen the gap between community policing and the communities the police are meant to serve. Also, we do our children a disservice by not preparing them for the reality of the existence of policing. Many of our kids will be lucky enough to never interact with police, but for those kids who inevitably will, we believe it's important that they see police as protectors and servants of their community, not as tyrants or bullies who aim to do them harm. I can imagine my own kids on both sides of this - needing help from police or being targeted by police - and so this is an enormously complicated question. But it doesn't feel like the right answer is for them to have absolutely no access to police and to no way for them to humanize police and see them as a potential source of help when it may be direly needed.

i am sending you a written copy of the verbal statement i delivered on monday at the public form. thank you all for your work on this committee.

My name is Erich Ludwig, I live on Berkeley St in Ward 3, and I have 2 children at the Argenziano.

I've been a regular attendee and frequent commentator at these meetings. I'm with Safe School Somerville, formerly known as Justice for Flavia.

The questions in 2 recent surveys - both PTA & High School only Staff - seem to be focused on narrowing down on *where* the police are that we might call and assuming police are the answer rather than having larger discussion on the full topics shown on the slides. This is one good thing for us to figure out. We also have to figure out WHY the police are called, and how parents are involved when they are called.

Where the cop is based isn't a "safety model".

1 year ago, Safe Schools Somerville started drafting a MOU to cover the "when" police should get called. We did this in collaboration with Juvenile Justice experts based here in Massachusetts. 9 months ago, Safe Schools Somerville delivered this MOU to the School Committee, the Superintendent, the Mayor and City Council. As of today, we have not received an invitation to present and discuss this MOU with any of these groups. This MOU limits police interactions to the state minimum, and requires parents to be involved at every step of those interactions.

Since this time, we have organized hundreds of students, teachers, parents, and community members to deliver written and spoken comments to the School Committee, all fervently against us bringing police back. We've heard from high school students who themselves have run surveys documenting police interactions, and they have shared with us how unsafe they feel with an SRO. I must say, I am angry and feel like we have been ignored.

The earlier slides on SROs can do are nice - but the data shows a different story - one not dependent on training the police have received or if the cops are "good cops or bad cops". Rather, this is about a system, a system that places our children in danger, danger from these armed police and the system they represent.

Based on the available data, we know that police in schools harm children - specifically children of color, children with disabilities and immigrant children. We also know, from testimony in this body, that in Somerville the majority of documented police interactions in the high school are in the Next Wave Full Circle program.

Thus, we know we are perpetuating harm on our children if we bring police back into schools. I'm angry that these children might get hurt because of our decisions. They don't deserve this.

As for the STEPS program - we have SO MANY PARENTS that don't carry guns that would love to mentor our students. Bring us in!

Finally, it is important that ALL parents are heard, not just High School parents. As we know, this district has called the cops on children as young as 6, and any MOU we adopt will cover all children and schools in the district. Somerville must stand with children, and with safe schools for all, and reject the placement of police in any of our schools.

here are some resources for the committee to consider around actually if police in schools make our children safer.

Police in Schools cause harm. The presence of police in schools automatically harms students of color, students with disabilities and students who are immigrants. This is a fact born by data, not our opinion. By choosing to place a police officer in our schools, we are choosing to perpetuate and prolong these harms in Somerville. This isn't about good cops or bad cops. This isn't about how well trained the police are (or not). This is how the system of policing works in the USA, and we don't want this to happen to our children in Somerville.

For more on this see <https://www.cfjj.org/policing-in-schools>

Broad Support for Alternatives to Police. We, the residents of Somerville, have demonstrated repeated and overwhelming support from students, staff, teachers and our community that we do not want police in schools. Our community wants restorative justice, mental health supports, and training for our teachers, staff & students on anti-racism and implicit bias.

Safe Schools Somerville has aggregated & delivered hundreds of comments from students, teachers, & parents to the Policing Sub Committee & School Committee - all against bringing back the SRO or having police in schools.

Somerville High School students have run at least 2 internal student surveys in the past 5 years gathering information on the harms caused by having an SRO in school, and delivered these to the high school administration.

Safe Schools Somerville has organized dozens of residents to provide public comment consistently over the past 2 years at School Committee Meetings.

Police don't Stop School Shootings. We as parents, students, educators all want our schools to be safe. This knee-jerk response to put police in schools to protect them from the things we fear most actually makes students feel unsafe and has been shown to not protect our children from these things.

For more on this see

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/10/18/police-schools-may-not-make-kids-any-safer/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/26/us/mass-shooting-school-security.html>

"The People's MOU" - Safe Schools Somerville - formerly "Justice for Flavia" - produced a plan that will protect us from the harms we're worried about (weapons in schools, etc), all while limiting the harm that police in schools produce. This MOU limits police presence to the legal requirements under MA State law, and involves parents at every step when police are engaged by the Somerville Public Schools.

The MOU can be read here: <https://architectureofinjustice.com/people-s-policy-mou>

i'm sharing some links to some materials prepared by Matt Cregor.
Matt has been working with Safe Schools Somerville since it's inception, and has volunteered multiple times to come present to the Policing SubCommittee and School Committee.

learn more about matt here:

<https://mhlac.org/staff/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/matt-cregor-24a2387a/>

<https://law.northeastern.edu/faculty/cregor/>

and reach him at mcregor@mhlac.org

Comparison document Comparing the People's Policy MOU to Massachusetts' Model MOU and Somerville's Current MOU

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cuhVtlgunZLPf2pHVEEnOFAMaaZVIf89n/view?usp=sharing>

people's policy memo RE: Comparing the People's Policy MOU to the 2022 Massachusetts Model MOU

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aZCyXyvl9mNp31Zdl60_cESoxTirDcck/view?usp=sharing

i'm sending the body of an email from Matt Cregor on March 29, 2022 which was sent to the Mayor, Chair Green, and other folks involved in these discussions. Matt's offer, and the other folks he could bring, are still valid & on the table! They'd love to come provide input for this body to consider as it does its work.
thank you.

Dear Mayor Ballantyne, Superintendent Skipper, Chair Green, and Members of the Somerville School Committee:

I thank you for your continued attention to the question of school policing in Somerville. As the School Committee and its Special Policing Subcommittee examine the issue, I would like to offer our time in reviewing and discussing the MOU proposed by Justice for Flavia with you, along with any questions you may have about Massachusetts' school policing laws, its new Model MOU, and Somerville's current MOU. I've spoken with several of the authors who would be willing to present on these topics at one of your meetings. Joining me would be:

The Hon. Jay Blitzman, who recently retired as the First Justice of the Juvenile Court for Middlesex County,

Leon Smith, Executive Director of Citizens for Juvenile Justice, who was named by statute to the Massachusetts Model School Resource Officer Memorandum Commission, and

Dave McKenna, an Equal Justice Works Fellow at Greater Boston Legal Services

And, perhaps more important than laws and regulations, we would be happy to discuss models we've seen in other school districts across the Commonwealth and country that work to keep students feeling safe and welcome in school.

We can make ourselves available for your meetings as is helpful, and appreciate your continued diligence in addressing this matter.

Sincerely,
Matt

Matthew Cregor
Staff Attorney
Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee
617-338-2345, ext. 133; mcregor@mhlac.org

Hello Policing SubCommittee!

I'm just off the zoom call from tonight, and I'm pretty pissed about the District Proposal.

#1 :: Armed cops in schools are fundamentally not ok for the reasons Safe Schools Somerville has outlined in previous public comment. We know from experience that just introducing cops in schools, even with "limits", leads to negative outcomes for certain students. We also know those "limits" will get eroded.

#2 :: The presentation tonight felt like a move to cut off the deliberation and process of this subcommittee (and in turn, the ability of our community to engage). The stated process when this subcommittee was formed was 1) subcommittee prepares recommendation to full SC, 2) SC accepts/modifies proposal, 3) proposal gets passed to mayor for any needed budget. This proposal tonight from the district was presented as a "fait accompli" which makes me deeply question this whole process - we've been working hard to prepare & present information and lived experience testimony to this body and to have it ignored isn't right.

#3 :: There was a lot of not-detail (which feels like intentional obfuscation given point #2). Where are these cops going to be based? In the schools? Around the schools? At the corner Dunks? Who is paying for this? How much does this cost? What else could that money be used for? What are the specific things that the HS admins can't handle that we need SLOs for? What outcomes do we expect from having SLOs in schools? What about the children that feel deeply unsafe seeing an armed police person in their school?

#4 :: Has any other district/city done this "SRO-lite" model? if so - can we see data & information from them please?

I'm sure I'll have more questions / comments, but needed to send this now to work out some of my feelings.

Thank you all for your work on these issues.

-erich