



Special Policing Subcommittee Update #2

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Potential School Safety Models



Model #1

Reinstate a trained building-based School Resource Officer at SHS



Model #2

No building-based SRO; any Somerville Police Department officer on patrol responds



Model #3

No SRO but partner with Somerville Police Department to have trained, dedicated Community Police Officer(s) available

Student Focus Groups

14 Groups moderated by Dr. Gretchen Brion-Meisels, doctoral students, representatives from CPAR

1-12 Students per focus group

90 Students total

Volunteered to Share	Willing to Share	GSA Student Club	Black Student Union
LatinX Student Club	Enroot (2)	Elm House	Next Wave/Full Circle
Newcomers Seminars	Class Officers & Advisory Board	Athletics (2)	Student Mediators

Students preference is for Model 1 or Model 3

	Model 1: SRO	Model 3: CPO
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Familiar with student populationTrainings in Anti-bias and De-escalationImmediate Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Familiar with student populationTrainings in Anti-bias and De-escalationAvailable when needed
Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Unnecessary to have police officer present at all timesEffectiveness of training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Response Time (compared to Model 1)Effectiveness of Training

Key Themes

Safety & Security

**Anti-bias &
Adolescent Training**

Role of SRO/CPO

**De-escalation
Tactics**

**Relationship with
Students**

Safety & Security: Police Presence in Schools

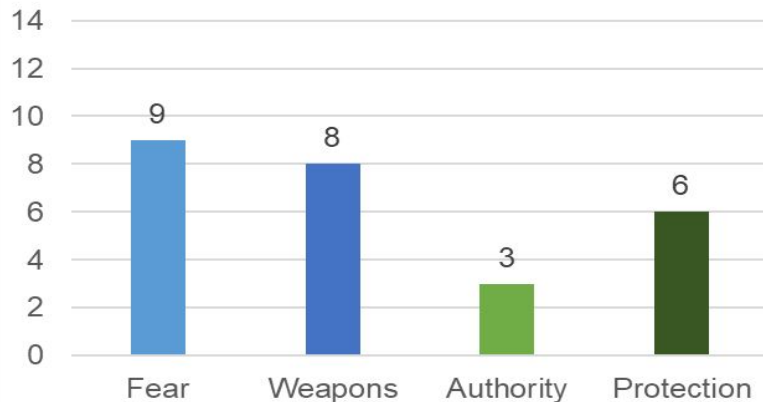
Concerns

- Students have **fear** reactions to police
- **Weapons** (guns/tasers) cause fear

Strengths

- Have **authority** that might prevent incidents
- Provide **protection** in emergency situations

Theme Frequencies



Policy Recommendations

- Increase SRO/CPO understanding of student experiences with police and associated trauma
- Investigate options to reduce student concerns related to police weapons (i.e. guns, tasers)

Safety & Security: Exemplar Quotes

Fear

"I personally have... had very, a very uncomfortable interactions of the police and have police officer in this building constantly would make me not want to come to school. And it would in fact probably make me not come to school in some days that I am feeling especially anxious..."

Weapons

"And adding on, I feel like sometimes like as old as you may be, like guns are intimidating and like people might just be like afraid to even walk in the hallway. Like if you know this person's stationed here people might be like intimidated and like afraid."

Authority

"And I think it would be better if the school was zero tolerance to everything the students do because if the school allows them to do anything and everything then they will keep doing things and with the police you would have more discipline and we would follow the norms..."

Protection

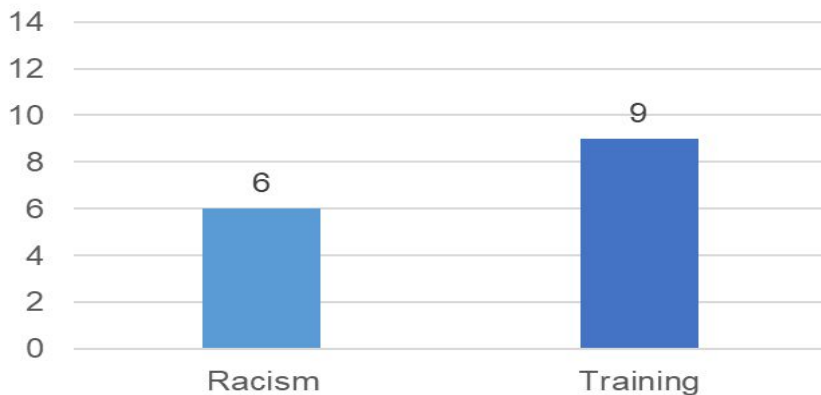
"I think personally like hearing about the news, like close cities getting like students shooting other students. I think that to me makes me lean more towards having an SRO present. because I don't, I wouldn't want a situation to escalate where someone needs to pull out a weapon on another student and take the life of a young student. But that's just my opinion."

Anti-Bias and Adolescent Training

Concerns

- Personal experiences with **racism** with police
- Effectiveness of **training**: interacting with high school students from different backgrounds

Theme Frequencies



Policy Recommendations

- Increase SRO/CPO understanding of student experiences with police and associated trauma*
- Create connection/community between SRO/CPO and students

Anti-Bias and Adolescent Training: Quotes

Racism

"Especially from the situations that happened last year too. Um, when one of the students, a black student got jumped to the floor and got brought to the cop car."

"And I've definitely had like, even though I'm mixed, like I'm half white European and I'm half, um, my dad's from [Latin American Country], um, I've definitely been like accused of things. Okay. Just cuz my last name's [Spanish] and I look a lot like my dad."

Training

"like officers like aren't necessarily trained to like work with like, people our age... I guess that'd be like better, but like, if they're like already, I don't really know like [You have doubt that they, like, just cuz you have received a training doesn't mean like you?] doesn't really mean anything; doesn't prove anything."

De-escalation Tactics

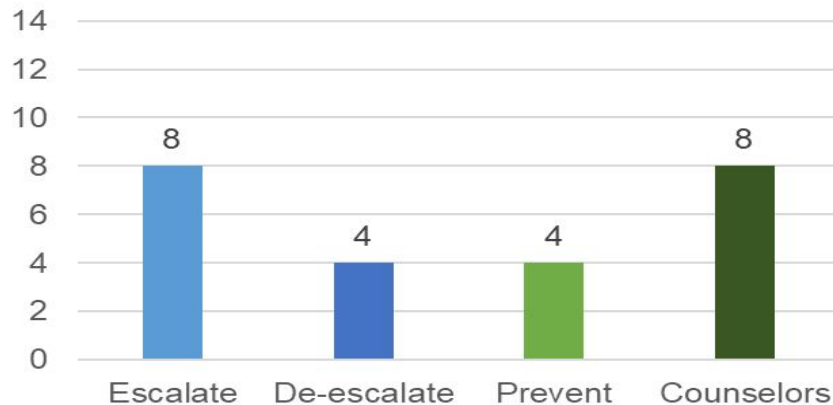
Concerns

- Police may **escalate** minor situations and possibly be violent to students
- Can police effectively **de-escalate**?

Counselors as an Alternative

- Can we **prevent** fights before they happen?
- Can alternative **counselors**/staff respond to student incidents?

Theme Frequencies



Policy Recommendations

- Create connection/community between SRO/CPO and students*
- Clarify role of SRO/CPO in schools and in punitive procedures

De-escalation Tactics: Exemplar Quotes

Escalate

"and also like having a SRO for, I feel like if for what I've seen in like videos or hear from other students, like majority abuse their power of being a sro. Like they kind of like take it very, very, very serious....And in like a very aggressive and bad type of way, even though they're supposed to just diffuse a situation instead of escalating it. Okay."

De-escalate

"[In regards to familiarity with SRO/CPO helping to de-escalate situation] I also agree like if you know them and you like respect them and you see them as like someone who you want to like do well for..."

Prevent

"I think we can get ahead of the problem with other ways so that we instead of stopping fights as they happen, we stop times before they happen...But I think in a lot of cases, like things have been better. Just, I mean we, we could look at our schools based on our previous administration now that the principal that we had last year has left, how many fights compared to last year have we had this year? Just in that total change of administration. I know that there's probably not a straight line that you can draw there, but even just that it exists. So having, um, having a police officer there probably won't help anything. If anything it will make fights more, uh, aggressive, which is not useful for a school."

Counselors as an Alternative

"And so like if one of the arguments for getting an SRO is to help building inclusiveness and whatnot, that I would personally rather they got anyone else with the training who is not police officer because I would just be more easily able to sympathize with them and whatnot because that's not the relationship I have with the police."

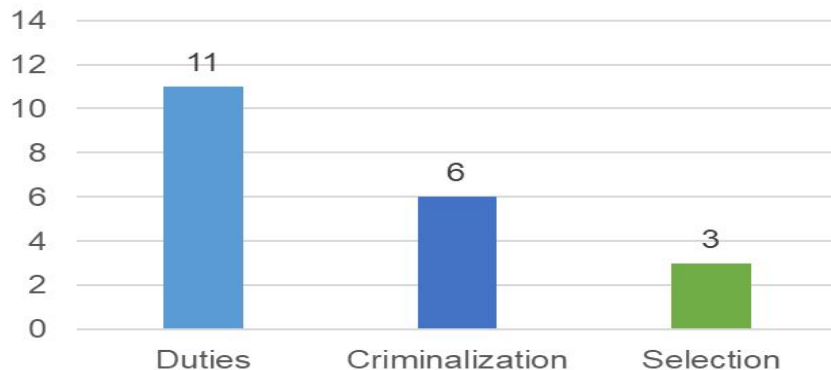
"...could we not just train counselors here to have that type of thing? Like I feel like we have that counselor opportunity to have without the gun. Like I feel like, I don't know, I feel like it's different"

Role of SRO or CPO

Concerns

- Confusion over the main **duties** of a SRO/CPO
- Will having a SRO/CPO increase the **criminalization** of students?
- Will someone at the school have a say in SRO/CPO **selection**?

Theme Frequencies



Policy Recommendations

- Provide transparency in SRO/CPO selection process/criteria
- Clarify role of SRO/CPO in schools and in punitive procedures*

Role of SRO or CPO: Exemplar Quotes

Duties

"For me, unless it's one of the dire situations, like some of the ones listed, it feels like it shouldn't be the police that try to mitigate social stress or build relationships or whatnot cuz like one that's not what they're for. And like I'm sure like if I gotta have police at all, I think they should be tasked with doing their job and leave the other jobs to people who are trained to do them"

Criminalization

"I would be worried with an SRO that there would be like criminal proceeds or something. I don't want any like, like let's say you just turned 18, like if it's a police officer, like they have to report something. Like I wouldn't want it to escalate"

Selection

"Um, so one thing that really stands out is that it mentions that they're [SRO] appointed by the Chief of Police. Now, the Chief of Police is generally trained in law enforcement and generally have absolutely no experience in education. You don't think students like dealing with conflict within schools. And I think that they should not be the one appointing somebody with the ability to arrest and uh, act physical violence upon students."

Relationships with Students

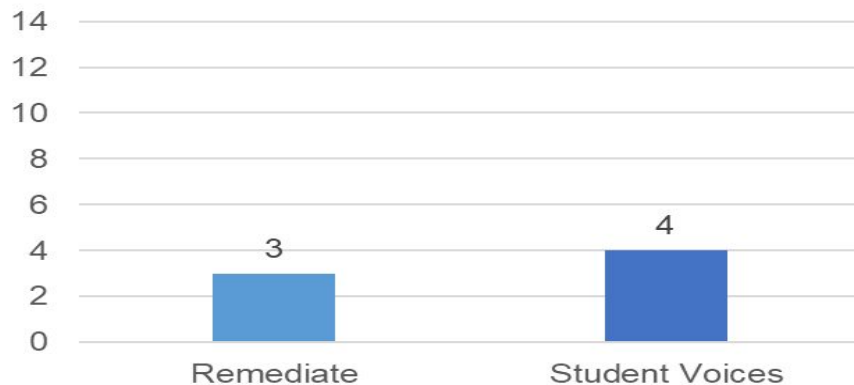
Concerns

- Will SRO/CPO listen to student **voices**? In particular, related to incidents at school.

Strengths

- Having an SRO/CPO might **remediate** stigma around police.

Theme Frequencies



Policy Recommendations

- Clarify role of SRO/CPO in schools and in punitive procedures*
- Create connection/community between SRO/CPO and students*

Relationships with Students: Exemplar Quotes

Student Voices

"Because in my opinion, there have been many fights in the school in which the wrong people are suspended and the people that cause the problems are the ones that stay in the school. For example, I have a friend that the groups of the Americans, so that I don't say colors, would always bother us; I would be there with my other friend and they would always bother him and he would stay calm because he didn't want to get expelled. And then one day all of us went outside, it was the winter, there was snow and he was sliding on the snow and by accident he stepped on the shoes of an American and they knocked him to the ground face down on the snow. My friend wanted to hit him but he didn't. The next day my friend hit him by the stairs over here. It was a big problem. And my friend got suspended for a month but till now he has yet to return to school since last year."

Remediate Stigma

"I think [model] one, because I guess when they're around more like they're around all the time and if people like that might I don't know, like, have bad experiences or something like that with the police; maybe they can work out... it's just almost like a restart type of thing. Like they work with 'em instead of just having them be here once in a while."

Policy Recommendations: Summary

- Provide transparency in SRO/CPO selection process/criteria
- Clarify role of SRO/CPO in schools and in punitive procedures
- Increase SRO/CPO understanding of student experiences with police and associated trauma
- Investigate options to reduce student concerns related to police weapons (i.e. guns, tasers)
- Create connection/community between SRO/CPO and students