

## Information Request and Suggestions for Policing Subcommittee

1. Specific description of what the SRO and Community Officers do on a day-to-day basis in our schools when they are not 'investigating and responding the criminal misconduct':

### **School Resource Officer (SRO):**

The one SRO that we were assigned was housed at Somerville High School in a discreet office off the main hallway. His name was Detective Ozzy Martinez and he was a member of the SHS team for 6 years. The role of the SRO at Somerville High School was to assist in creating a safe and supportive environment, working collaboratively with the school administration and students to build strong, respectful relationships. When not assisting with the various activities listed in the MOU, Ozzy would be out in the hallways talking with students, creating trusting relationships, and mentoring students. Students confided in him about incidents that happened outside of the school day to ask his advice about the law surrounding such issues as sexual harassment. He was bilingual in Spanish, a former graduate of SHS and former high school athlete. Students would seek him out for conversations on many topics such as home life, peer relationships, questions about the law. Ozzy helped to greet students at arrival, and also assisted with lunch and dismissal. He attended many sporting events on his own time to show support for students.

As he built relationships and earned the trust of students, students would come to him and let him know what was going on. If he thought school administration should be made aware of a particular issue, he would tell the student that he was obligated to share information with the Principal. On many occasions we got credible information from Ozzy that helped the Principal keep the building safer for students. Having a bilingual SRO who grew up in Somerville, attended SHS and who was trained in de-escalation, as Ozzy was, made him a valuable member of the SHS team. Parents

would use him as a resource for knowledge of the law and their rights with problems outside of school, rather than going into the Police station. These aspects of his job were similar to that of a School Counselor, but with an expertise on the law.

The SRO is not a disciplinarian or an enforcer of school regulations, and does not take the place of the Counselors or Deans of Students. Ozzy was not involved in student suspension hearings, nor was he able to determine or implement disciplinary action. The Principal is responsible for investigating and responding to all violations of the student code of conduct during school and at school sponsored events. The SRO is responsible for investigating potential criminal offenses or student conduct that requires immediate attention to maintain safety.

For example, during the 2018/19 school year, there were 50 suspensions issued at SHS for violations involving drugs, alcohol, threats, weapons and fights. All were investigated, parents notified and suspension hearings given by the Principal at the time, Mr. Sibby Lagambina. SRO Ozzy's role was to have follow up conversations with students and parents about the law. No criminal charges were ever filed. Ozzie would also confiscate any paraphernalia discovered or obtained during an investigation and take it to the Somerville Police Station.

### **School Community Officers:**

School Community Officers primarily only respond when school administration reaches out through the district's Director of Student Services. Community Officers may be called in for various reasons, mostly for safety concerns outside of the school such as vandalism, neighbors acting in unsafe ways around school areas, students congregating in large numbers on school grounds well after school hours, etc. The advantage to having an assigned Community Officer was that they would get to know each building's administration team and get to know students at each building. We had two Community Officers, Dianah Prophet and Paul Beckford who volunteered for the role because they had a desire to work

with Somerville youth. We also have a Juvenile Detective, Natacha Montana-Garcia.

2. List of incidents for which SPS has called the police pre-pandemic, with some indication of how frequently each type of incident was reported:

SY 2018/19: During this school year SRO Ozzy Martinez was assigned to Somerville High School. All calls to police, if needed, would go through SRO Martinez. The incidents are listed above.

At the K-8 level, all calls to SPD would go through the District liaison, Director of Student Services Liz Doncaster. Director Doncaster would notify the police either through the Somerville Police Department's District Commander or Juvenile Officer when students were reported in possession of a weapon, vandalizing school property, making threats to school, school personnel, themselves and others in person or through social media, possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia, attempting to or starting fires, and hate crimes. During SY 2018/19, 17 suspensions were issued involving these types of incidents at the K-8 level.

These contacts to SPD did not result in any criminal charges.

3. Above data disaggregated by race/ethnicity and special education:  
SY: 2018/19:

Please see email sent earlier today to Subcommittee members

