

The October 25, 2022 Special Policing Subcommittee meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm. Subcommittee members Ellenor Barish, Sarah Phillips, Superintendent Curley, Dayshawn Simmons, and Les Lartey were present at the start of the meeting. Aisha Banda, Glenda Soto and Andre Green joined the meeting in progress.

Dr. Gretchen Brion-Meisels, Sam Eligene, Sebastian LaGambina, Jasmine Fernandez, and Susana Hernandez Morgan were also present.

There were five people in the audience.

There were four items on the agenda.

1. Student Focus Groups Data

Dr. Brion-Meisels, introduced preliminary findings from the high school focus groups, promising more details as the data is coded and further analyzed. An average of eight students participated in each of twelve focus groups drawing from Next Wave/Full Circle, various SHS student activity groups and from volunteers identified via a high school survey. In addition to broad questions about school safety and support, focus group facilitators presented three School Safety Models that students were asked to discuss and rank.

- Model 1 - Reinstate a building-based SRO at SHS.
- Model 2 - No building-based SRO; any SPD officer on patrol responds if there is an incident at SHS.
- Model 3 - No SRO but SPS partners with SPD to have trained, dedicated Community Police Officer(s) available to respond if there is an incident at SHS.

Students ranked Model 2 as least desirable. Model 3 was preferred by a slight majority over Model 1. Students identifying as white or African-American were less likely to want an SRO in the building while students identifying as Latinx were more split. Students called for training, relationship building, and clarification of student rights no matter what model is adopted.

2. Staff Survey Update

Sam Eligene, SPS Director of Data, Assessment, and Accountability presented results of a survey sent to SHS and FC staff. Like the students, they were asked to rank school safety models as described above. Approximately half of those surveyed responded. Like the students, they ranked Model 2 last. More preferred Model 1 (reinstatement of the SRO) over Model 3 (Community Police Officers). It was noted that restoration of the SRO votes came with lots of caveats around training and with many references to the former SRO. Like students, staff stressed the importance of relationship building. They also expressed concerns about the safety of the SHS building itself.

The presentations of student and staff feedback sparked a question about how SPD is doing community building now which led into a discussion about the budgetary cycle and union bumping and bidding process (which begins in January) might impact the timing of implementation of a new school safety model.

There was a request for national data on policing in schools. Sarah Phillips said she would share some recent meta-analysis articles. Andre Green reflected on the challenges of using national data to make this local decision.

3. STEPS Discussion

Ellenor Barish shared a press release on STEPS that went out just before the program was implemented in the 2015-16 school year. She invited subcommittee members to ask questions or share their experiences with the program. Experiences varied among subcommittee members. While some recalled positive interactions and relationship building between SPD officers and staff or students, some also described officer visits as disruptive to class, poorly planned, and disorganized. Additionally, they talked about the negative impact these unannounced visits had on some students who were left wondering why the officers were there. There was a call to examine the district's values and to consider what the benefit of this program was and to whom. Additionally, subcommittee members reiterated the request for more information about how SPD is engaging with the community now with specific mention of the former basketball in the Mystics.

4. Community Forum Planning

Ellenor Barish proposed that the Community Forum be held virtually on 11/14 at 6 pm with interpretation services available and said she hoped most subcommittee members would be able to attend.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.