

School Resource Officer Program Review

Submitted by

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School District of La Crosse

To

Board of Education

School District of La Crosse

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the School District of La Crosse and the La Crosse Police Department is scheduled to end on June 30, 2021. On August 3, 2020 the School District of La Crosse Board of Education charged the Superintendent with completing a review of the SRO program and making a recommendation to the Board regarding the future of the program. The Charge identified three broad areas to be investigated: (1) a history of the SRO program and current practices; (2) peer reviewed research on SRO programs and local data on the current SRO program and juvenile justice trends; and (3) an examination of alternatives to the SRO program and possible consequences of the loss or reduction of the program.

The Board of Education called for an open, transparent, comprehensive and timely review process that utilized multiple types of evidence and ongoing opportunities for input from stakeholders both within and outside the school district. A summary of the findings and recommendations are included here. For a detailed discussion of the findings, please see the full report that follows.

FINDINGS

School-to-Prison Pipeline:

Key findings show that the markers of the school-to-prison pipeline are present in the School District of La Crosse.

1. The School District of La Crosse relies on exclusionary discipline at higher rates than other school districts.
2. The School District of La Crosse disproportionately disciplines and suspends students of color, students in poverty, male students, and students with disabilities.
3. Juvenile arrests occur at higher rates in the City of La Crosse than in comparable cities.
4. Black juveniles are disproportionately arrested in the City of La Crosse.
5. Graduation rates for Black students and students with disabilities have declined while graduation rates for reference groups have grown or stayed the same, expanding graduation gaps.
6. The La Crosse SRO program is staffed and funded at a higher rate than other comparable school districts.

Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals:

Key findings show that the School District of La Crosse is not currently meeting its mission, vision, values and goals of ensuring all students are safe, welcome and included.

1. Non-punitive and therapeutic approaches to student misbehavior were preferred by students, staff and parents and were felt to be more effective than suspensions, tickets, and arrests.
2. Black students and their parents and students with disabilities and their parents report more negative interactions with SROs and more frequently indicate that SROs make them feel unsafe at school.
3. Students of color feel as though they belong less and have fewer connections to teachers and adults.

Stakeholder Input:

Key findings were derived from stakeholder input as requested by the Board of Education.

1. Correspondence from stakeholders who proactively communicated with the School District were more frequently supportive of removing SROs from schools due to student fear of SROs, perpetuation of the school-to-prison pipeline, and criminalization of students.
2. Administrators and SROs felt SROs presence in schools led to increased safety and positive relationships and indicated that having a consistent officer with the appropriate training responding to incidents led to better outcomes for students.

SRO Program Recommendations:

Key findings show that the School District of La Crosse SRO program meets most recommendations identified by peer reviewed research and government recommendations, but not all.

1. The School District of La Crosse SRO program meets most recommendations but does not meet the recommendations to collect and report data or to have an evaluation process in place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The School District of La Crosse is committed to providing an educational environment where all students and families are safe, welcome, and included. Therefore the District must shift away from punitive disciplinary practices, the criminalization of students and actions that contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. To achieve this, the following actions are recommended:

1. Develop and implement School District of La Crosse philosophies and disciplinary practices that reduce punitive approaches to student misbehavior and eliminate the criminalization of students.

2. Develop and implement School District of La Crosse philosophies and practices that lead to proportionate disciplinary and arrest outcomes for historically marginalized students.
3. Expand and shift to therapeutic and restorative practices for students who have challenges with behavior.
4. Expand proactive social service resources within the School District.
5. Reduce the ongoing, routine presence of SROs in school buildings while retaining consistency of responding officers.
6. Establish an SRO Oversight Committee.

ACTION STEPS

1. The Superintendent will create a School Discipline Committee comprised of stakeholders within and outside the School District by January 1, 2021.
2. The School Discipline Committee will be charged with providing an action plan for change to the Superintendent and the Board of Education by May 1, 2021:
 - a. Actions for the Committee to consider include:
 - i. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
 - ii. School climate
 - iii. School culture
 - iv. De-escalation strategies
 - v. Social emotional learning
 - vi. Mental health supports
 - vii. Systematic data analysis
 - viii. Continuous improvement models
 - b. Work already completed in analyzing the School District's disproportionate outcomes in special education should help inform the recommendations of this committee.
3. The School Discipline Committee will collaborate with current community partners and School District Student Services staff to expand therapeutic and restorative practices by September 1, 2021.
 - a. Practices for the Committee to explore include:
 - i. Restorative justice
 - ii. Peace circles
 - iii. Peer juries

- iv. Peer mediation
 - v. Motivational interviewing
 - vi. Conflict resolution
 - vii. PBIS
4. The School District of La Crosse will collaborate with La Crosse County Human Services and other local agencies to increase proactive social service resources available within schools by July 1, 2021.
- a. Programs for the School District to consider include:
 - i. System of Care
 - ii. Restorative Justice
 - iii. Community Schools Coordinators
 - iv. Cultural Liaisons
 - v. Other historically successful programs funded through the Community Services Fund
 - b. The Community Service Fund levy for proactive social service resources will increase by \$100,000 for the 2021-2022 school year and by \$50,000 for the 2022-2023 school year.
5. The School District of La Crosse will collaborate with the La Crosse Police Department to reduce the number of SROs assigned to the School District from five to three by July 1, 2021 and from three to two by July 1, 2022.
- a. A phased reduction is recommended to provide time to build up other therapeutic supports, restorative practices, and social services as SRO supports are scaled back.
 - b. The Community Service Fund levy for the SRO program will be reduced from \$244,000 for the 2020-2021 school year to \$150,000 for the 2021-2022 school year and to \$100,000 for the 2022-2023 school year.
 - c. The reduction of officers and costs will bring the SRO program in-line with other comparable districts and eliminate the routine, ongoing presence of SROs in individual schools in favor of developing connections across the School District to ensure consistency of law enforcement responders when required.
6. The School District of La Crosse will collaborate with the La Crosse Police Department to implement revisions to the SRO program beginning July 1, 2021 that:
- a. Address the concerns about the SRO program identified in this review, particularly concerns identified by students and families from historically marginalized groups.

7. The Superintendent will create an SRO Oversight Committee comprised of stakeholders from within and outside the School District by July 1, 2020 to provide on an annual basis:
 - a. A review of data related to the SRO program
 - b. An evaluation of the ongoing effectiveness of the SRO program
 - c. Recommendations for future improvements

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
Introduction	7
School Board Charge to Superintendent	7
History of the School Resource Officer Program	8
School District of La Crosse	11
Literature Review	14
School-to-prison Pipeline	14
Impressions of School Safety	17
Research on School Resource Officers	18
Local Research	23
Program Review Questions	26
Findings	26
School-to-prison Pipeline Indicators in the School District of La Crosse	26
Stakeholder Feedback	42
Comparison to SRO Program Recommendations	65
SRO Programs in Other School Districts	67
Alternatives to SRO Programs	69
Conclusion	70
School-to-Prison Pipeline in La Crosse	70
Mission, Vision, Values and Goals in the La Crosse School District	71
Stakeholder Input	72
SRO Program Recommendations	73
Recommendation	73
References	79
Appendix A	84
Appendix B	85
Appendix C	92
Appendix D	96
Appendix E	101
Appendix F	102
Appendix G	103
Appendix H	106
Appendix I	109

Introduction

School Board Charge to Superintendent

On June 22, 2020 the Board of Education of the School District of La Crosse [discussed](#) the formation of an Ad Hoc Fund 80 Committee that would compile questions, data, and overall input regarding Fund 80, in particular, the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program. On July 6, 2020 the Board of education [granted approval](#) for the Formation of the Ad Hoc Fund 80 Committee.

The Ad Hoc Fund 80 Committee was made up of four Board Members and was [charged](#) with two responsibilities: 1) Synthesizing questions from Board Members; 2) Compiling a list of stakeholders to solicit input from. The Ad Hoc Fund 80 Committee [met](#) on July 14, 2020 and developed a [list of questions](#) for the Superintendent and a [list of stakeholders](#) for the Superintendent to contact regarding the SRO program.

On [August 3, 2020](#) the Board of Education [charged](#) the Superintendent with completing a review of the SRO program and making a recommendation to the Board regarding the future of the program. The Charge identified three broad areas to be investigated: (1) a history of the SRO program and current practices; (2) peer reviewed research on SRO programs and local data on the current SRO program and juvenile justice trends; and (3) an examination of alternatives to the SRO program and possible consequences of the loss or reduction of the program. The charge included a series of stipulations including the creation of a website to make data available to the public. The charge stipulated that a recommendation must be made to the board of Education regarding the SRO program no later than November 16, 2020 unless an extension was requested by the Superintendent.

History of the School Resource Officer Program

Between July and September of 1993, the School District of La Crosse in partnership with the La Crosse Police Department created the Police School Liaison Officer Program and began with an assigned officer at each high school. The major goals of the program were as follows:

1. To enhance the safe and positive learning environment for all students present in our schools.
2. To further an environment of cooperation between the school, police, parents and students.
3. To enhance crime prevention efforts between the school-community.
4. To facilitate the report of all crimes committed against youth and their property.

In June 1999, the Common Council of the City of La Crosse accepted a Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Universal Hiring Grant to hire three middle school liaison officers. Following that approval, the School Board and City Council finalized the cost-sharing agreements as required by the COPS grant.

Funding. From 1999-2002 the School District paid 50% of the cost of the SROs at the middle schools. After the COPS grant expired, cost-sharing for the three middle school police liaisons for 2003-2004 was 75% school district funded increasing to 100% school district funded starting in 2004. Each of the high school liaisons cost the district \$25,000. During this time, police liaisons began being referred to as School Resource Officers (SRO).

In April 2004, a new cost-sharing agreement was drafted which funded the three middle school SROs at \$34,600 each and the two high school SROs at \$25,000 each. Between 2004-2017, district costs for the SRO program remained relatively stable. In 2016, high school

SROs continued to cost the district \$25,000 per SRO and middle school SROs cost the district \$41,000 per SRO.

The SROs were funded through the general fund school budgets until 2015-16 when it was transferred to the Community Service Fund 80. This was with the agreement with the Police Department that the officers would not only serve the schools but also the neighboring private schools and neighborhoods.

Starting in the 2015-2016 school year, the School District agreed to pay 75% of 75% of the funding for SROs. From 2017 through 2020 the following amounts have been paid to the Police Department for SROs through the Fund 80 levy:

SY 2017-18 - \$200,000

SY 2018-19 - \$225,000

SY 2019-20 - \$250,000

SY 2020-21 - \$244,000

After July 1, 2021, the existing agreement with the La Crosse Police Department expires.

Reforms. In 2008 La Crosse Human Services commissioned a [report](#) from the Carey Group to examine the continuum of services being offered to juveniles and their families (Carey Group, 2011). As a result, a Juvenile Justice Arrest and Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Inter-Agency Task Force (Task Force) was convened to examine why La Crosse County arrests a disproportionate number of youth and determine if current practices are in the best interest of the public. The Task Force submitted a [report](#) in September of 2014 that identified seven conclusions and seven recommendations.

A January 2016 [position description](#) describes the SRO role and duties. In August 2016, the police department, school district, and other partners signed a [Memorandum of](#)

[Understanding](#) (MOU) establishing a Youth Justice Partnership in La Crosse named System of Care. This partnership worked to decriminalize adolescent misbehavior and hold students accountable for their choices with a system of intervention and supports.

On July 1, 2017, the School District of La Crosse and the La Crosse Police Department signed an [MOU](#) outlining the relationships between the two entities for the SRO program. In March of 2019 a [Memorandum of Agreement](#) (MOA) was signed regarding the use of body cameras. In October of 2020, an [additional MOA](#) was agreed to which clarified the role of the SRO, formalized training practices and expectations of SROs and outlined program modifications for the 2020-2021 school year.

Further clarification of roles, training, and practices were proposed by the La Crosse Police Department through a [letter](#) to the Board of Education on July 17, 2020. These changes and clarifications to the program were agreed upon with administration upon return of students to school buildings.

Mission, Goals and Objectives. The [MOU](#) states the mission of the SRO Program is to create and maintain safe, secure and orderly learning environments for students, teachers, and staff. The goals of the SRO program include:

1. Maintaining a safe and secure environment on school grounds.
2. Establishing positive relationships between the SRO and the student population.
3. Building rapport between the SRO and parents, faculty, staff and administrators.
4. Reducing offenses committed by juveniles and young adults.

The MOU explains that the SRO will also establish a trusting channel of communication, serve as a positive role model, and promote citizen awareness of the law.

School District of La Crosse

The School District of La Crosse has established a mission, vision, and values for education in the school district. The Board of Education and administration have policies that govern the operations and expectations of the school district. Annually administration establishes goals the school district will work toward achieving. These are outlined below.

Mission, Vision and Values. The [mission statement](#) of the Board of Education is as follows: The Board of Education is comprised of locally elected officials who establish policies to:

1. Ensure quality, equitable, and innovative educational opportunities for all students.
2. Ensure programs are designed to develop the student as a whole.
3. Ensure resources are available to provide excellence in education.
4. Ensure accountability to the public.
5. Ensure effective communication and collaboration with the community.

The administration of the School District of La Crosse has a [vision](#) for each student to dream, believe, and achieve. The desired outcome for each student is high achievement through the strategies of relationships, instruction and engagement. These strategies are achieved through a focus on collaboration, equity and safety. The values of the District include: giving, perseverance, self-discipline, compassion, responsibility, respect, and honesty.

Policies and Procedures. One Board of Education policy is primarily relevant to the SRO program and establishes expectations for the learning environment in the school district: Operational Expectation Policy [OE-10 - Learning Environment](#).

Listed below are School District administrative policies that intersect with law enforcement:

1. [4310 Compulsory School Attendance](#)
2. [4430.3 Tobacco/Substance Free Environment](#)
3. [4430.4 Student Alcohol and Other Drug Use](#)
4. [4430.71 Anti-Bullying](#)
5. [4450 Student Interviews by Outside Entity Personnel](#)
6. [4470 Student Discipline](#)
7. [4500 Student Health and Welfare](#)
8. [4540 Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect](#)
9. [5771 Search and Seizure](#)
10. [7310.3 Use of Surveillance Cameras](#)
11. [8320 Weapons on School Premises](#)
12. [Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities](#)

These policies are reviewed and approved at the administrative level in the School District of La Crosse.

Community Service Fund. The SRO program is funded by levying money through the Community Service Fund (Fund 80). These are funds that are allowed to be levied outside the revenue limits placed on school districts. Community Service Fund monies come with restrictions for use outlined in Wisconsin DPI Administrative Code [PI 80.02 - Ineligible Costs](#). The code states that “A school board may not expend monies on ineligible costs for community programs and services. The following are ineligible costs:

1. costs for any program or service that is limited to only school district pupils;
2. costs for any program or service whose schedule presents a significant barrier for age-appropriate school district residents to participate in the program or service;

3. costs that are not the actual, additional cost to operate community programs and services under s. 120.13(19), Stats; and
4. costs that would be incurred by the school district if the community programs and services were not provided by the school district.”

These funds cannot be used for services available only to School District of La Crosse students or for services the school district would provide regardless. Further information on the Community Service Fund is provided in Appendix A.

SRO program costs are eligible costs. Some alternatives proposed by community members or considered by the School District are not eligible under the Community Service Fund. Examples include school counselors, behavior interventionists, or other staff members that serve only students within the School District of La Crosse. Other alternatives, such as the ones currently funded through the Community Service Fund are likely to be eligible costs as long as they continue to meet the criteria stated in PI 80.02. Examples include cultural liaisons, community school coordinators, or support to System of Care.

Costs for services may be expended through the General Fund, or Fund 10, for expenditures that serve only the students of the School District of La Crosse. This would require a budget reduction elsewhere in the budget to ensure a balanced budget. This limitation along with the limitations of expenditures under the Community Service Fund constrain the options available to the School District in examining alternatives to the SRO program.

Administrative Goals. Annually, administration adopts goals for the School District of La Crosse. These goals are aligned with Board of Education Results policies. The 2020 Administrative Goals are:

1. All students graduate, college and career ready.

2. All students ready proficiently.
3. All students feel like they belong.
4. All students are engaged.
5. Students outcomes do not correlate with student demographics.

All programs within the School District of La Crosse must align with the mission, vision, and values of the School District as well as Board of Education Policies and administrative goals.

Literature Review

In this section, peer-reviewed literature and local research are examined to provide context for the examination of the School Resource Officer program in the School District of La Crosse. First, the school-to-prison pipeline is defined. Second, changing impressions of school safety are examined. Third, recent peer-reviewed literature on school resource officers is summarized. And finally, prior local research on juvenile arrests is explored.

School-to-prison Pipeline

The school-to-prison pipeline is a phrase that identifies the connection between events that happen in schools and an increased likelihood of involvement in the criminal justice system and imprisonment. The Justice Policy Institute (2011) describes the school-to-prison pipeline in the following way:

The “School-to-prison Pipeline” and similar concepts are used to describe how some youth are seemingly on a one-way path that begins with becoming disconnected with school, then continues to dropping out, and later entering the justice system. School policies that rely on overly punitive responses to student behavior and a reliance on law enforcement to address school discipline have led to increases in suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to the juvenile justice system for even minor infractions. As a result,

students are taken out-of-school, missing important educational opportunities and, in some cases, made unable to return to school. The School-to-prison Pipeline not only sends students directly into the justice system, but missed educational opportunities are linked to increased risk that a student will one day be involved in the justice system.

Perhaps most concerning is that the School-to-prison Pipeline most affects youth of color, who are more likely to be suspended or expelled and arrested outside of school or, in some jurisdictions, in school, have lower levels of educational attainment, and are more likely to go to prison than their white counterparts (p. 19).

The school-to-prison pipeline starts with an overly punitive disciplinary system in schools leading to the suspension, expulsion, and increased likelihood of arrest of students due to typical adolescent developmental behavior and low-level misdemeanors.

Zero-Tolerance Policies, Suspensions and Expulsions. Zero-tolerance policies also play a critical role in criminalizing students and are perhaps most directly attributable to the school-to-prison pipeline (Heitzeg, 2009). Use of zero-tolerance policies have been misused by administrators and typically equate to exclusion of students through suspension and expulsion (Martinez, 2009). Suspensions are connected to an increased likelihood of arrests for juveniles. Mowen and Brent (2016) found that:

... youth who are suspended are at an increased risk of experiencing an arrest across time relative to youth who are not suspended and that this effect increases across time. Further, with each subsequent year the youth is suspended, there is a significant increase in odds of arrest (p. 628).

Increased use of zero tolerance policies and police in schools has exponentially increased arrests and referrals to juvenile courts (Mallett, 2016). Despite the intention to promote a safe learning

environment, students perceive zero-tolerance policies as ineffective (McNeal and Dunbar, 2010). When schools have zero-tolerance policies, students are suspended and expelled at higher rates and they are more likely to be arrested and involved in the criminal justice system.

Police and Arrests. Data from the US Department of education show that the regular presence of a police officer at schools is predictive of school officials increasing referrals of students to law enforcement for a variety of offenses including low level offenses (Nance, 2016). Liberman, Kirk, and Kideuk (2014) find that first arrests increase the likelihood of future offenses and subsequent arrests. Further, Liberman et al. (2014) found that a first arrest increases subsequent law enforcement response even compared to those who had not been arrested for comparable offenses.

Disproportionality. Research shows that exclusionary enforcement measures are more prevalent in schools with more students of color and low-income students leading to an increase in divergence to the criminal justice system (Kupchik and Ward, 2014). In addition, African American and Latinx students are significantly more likely to be referred to the office for problems and suspended out-of-school than their white peers. Students with disabilities are also significantly more likely to be referred and arrested than students without disabilities (Counts et al., 2018).

Summary. The result of zero-tolerance policies and the presence of police officers in schools is greater referrals to school officials with an increased likelihood of out-of-school suspensions, expulsions and referrals to law enforcement. The effect of these policies and practices is to criminalize typical student behavioral problems that are better framed as social, psychological and academic problems (Javdani, 2019; Na and Gottfredson, 2013; Theriot, 2016; Theriot and Crueller, 2016). Students experiencing out-of-school suspension and arrests lead to

increased likelihood of further suspensions and arrests. In addition, these processes disproportionately affect students of color, students with disabilities and students experiencing poverty.

Impressions of School Safety

Violent crime in schools has significantly and continually declined since 1993 (IES, 2019 Indicators of crime). Violent deaths at schools and youth homicides at schools have also been in decline during the same period and in the 2015-2016 school year totaled 38 and 18 respectively across the United States. Despite the rarity of deaths at school:

the genuinely high potential cost of school massacres fused with an exaggerated perception of their likelihood and randomness, school rampage attacks came to be viewed as a risk that could not be tolerated and must be avoided at nearly any cost (Madfis, 2016, p. 39).

Concerns about school safety have increased while schools have become safer than ever. While police in schools have been associated with the prevention of incidents (COPS, USDOJ, 2010), these trends have occurred across schools regardless of the presence of police in school buildings (Congressional Research service, 2013; Brady et al., 2007).

When school security measures are put in place, they do not increase perceptions of school safety, but actually decrease perceptions of school safety by both parents and students (Mowen and Freng, 2018). Students do not perceive schools are safer with school-based law enforcement present (JPRC, 2018). Research shows that efforts to increase student and parent perceptions of school safety are obstructed by the traditional measures taken to improve school safety.

Research on School Resource Officers

SROs and Crime. The body of research on the effectiveness of SROs is not expansive and the quality of the studies is limited by the ability to create the conditions for controlled experiments. Research on the effectiveness of school resources officers shows conflicting results with some studies supporting a particular claim while others support the opposite. Some of the conflicting research is outlined here along with the results of one meta-analysis and a recent comprehensive literature review.

Research shows that the presence of SROs leads to more crime recording and reporting (Devlin and Gottfredson, 2018), that SROs report crime similar to outside law enforcement agencies (May et al., 2018) or had no impact on crime in schools (Na and Gottfredson, 2013; Petrosino et al., 2012), and that SROs reduce crime over time (Zhang and Spence, 2018). Fisher et al. (2018) indicate that more security measures increase the odds of being threatened with harm while also finding no change in the odds of being in a physical altercation over time.

Evidence shows schools with SROs were found to refer juveniles for fewer minor offenses (May et al., 2018) and SROs were found to be associated with a more than 100 percent increase in disorderly conduct charges (Theriot, 2016). For serious offenses, SROs have been hypothesized as a deterrent to serious crime (Jennings et al., 2011) where serious school violence has decreased and SROs have been associated with increases in referrals to juvenile justice for serious crimes like assault, weapons and drug offenses (Ryan et al., 2018; Zhang and Spence, 2018).

Exclusionary enforcement measures are more prevalent in schools with more students of color and low income students (Kupchik and Ward, 2014) which is shown to lead to an increase in arrest for high poverty students (Theriot, 2016). Weisburst (2019) found that schools that

accepted federal grants for school police showed an increase in discipline rates for middle school students with a larger increase for Black students. However, Na and Gottfredson (2013) find that the presence of SROs does not contribute to increased suspension or removal and found no adverse effects on minority groups or special education populations.

One meta-analysis summarizes the impact of SROs. Using ten effects sizes from seven reports, Fisher and Hennessey (2016) found that, “pattern of results across the separate random effects meta-analyses provides evidence that - consistent with theories of criminalization - the presence of SROs in high schools is associated with higher levels of exclusionary discipline” (p. 229).

A recent empirical review of the literature examined the challenges and impact of the work of school police officers. Javdani (2019) systematically searched the literature to identify peer reviewed articles conducted after the implementation of zero-tolerance policies. The review included quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods studies and for those that examined the effects of SROs, at least quasi-experimental methods were present. The search yielded 28 papers that were included in the empirical review.

Javdani identified a series of findings around various aspects of SRO work. SROs face competing demands in their roles from law enforcement and school administrators and sometimes find their relationships with school administrators confusing or conflicting. Along with inconsistent or a lack of preparation for the role, “These competing structural demands, combined with conflicting roles and little preparation to engage in the roles that SPOs find most rewarding create a context of social control” (p. 9).

SROs are assumed to have a deterrent effect through their presence in schools. Javdani finds that despite this intention, there is no evidence to support the assumption that an SRO’s

presence deters negative behavior, school violence gun violence, or mass shootings. As it relates to school discipline Javidani states, “there is a strong possibility that the work of [SROs] influences greater discipline at worst, and has no impact at best” (p. 12). Javidani goes on to report that, “the influence of [SROs] on schools safety, crime, and arrest are consistent with prior reviews in suggesting a null effect on safety and increases in crime and arrest, by most measures” (p. 12).

Student Perceptions. Student perceptions of SROs and how SROs impact students’ sense of belonging is another area of interest in examining the impact of police in schools. Students believe school to be safe places and feel many security strategies are unnecessary (Bracy, 2011). Students also indicate that SROs help keep schools safe and that drug-sniffing dogs reduce drugs in schools (Brown, 2005). Students who have positive interactions with SROs feel safe at school (McDevitt and Paniello, 2005). Theriot (2016) found that interactions with SROs “positively influence students’ attitudes about SROs yet are associated with lower levels of school connectedness” (p. 459). While the presence of SROs lead to student feelings of safety, students feel communication is more important than control measures to establish the legitimacy of the school’s system of law (Mayer and Leone, 1999).

Academics. A few studies have examined academic outcomes as it relates to the presence of SROs. Legewie and Fagan (2019) found that “exposure to police surges significantly reduced test scores for African American boys, consistent with their greater exposure to policing” (p. 220). Additionally, exposure to school policing is associated with a decrease in high school graduation rates and a decrease in college enrollment rates (Weisburst, 2019).

Recommendations for SRO Programs. Empirical reviews of SRO programs along with recommendations from governmental organizations like the [US Department of Justice](#), [US](#)

[Department of Education](#), and the [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#) identify a number of best practices for SRO programs (see Table 1). The most common recommendations include providing juvenile specific training to SROs, establishing a memorandum of understanding or a memorandum of agreement between the agencies involved, clearly identifying the roles, responsibilities and scope of the SRO program, having an evaluation process for SROs, and collecting and reporting data on the SRO program. Less common recommendations include recruiting and hiring effective SROs and involving cross-sector collaboration.

Table 1: Recommendations for SRO Programs.

Recommendation	Citations
Provide juvenile specific training to SROs	Barbara, 2010; Counts et al., 2018; Javdani, 2019; Ryan, 2018; US Department of Education, 2016; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, n.d.
Establish a memorandum of understanding or a memorandum of agreement between the agencies involved	Barbara, 2010; Counts et al., 2018; Javdani, 2019; US Department of Education, 2016; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, n.d.
Clearly identifying the roles, responsibilities and scope of the SRO program	Barbara, 2010; Counts et al., 2018; Javdani, 2019; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, n.d.
Have an evaluation process for SROs	Barbara, 2010; US Department of Education, 2016; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, n.d.
Collect and report data on the SRO program	Counts et al., 2018; US Department of Justice, 2010; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, n.d.
Recruit and hire effective SROs	Javdani, 2019; US Department of Education, 2016
Involve cross-sector collaboration	Javdani, 2019; US Department of Education, 2016

EAB Research Request. EAB, an educational research company, published an online [article](#) entitled, “What your school board needs to know about police in schools,” that summarized some of the research around SROs. The article indicated that evidence of SRO effectiveness is lacking and that school discipline and juvenile justice systems fail Black students and SROs can play a role in that failure. Given the School District of La Crosse association as a paid member to EAB a more specific research request was made for an evaluation of SRO programs.

EAB provided an [evaluation](#) of SRO programs that examine the rationale for and against SROs. EAB identified three claims as rationale for having an SRO program and evaluated the evidence for those claims. The first claim is that SROs serve as mentors and positively shape students’ perceptions of the police and the second claim is that SROs prevent and respond to criminal and disruptive behaviors in school. Evidence for both of these claims was inconclusive and that there is limited evidence that SROs deter severe misbehavior or crimes at school. The third claim in support of SRO programs is that SROs will protect schools in the event of a school-based mass shooting. EAB determined there is no empirical evidence available to evaluate this claim as mass shootings are extremely rare events.

EAB also examined two claims in opposition to SROs. The first claim is that SROs are related to excessive criminalization of students. EAB found evidence to suggest that SROs excessively criminalize low-level offenses but also identified one study that found that the presence of SROs leads to fewer arrests for other offenses. The second claim examined is that SROs are associated with a disproportionate impact of criminalization on marginalized students. EAB found evidence to support this claim.

Local Research

Entities conducted research on juvenile justice issues and general conditions in the La Crosse area in 2008, 2014, and 2018. The Carey Group submitted a report at the behest of the La Crosse County Department of Health and Human services in 2008. Juvenile Justice Arrest and Disproportionate Minority Contact Inter-Agency Task Force submitted a report in 2014. Both the La Crosse County Juvenile Justice Best Practices Stakeholder Group and COMPASS Now 2018 submitted reports in 2018.

The Carey Group. In 2008, the La Crosse County Department of Health and Human Services engaged the Carey Group to examine the continuum of services offered to juveniles and their families within La Crosse County. The Carey Group was asked by the Department to analyze juvenile arrest disposition trends as well as assess the juvenile continuum of services (Carey Group, 2008).

Findings from the [Carey Group Report](#) included the following:

1. La Crosse County Juvenile Justice referrals are similar in racial makeup as other counties of similar size and the County is not experiencing a rapid growth of non-Caucasian referrals.
2. Wisconsin juvenile arrest rates are significantly higher compared to national rates and La Crosse County juvenile arrest rates are much higher than both the state and the three like-size counties (p. 3).
3. La Crosse County is following a national pattern of decreased juvenile arrests but the decrease is not as rapid as the juvenile jurisdictions nationally and statewide (p. 5).

Based on the Carey Group's recommendation, the Juvenile Justice Arrest and Disproportionate Minority Contact Inter-Agency Task Force (Task Force) was formed to study why La Crosse

County arrests a disproportionate number of youth and determine best practices (Kruse and Foegen, 2014).

Task Force Report. The [report](#) generated by the Task Force identified two findings as it related to school suspensions, “First, White students and Asian students experience roughly equal percentages of suspensions. Second, data from La Crosse School District and Onalaska School District suggest that Black students have a higher suspension percentage compared to White and Asian students” (p. 30). With regard to juvenile arrests, the Task Force found that from 2008 to 2012 there was a declining number of juvenile arrests, that Black juveniles had an arrest rate roughly nine times that of White juveniles in each year, and that six of the ten most common arrest locations were schools. The Task Force found that arrest rates remained higher than similar counties, the state average and the national average. The result of the Task Force’s work was seven recommendations aimed at systems change with an implementation timeline culminating in 2016. One of the recommendations of the Task Force was to create a La Crosse County Juvenile Justice Best Practices Stakeholder Group.

Juvenile Justice Best Practices Stakeholder Group. The La Crosse County Juvenile Justice Best Practices Stakeholder Group published an [Updated Data Report](#) in January, 2018. This group found juvenile arrests in the City of La Crosse significantly exceeded the national and State average and that disproportionate contact with Black juveniles was ongoing across charges (Bakken and Kruse, 2018). Middle and high schools in the School District of La Crosse remained five of the top ten locations for juvenile arrests. For context, about 25% of arrests were connected to school addresses and about 25% of student awake hours in a year are in schools. Additionally, some of these arrests occurred at school but were related to community offenses. This report also examined suspensions in the School District of La Crosse finding that Black

students were suspended at a much higher proportion than other students but similar to State averages. Recommendations from this report included:

1. Reduce the prevalence of disorderly conduct
2. Diversionary measures in the community
3. Work on school suspension rates
4. Continue efforts of cultural competency training
5. Explore standardization of definitions of offenses

The recommendations of this report contributed to the development of the La Crosse County System of Care Juvenile Justice Best Practice (System of Care) [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between the City of La Crosse Police Department, La Crosse County Circuit Court, La Crosse County District Attorney's Office, La Crosse County Department of Health and Human Services, and the School District of La Crosse.

COMPASS Report. The COMPASS Now 2018 [report](#) gathered a range of information from the area to assess needs, identify resources, and urge action. About half of the respondents were from La Crosse County. The top five needs identified in the report were: (1) More livable wage jobs; (2) Increased access to mental healthcare services; (3) Increased inclusion of socially diverse people; (4) Reduced drug and alcohol misuse and abuse, and; (5) Increased well-being of children and youth (Goromske, 2018, p. 8). A finding related to inclusion stated that “Generally, social diversity is valued and acknowledged throughout the County, but more could be done to increase respect for those with different backgrounds and to include them in decision-making” (p. 49). The report found that juvenile arrests are decreasing but that rates are still higher than the State of Wisconsin average. Additionally, people view elementary, middle and high school education as good to excellent (91-95% of respondents).

Program Review Questions

The Board of Education in their Charge identified three broad areas to be investigated: (1) a history of the SRO program and current practices; (2) peer reviewed research on SRO programs and local data on the current SRO program and juvenile justice trends, and; (3) an examination of alternatives to the SRO program and possible consequences of the loss or reduction of the program. The research identified in this section covers many of the questions outlined in the Charge given by the Board of Education. The findings outlined in the next section examine the questions posed by the Charge to further inform the recommendations of this report.

Findings

This section further addresses the questions in the charge by the Board of Education. Areas of investigation include: (1) examination of local data as it relates to the school-to-prison pipeline; (2) stakeholder impressions of school discipline and safety; and; (3) comparison of the SRO program in La Crosse to recommendations from research and state and federal agencies.

School-to-prison Pipeline Indicators in the School District of La Crosse

Higher than average rates of expulsion, suspension and arrest are expected if the markers of the school-to-prison pipeline are present in the School District of La Crosse.

Disproportionality by race and disability in expulsion, suspension and arrest rates are also expected if the school-to-prison pipeline is present. School District of La Crosse data is compared to similar sized school districts, school districts with similar demographics, and local school districts to determine if these conditions are present.

Zero Tolerance policies. The School District of La Crosse provides a range of disciplinary consequences for student misbehavior. These options are listed in the [Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities](#). The one zero tolerance policy the School District of La Crosse

has in place relates to firearms on school premises. This zero-tolerance policy is required by [Wisconsin State Statute 120.13\(1\)\(c\)\(2m\)](#).

Expulsions. While an option the school district possesses, the School District of La Crosse does not utilize expulsion as a regular means of school discipline. Since at least the 2016-2017 school year, the School District of La Crosse has not expelled a student for misconduct.

School Discipline. School districts in Wisconsin report disciplinary data to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction where it is available through the [WISEdash Public Portal](#). Local office referrals for elementary students are tracked in our student information system, Skyward. This data was analyzed to determine if there was as greater of suspension for certain groups of students and compared to other school districts of similar size and demographics.

Out-of-School Suspensions. out-of-school suspension data show that the La Crosse School District suspends students at a higher rate than similar sized school districts and the State of Wisconsin as a whole (see Table 2).

Table 2: Out-of-school Suspension Rates for Similar Sized School Districts to the School District of La Crosse.

School District	Enrollment	Out-of-school Suspensions	Rate of Out-of-school Suspension
Middleton-Cross Plains Area	7,534	143	1.9%
Elmbrook	7,401	86	1.2%
Wauwatosa	7,231	311	4.3%
Stevens Point Area Public	7,159	93	1.3%
Fond du Lac	7,050	118	1.7%
Neenah Joint	6,702	497	7.4%
Oak Creek-Franklin Joint	6,472	461	7.1%

La Crosse	6,449	803	12.5%
Beloit	6,347	2163	34.1%
West Bend	6,309	249	3.9%
Verona Area	5,741	306	5.3%
Hudson	5,609	147	2.6%
Average			6.9%
AVE w/o Beloit & La Crosse			3.7%
Wisconsin	854,959	73067	8.5%

The average rate of out-of-school suspension for similar sized school districts is 6.9%. The average rate of out-of-school suspension for the ten most similar sized school districts after removing the School District of La Crosse and the School District of Beloit which is an outlier, is 3.7%. The average rate of out-of-school suspension for the State of Wisconsin is 8.5%. Compared to the average of similar sized school districts, the La Crosse School District suspends students out-of-school at a rate nearly two times that of other districts. After removing outliers, the School District of La Crosse suspends students out-of-school at a rate over three times that of other similar sized school districts. The School District of La Crosse suspends students out-of-school one and a half times more than the average of all school districts in the State of Wisconsin.

The School District of La Crosse also suspends students at a higher rate than other school districts with similar student demographics (see Table 3). The demographics considered were enrollment, minority population, disability population, poverty rate, and city composition. The School District of La Crosse suspends students out-of-school at a rate nearly three times greater than school districts with similar demographics. Compared to area school districts, the School District of La Crosse suspends students at a rate five and half times greater than the average of Holmen, Onalaska and West Salem (see Table 4).

Table 3: Out-of-school Suspension Rates for School Districts With Similar Demographics to the School District of La Crosse.

School District	Enrollment	Out-of-school Suspensions	Rate of Out-of-school Suspension
Fond du Lac	7,050	118	1.7%
La Crosse	6,449	805	12.5%
Manitowoc	4,961	319	6.4%
Stevens Point Area Public	7,159	93	1.3%
Wausau	8,311	353	4.2%
Wisconsin Rapids	5,114	487	9.5%
Average			5.9%
Average w/o La Crosse			4.6%

Table 4: Out-of-school Suspension Rates for School Districts in the Same County as the School District of La Crosse.

School District	Enrollment	Out-of-school Suspensions	Rate of Out-of-School Suspension
Holmen	3,916	67	1.7%
La Crosse	6,449	805	12.5%
Onalaska	3,171	105	3.3%
West Salem	1,838	31	1.7%
Average			4.8%
Average w/o La Crosse			2.2%

Suspension data for the School District of La Crosse show an increase in total out-of-school suspensions over the 2016-2017 to 2018-2019 (see Table 5). Data from the 2019-2020 school year is affected by the statewide school building closure due to the Governor’s Stay At Home order as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 5: School District of La Crosse out-of-school Suspension Data Disaggregated by Race.

Race	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
American Indian	0	0	0	1
Asian	4	3	3	3
Black	150	184	150	80
Hispanic	51	42	62	48
Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
White	393	363	431	281
Two or More	151	176	155	126
Total	749	768	801*	539

*Total counts of suspensions when disaggregated by race differ compared to undifferentiated totals due to redaction of data for groups that have a small number of students.

To examine if there is disproportionality in out-of-school suspensions by race, the data is calculated by percent of the total (see Table 6). Out-of-school suspensions by percent of the total can then be compared to enrollment percentages by race (see Table 7) to identify if there is over- or underrepresentation of particular groups (see Table 8).

Table 6: Percent of out-of-school Suspensions in the School District of La Crosse by Race or Ethnicity.

Race	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
American Indian	0%	0%	0%	0%
Asian	1%	0%	0%	1%
Black	20%	24%	19%	15%
Hispanic	7%	5%	8%	9%
Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%
White	52%	47%	54%	52%
Two or More	20%	23%	19%	23%

Table 7: School District of La Crosse Enrollment by Race.

Race	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
American Indian	0.8%	0.5%	0.6%	0.4%
Asian	9.8%	9.9%	9.8%	9.8%
Black	5.1%	5.0%	4.9%	4.9%
Hispanic	4.0%	4.2%	4.2%	4.7%
Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
White	71.3%	70.6%	70.3%	69.8%
Two or More	9.0%	9.7%	10.2%	10.2%

Table 8: Comparison of out-of-school Suspensions to Student Enrollment By Percent for the School District of La Crosse.

Race	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
American Indian	-1%	0%	-1%	0%
Asian	-9%	-10%	-9%	-9%
Black	15%	19%	14%	10%
Hispanic	3%	1%	4%	4%
Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%
White	-19%	-23%	-16%	-18%
Two or More	11%	13%	9%	13%

This analysis shows that students identifying as Black and two or more races are over-represented in out-of-school suspension data relative to enrollment in the School District of La Crosse. Students identifying as White and Asian are underrepresented in out-of-school suspension data relative to enrollment. Looking at 2018-2019 out-of-school suspension data shows that Hispanic students and those identifying as two or more races are suspended out-of-school more than two times the rate of white students. Black students are suspended out-of-school at a rate five times that of white students (see Table 9).

Table 9: Out-of-school Suspensions by Race for the School District of La Crosse in the 2018-2019 School Year.

Race	Out-of-school Suspensions	Percent of Out-of-school Suspensions	Enrollment Percent	Rate of Out-of-school Suspensions
Amer. Indian	0	0.0%	0.6%	0.00%
Asian	3	0.4%	9.8%	0.46%
Black	150	18.7%	4.9%	45.87%
Hispanic	62	7.7%	4.2%	22.14%
Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%
White	431	53.8%	70.3%	9.24%
Two or More	155	19.4%	10.2%	22.96%

In addition to disproportionality by race, out-of-school suspensions are also disproportionate when examined by gender, free and reduced lunch qualification and disability (see Table 10). Students identifying as male are more than twice as likely to be suspended out-of-school than students identifying as female. Students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, a proxy for economic disadvantage, are over four times as likely to be suspended out-of-school and students who are identified with a disability are four and half more times likely to be suspended out-of-school.

Table 10: Out-of-school Suspensions by Gender, Free and Reduced Lunch, and Disability for the School District of La Crosse in the 2018-2019 School Year.

2018-2019	Category	Out-of-school Suspensions	Percent of Out-of-school Suspensions	Enrollment Percent	Rate of Out-of-school Suspensions
Gender	F	261	32.4%	48.9%	8.0%

	M	544	67.6%	51.1%	16.0%
Free and Reduced Lunch	N	150	18.6%	48.0%	4.3%
	Y	655	81.4%	52.0%	20.6%
Disability	N	464	57.6%	85.9%	8.1%
	Y	341	42.4%	14.1%	36.5%

In-School Suspensions. When examining in-school suspensions for students during the 2018-2019 school year a similar pattern of disproportionality exists. Black students are suspended in school two and a half times the rate of white students and students that identify as two or more races are suspended twice the rate of white students (see Table 11). Students identifying as male are suspended at nearly three times the rate of those identifying as female and students who are identified with a disability are suspended in school at a rate three times that of students not identified with a disability (see Table 12).

Table 11: In-School Suspensions by Race for the School District of La Crosse in the 2018-2019 School Year.

Race	In-School Suspensions	Percent of In-School Suspensions	Enrollment Percent	Rate of In-School Suspensions
Amer. Indian	2	0.4%	0.6%	5.26%
Asian	6	1.1%	9.8%	0.92%
Black	68	12.4%	4.9%	20.80%
Hispanic	23	4.2%	4.2%	8.21%
Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.00%
White	351	63.9%	70.3%	7.53%
Two or More	99	18.0%	10.2%	14.67%

Table 12: In-School Suspensions by Gender, Free and Reduced Lunch, and Disability for the School District of La Crosse in the 2018-2019 School Year.

2018-2019	Category	In-School Suspensions	Percent of In-School Suspensions	Enrollment Percent	Rate of In-School Suspensions
Gender	F	144	26.2%	48.9%	4.4%
	M	405	73.8%	51.1%	11.9%
Free and Reduced Lunch	N	281	51.2%	52.0%	8.1%
	Y	268	48.8%	48.0%	8.4%
Disability	N	366	66.7%	85.9%	6.4%
	Y	183	33.3%	14.1%	19.6%

Elementary Office Referrals. A similar disproportionate pattern arises at the elementary level when analyzing elementary school office referrals. Black elementary students were referred to the office at a rate nearly three times that of white elementary students (see Table 13). Elementary students identifying as two or more races were referred to the office at a rate over one and a half times that of white elementary students. Male students were referred to the office two and half times the rate of female elementary students, and elementary students who qualified for free and reduced lunch were referred to the office nearly twice the rate of those elementary students who did not qualify for free and reduced lunch (see Table 14). The greatest disparity was for elementary students identified as having a disability who were referred to the office at a rate three and a half times that of elementary students not identified as having a disability.

Table 13: Elementary School Office Referrals by Race for the School District of La Crosse in the 2018-2019 School Year.

Race	ES Office Referrals	Percent of ES Office Referrals	Enrollment Percent	Rate of ES Office Referrals
Amer. Indian	-	-	-	-

Asian	35	6.1%	10.6%	9.8%
Black	65	11.3%	4.5%	42.8%
Hispanic	23	4.0%	4.0%	17.2%
Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
White	351	61.3%	68.8%	15.2%
Two or More	99	17.3%	11.7%	25.3%

Table 14: Elementary School Office Referrals by Gender, Free and Reduced Lunch, and Disability for the School District of La Crosse in the 2018-2019 School Year.

2018-2019	Category	ES Office Referrals	Percent of ES Office Referrals	Enrollment Percent	Rate of ES Office Referrals
Gender	F	531	27.7%	50.3%	31.5%
	M	1385	72.3%	49.7%	83.1%
Free and Reduced Lunch	N	693	36.2%	50.2%	41.2%
	Y	1223	63.8%	49.8%	73.2%
Disability	N	1223	63.8%	86.8%	42.0%
	Y	693	36.2%	13.2%	156.1%

Disproportionality in disciplinary data exists in the School District of La Crosse across race, gender, economic status, and disability. This disparity exists across out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspensions, and office referrals for elementary students. These disparities are persistent over time. Additionally, the School District of La Crosse has higher rates of out-of-school suspension than similar school districts by size and by demographics.

Juvenile Arrests. Arrest data for Counties and City Police Departments can be found at the Wisconsin Department of Justice Website on the [UCR Data Dashboard Center](#). Using total 4K-12 enrollment to calculate rates, arrests of juveniles in the City of La Crosse occur at a higher rate than other cities in similar sized school districts (see Table 15). On average, arrests for

juveniles in the City of La Crosse occur at a rate three times that of similar sized cities and three times the rate of the State of Wisconsin as a whole.

Table 15: Juvenile Arrest Rates for Similar Sized School Districts to the School District of La Crosse Using Total 4K-12 Enrollment.

School District	4K-12 Enrollment	2019 City Juvenile Arrests	Rate of Arrest by Enrollment
Middleton-Cross Plains Area	7,534	136	1.8%
Elmbrook	7,401	90	1.2%
Wauwatosa	7,231	295	4.1%
Stevens Point Area Public	7,159	192	2.7%
Fond du Lac	7,050	520	7.4%
Neenah Joint	6,702	213	3.2%
Oak Creek-Franklin Joint	6,472	345	5.3%
La Crosse	6,449	903	14.0%
Beloit	6,347	479	7.5%
West Bend	6,309	739	11.7%
Verona Area	5,741	129	2.2%
Hudson	5,609	174	3.1%
Average			5.4%
Average w/o La Crosse			4.6%
Wisconsin	854,959	35,078	4.1%

A comparison to cities with school districts that have similar demographics as the School District of La Crosse shows that juveniles are arrested at higher rates than all but one city with school demographics similar to La Crosse (see Table 16). Juveniles are arrested in La Crosse at a rate nearly twice the average of other cities with similar school district demographics. A comparison to local school districts shows the same trend with arrests of juveniles in La Crosse occurring at a rate over four times that of other school districts (see Table 17).

Table 16: Juvenile Arrest Rates for School Districts With Similar Demographics to the School District of La Crosse Using Total 4K-12 Enrollment.

School District	Enrollment	2019 City Juvenile Arrests	Rate of Arrest by Enrollment
Fond du Lac	7,050	520	7.4%
La Crosse	6,449	903	14.0%
Manitowoc	4,961	693	14.0%
Stevens Point Area Public	7,159	192	2.7%
Wausau	8,311	405	4.9%
Wisconsin Rapids	5,114	412	8.1%
Average			8.5%
Average w/o La Crosse			7.4%

Table 17: Juvenile Arrest Rates for School Districts in the Same County as the School District of La Crosse.

School District	Enrollment	2019 City Juvenile Arrests	Rate of Arrest by Enrollment
Holmen	3,916	109	2.8%
La Crosse	6,449	903	14.0%
Onalaska	3,171	59	1.9%
West Salem	1,838	80	4.4%
Average			5.7%
Average w/o La Crosse			3.0%

Comparison to the 2004 Carey Report. The 2004 Carey Report compared juvenile arrest rates in La Crosse County to other similar sized counties, the State of Wisconsin and the Nation. Data on juvenile arrests for the same counties the Carey Report used show that in 2019, La Crosse County had a similar rate of juvenile arrest as Sheboygan County but the rate of arrest in

La Crosse County was nearly one and half times that of the average of the other similar sized counties (see Table 18). The rate of juvenile arrest in La Crosse County was twice the State of Wisconsin average and six times the national average.

Table 18: 2019 Juvenile Arrest Rates for Similar Sized Counties, The State of Wisconsin and the Nation.

County	2019 Juvenile Arrests	2019 Age 12-17 Estimate*	Rate of Arrest
Fond Du Lac	814	7,880	10.3%
La Crosse	1,239	8,073	15.3%
Sheboygan	1,373	9,135	15.0%
Walworth	756	8,192	9.2%
Average			12.5%
Average w/o La Crosse			11.5%
Wisconsin	35,078	443,705	7.9%
US	728,280	29,272,778	2.5%

*US census data can be found at Census.gov.

Comparison to the data in the 2004 Carey Report shows that the La Crosse County juvenile arrest rate has increased by 17% in 2019 (see Table 19). During the same period of time juvenile arrests nationwide dropped by 17% and juvenile arrests in the State of Wisconsin dropped by 1%. While similar counties saw a larger increase in juvenile arrests by percent than La Crosse County did at 36%, the total rate of juvenile arrests per 1,000 juveniles remains below that of La Crosse County by 30%.

Table 19: Comparison of 2004 and 2019 Arrest Rates Per 1,000 Youth for the US, Wisconsin, and Comparison Counties.

Comparison Group	2004 Arrest Rate Per 1,000 Youth	2019 Arrest Rate Per 1,000 Youth	Change
US	30	25	-17%
Wisconsin	80	79	-1%
La Crosse	131	153	17%
Comparison Counties	86	117	36%

Juvenile Arrest Data by Race. Juvenile arrest data in the City of La Crosse show a decline in total arrests from 2015 to 2009 for all demographic groups (see Table 20). Arrest rates by race were calculated for 2019 using La Crosse School District secondary school enrollment (see Table 21). Reported arrest data is not disaggregated by race into a two or more race category as occurs for school district enrollment data. When using school district enrollment data, this has the potential to artificially inflate arrest rates for juveniles of color. To estimate a correction for this, an adjusted middle and high school enrollment was calculated by proportionally distributing enrollment in the two or more race category to the races identified in arrest data. This data show that in 2019 Black juveniles were arrested at a rate four times that of white juveniles in the City of La Crosse.

Table 20: Juvenile Arrest Data by Race Reported by the La Crosse Police Department from 2015-2019.

Race	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
American Indian	16	17	15	28	9
Asian	34	39	14	18	19
Black	374	408	343	244	250
Unknown	5	1	5	3	3
White	821	761	580	532	623
Total	1250	1226	957	825	904

Table 21: City of La Crosse Juvenile Arrest Rates Calculated Using La Crosse School District Secondary School Enrollment.

Race	2019 Juvenile Arrests	2018-2019 MS & HS Enrollment	Arrest Rate	Adjusted MS & HS Enrollment	Adjusted Arrest Rate
American Indian	9	25	36.0%	36	25.0%
Asian	19	296	6.4%	426	4.5%
Black	250	175	142.9%	252	99.2%
White	623	2357	26.4%	2567	24.3%

Data show that juvenile arrests occur at a higher rate in the City of La Crosse than in other cities with similar sized school districts, other cities with school districts with similar demographics, other local school districts and when compared to the average in the State of Wisconsin. Juvenile arrest data show that La Crosse County arrests juveniles at a higher rate than other similar sized counties, the state of Wisconsin and the nation as a whole. Rates of juvenile arrest have increased since the 2004 Carey Report while rates in the state of Wisconsin and the nation have declined. There continues to be a disproportionate rate of arrest of Black juveniles in the City of La Crosse.

Graduation Rates. The result of the school-to-prison pipeline is a greater rate of youth incarceration and students who do not graduate from high school. From 2015 to 2019 there has been a slight downward trend in graduation rates for Black students and students with disabilities (see Table 22). In addition, the gap in graduation rate increased between Black and white students and between students with and without disabilities.

Table 22: Four-Year Graduation Rates in the School District of La Crosse for Black Students and Students with Disabilities and Their Reference Groups.

Group	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
White	94.0%	92.3%	92.4%	89.7%	92.6%
Black	85.5%	78.3%	85.0%	82.8%	75.0%
Student w/o Disability	94.2%	93.3%	92.9%	91.9%	94.8%
Student w/ Disability	81.8%	78.7%	81.5%	65.2%	75.0%

This downward trend and expanding gap in graduation rates for Black students and students with disabilities is affected by many factors. It is also occurring in relation to the data presented previously on suspension, office referrals and arrests.

Key Findings on School-to-Prison Pipeline Indicators. The data presented in the previous sections indicate that:

1. The School District of La Crosse relies on exclusionary discipline at higher rates than other school districts.
2. The School District of La Crosse disproportionately disciplines and suspends students of color, students in poverty, male students, and students with disabilities.
3. Juvenile arrests occur at higher rates in La Crosse than in similar cities.
4. Black juveniles are disproportionately arrested in La Crosse.
5. Graduation rates for Black students and students with disabilities have declined while graduation rates for reference groups have grown or stayed the same, expanding graduation gaps.

Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholders in the School District of La Crosse provided feedback through multiple avenues regarding the SRO program. Residents of the area provided correspondence in the form

of emails and letters and specific organizations in the La Crosse community provided position statements on the SRO program. Open forums were also provided to allow community members to speak on the SRO program. The 2019 Youth Risk Behaviors Survey (YRBS) administered to students in the School District of La Crosse provides information from youth perspectives. In addition, administrators in the School District of La Crosse provided feedback on specific questions related to the Charge given by the Board of Education and parents, staff and students answered survey questions related to school discipline, school safety, and SROs. This data is examined in this section.

Community Correspondence. Community correspondence came in the form of emails and written letters. Eighty pieces of [correspondence](#) were shared in favor of removing SROs from the building or replacing SROs with an alternate resource. Community members supporting the continuation of the SRO program submitted 55 pieces of [correspondence](#).

Correspondence in favor of removing SROs identified seven reasons for opposition to the program (see Table 23). The two primary reasons stated in the correspondence were that the presence of SROs in school buildings cause students to be afraid or experience anxiety and that the presence of SROs leads to racial disparities in juvenile justice and school discipline. Correspondence with claims that SROs cause students to be afraid or experience anxiety often mentioned that students of color experienced these feelings more frequently as a result of the historical trauma associated with policing in communities of color. Correspondence in favor of removing SROs also identified preferred alternatives to the SRO program (see Table 24). The two most commonly cited alternatives were replacing SROs with school counselors or social workers and implementation of restorative justice practices.

Table 23: Reasons for Opposition to the SRO Program as Stated in Correspondence.

Reasons Stated in Opposition to SROs	Count
The presence of SROs in school buildings cause students to be afraid or experience anxiety.	25
The presence of SROs leads to racial disparities in juvenile justice and school discipline.	22
General statements opposing SROs.	13
The presence of SROs leads to the criminalization of typical student behavior.	9
SROs make situations worse not better.	5
The presence of SROs negatively affects the school learning environment.	4
Schools would be safer with the removal of SROs.	3

Table 24: Alternatives to the SRO Program Proposed in Correspondence Stating Opposition to the SRO Program.

Alternatives Proposed to SROs	Count
Invest in social workers or counselors	22
Invest in restorative justice	10
Invest in teachers and school programs	5
Invest in mental health resources	4
Invest in cultural liaisons	2

Correspondence in favor of keeping SROs identified nine reasons for support of the program (see Table 25). The two primary reasons stated in the correspondence to keep the SRO program are that SROs build positive relationships and that SROs increase safety at school. Secondary reasons to keep the SRO program from the correspondence include SROs have a deterrent effect and can de-escalate issues, SROs make students and parents feel safer at school,

SROs can intervene quickly in a crisis due to their presence and SROs fill additional roles that benefit students. Another theme that emerged from the correspondence was related to support for individual SROs. Individuals writing in expressed significant support for Officer Graves who works at Logan High School citing general and individual acts that they felt made him an asset to the school, students and staff. Three other officers were mentioned as well with multiple individuals mentioning the positive work of Officer Randall at Longfellow Middle School.

Table 25: Reasons for Support of the SRO Program as Stated in Correspondence.

Reasons Stated in Support of SROs	Count
SROs build positive relationships with students.	31
SROs increase safety at school.	22
SROs deter crime, de-escalate incidents, and intervene before issues become crimes.	13
SROs make students and parents feel safer while they or their child is at school.	12
SROs can intervene in situations because they are present in the school.	10
SROs positively fulfill additional roles like education, counseling, conflict mediation, medical support, and providing resources to students in need.	9
SROs are able to intervene quickly in a crisis because they are present in the school.	7
General support of SROs.	7
SROs model good behavior and are positive role models for students.	4

Position Statements. Eight community organizations submitted position statements regarding the SRO program review. Waking Up White advocated for a committee to examine terminating the SRO program and to consider replacing it with other services. The following community organizations supported terminating the contract with the SRO program:

1. YWCA
2. Cia Siab
3. Southside Moms United
4. La Crosse Area SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice)
5. La Crosse Central High School's Indigenous Peoples Club
6. Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin
7. ACLU of Wisconsin

Reasons identified for removal included:

1. the fear and oppression the presence of law enforcement causes some students
2. harm that that the presence of law enforcement in schools does to students of color and other historically marginalized groups
3. other professionals are better trained to address student issues
4. disproportionate outcomes of the school-to-prison pipeline
5. historical trauma of interactions with law enforcement for people of color and those experiencing poverty

Submitted position statements identified a range of services to replace SROs including:

1. social workers
2. school counselors
3. mental health counselors
4. school psychologists
5. behavioral specialists
6. Restorative justice coordinators

In addition, other actions were recommended by these groups, including:

1. socio-emotional learning for students
2. evaluating school budgets to enact effective health and safety curriculum without SROs
3. enacting culturally responsive policies
4. evaluating and eliminating policies that criminalize students and lead to disproportionate outcomes for students of color

Three educational entities within the School District of La Crosse made collective statements. A group of staff members at Logan High School submitted a letter supporting the SRO assigned to Logan High School and advocated for keeping the SRO program in their building and the rest of the school district. The La Crosse Education Association, the teacher's bargaining unit, [indicated](#) that if the SRO program were to be terminated "the Board of Education should provide a comprehensive plan to replace those supports with input from teachers and other school staff."

The staff of the Integrated Supports Center (ISC) expressed support for SROs. This group of educators works with students in an alternative education track who often have greater difficulties with expected behavior in a traditional school setting. The staff identified the positive impact of SROs through their intentional efforts to build relationships with students, their ability to intervene when students are in crisis, and the valuable information they are able to provide about contraband and community issues. ISC staff also expressed concern about calling dispatch or the County crisis line due to delays in arrival and concerns that a random officer would not necessarily understand adolescents, the ISC program or the unique needs of students.

Open Forums. Two open forums were held in the school district to solicit feedback from community members and to provide an opportunity to speak directly to the administration

conducting the program review and the Board of Education. These events were held via videoconferencing due to concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Speakers were required to register prior to the event.

Of the 22 individuals that spoke at the first open forum on September 14, 2020, 12 spoke in favor of keeping the SRO program and 10 individuals spoke in favor of eliminating the SRO program or replacing it with alternative supports. Of the 18 individuals that spoke at the second open forum on October 12, 2020, one individual spoke in favor of keeping the SRO program and 17 individuals spoke in favor of eliminating or the SRO program or replacing it with an alternative. Four students spoke at the second open forum relating negative experiences they had with SROs or a fear of police in general. One individual in favor of eliminating the SRO program spoke at both open forums.

In total, 39 unique individuals spoke at the two open forums. At the open forums, 13 individuals spoke in favor of keeping the SRO program and 26 spoke in favor of eliminating the SRO program or replacing it with an alternative support.

Administrator Perspectives. Administrators were surveyed with a series of questions derived from the Charge given by the Board of Education. Ten secondary administrators and four elementary administrators responded to the survey. The responses were coded and categorized to identify themes (see Appendix B).

SROs are called for student safety concerns, unlawful activity, school associated issues, and as a resource. Student safety concerns are primarily physical altercations, fights and threats of violence. Unlawful activity includes drugs, alcohol, and tobacco as well as weapons and when students come to school under the influence. School associated issues involve attendance issues, disruptions and when students vacate the premises.

SROs are primarily called by administrators or administrative assistants, generally at the direction of an administrator. Less often counselors, social workers, and other staff call SROs. SROs are stationed in each building full-time but administrators report calling SROs across a wide range of frequencies, from multiple times daily to rarely or infrequently. SROs are called more frequently at the secondary level than the elementary level.

SROs take on a variety of responsibilities according to administrators. Administrators report that SROs provide student support or resources, address crime or misbehavior, and assist in school safety. At the secondary level, the most reported responsibility was relationship building with students followed by supervision. Less cited responsibilities included connecting students to resources, assisting with classroom instruction, and conducting threat assessments. At the elementary level the most cited responsibility was addressing truancy issues followed by being a point of contact for families and staff. Half of the secondary administrators and one elementary administrator indicate that SRO responsibilities have changed over time. The primary way SRO responsibilities changed was a greater emphasis on relationship building.

Using the purposes of the SRO identified in the MOU, administrators ranked the importance of SRO functions. On average, secondary administrators equally indicated two purposes were most important: maintaining a safe and secure environment on school grounds and establishing positive relationships between the SRO and the student population. Reducing offenses committed by juveniles and young adults was the second most important function followed by building rapport between the SRO and parents, faculty, staff and administrators. Elementary principals viewed the functions of SROs differently. On average, elementary administrators equally indicated that the following were most important: building rapport between the SRO and parents and establishing positive relationships between the SRO and the

student population. These functions were followed by maintaining a safe and secure environment on school grounds as the second most important function and reducing offenses committed by juveniles and young adults was identified as the least important function.

Administrators identified ways in which SROs built relationships with students of color and their families. The most commonly reported strategy was purposeful contact and relationship building with students of color. One administrator identified a series of services that SROs provided to students that built relationships. Five administrators indicated that they did not notice any specific strategies used.

Every administrator indicated that SROs never interfere with the curriculum and two administrators indicated they felt SROs add to the curriculum. One of the fourteen administrators indicated that SROs sometimes get involved in issues beyond their preference. One administrator indicated that the SRO was appropriately involved but that non-SRO police officers did get involved beyond what they would prefer.

Most administrators identified other individuals that went “above and beyond” when intervening in student disciplinary matters. While four administrators identified no other individuals, eight administrators identified other school district staff including special education teachers, counselors, integrated support staff and counselors. Two administrators identified community partners at YWCA and the System of Care program as going above and beyond.

Five questions on the survey address ask administrators to consider what would happen if the SRO program were no longer in place. Administrators indicated that building emergencies would be handled by other school district staff and if a police officer were required dispatch or 911 would have to be called. For some elementary principals, this was the same procedure as is currently in place. Most administrators indicated that the emergency response time would be

delayed indicating a range of timeframes from slower to significant delays to not in time to intervene. All but two administrators indicated that they preferred having the same responding officer for consistency and that having a different responding officer would lead to a negative impact. These impacts included, amongst others: increases in negative interactions with police officers, students less willing to respond to police officers, a loss of consistency, trust and relationships, and escalation of situations. Finally, if SROs were removed, administrators identified social workers and counselors as most effective in supporting students.

Administrators identified skills and training they wanted police officers to have when responding to incidents. Administrators identified skills in three categories: school specific skills, general skills, and attributes. The most commonly identified skills were: ability to build relationships, ability to de-escalate situations, understanding of youth, patience, listening skills and communication skills. Administrators identified training they wanted police officers responding to incidents to have in four categories: how to address student situations, cultural and systems training, safety training, and prevention and restorative training. The most commonly identified trainings were in: de-escalation, cultural awareness training, conflict resolution, CPI training, and implicit bias training.

Administrators related incidents they felt justified the presence of SROs in buildings. These examples generally focused on extremely violent behavior targeted at other students, self-injurious or dangerous behavior, and crimes that required investigation that occurred at school or amongst students. One of the most visible incidents in recent years that administrators felt justified the presence of SROs was an ongoing altercation between families and groups in the community that was associated with the murder of two individuals. This conflict spilled into the

schools leading to high tension, ongoing safety concerns, and violent incidents in the school building.

Administrators imagined the future of the SRO program as well. Administrators identified a preference for an ongoing relationship with the police department but were also open to reforms and adjustments. A few administrators indicated interest in more proactive efforts to address student behavioral issues.

SRO Perspectives. SROs were provided with a survey that included a series of questions derived from the Charge given by the Board of Education. Four SROs and the officer in charge of the program provided answers to the questions submitted. The responses were coded and categorized to identify themes (see Appendix C).

All the SROs felt that student safety and interacting with students proactively were general responsibilities they were taking on in schools. Most officers also felt they were responsible for elements of addressing student issues and legal issues in schools. The most common responses were to provide safety and security, to act as a counselor to students, and to act as a mentor and role model to students. SROs also commonly identified talking with students and staff about legal issues, acting as a mediator between students, and addressing truancy as responsibilities they were taking on in schools. SROs identified an increase in mental health issues they were responding to in recent years.

Each SRO described a different typical day with a number of commonalities. These included arriving early to school, greeting students in the halls, addressing routine police department and school responsibilities and communication, responding to student and staff inquiries and requests, walking the halls to connect with students, interacting with students during common times, assisting with incidents, and being present at dismissal. SROs also

indicated that their days are variable and that they respond to the unique circumstances each day brings.

SROs were asked to rank the purposes of the SRO program as outlined in the MOU. SROs felt it was difficult to rank them due to how intertwined each purpose was with the other. One SRO identified building relationships with students as the priority.

SROs built relationships with students of color and their families by treating all students the same and with dignity and respect, through an open-door policy and by reaching out to students of color specifically. SROs attend a number of community events, separate from school events such as: the Black Student Unity at UW-La Crosse, community conversations, Hmong New Year, Juneteenth celebration, Blue Crew at the Boys and Girls Club, attending the funeral of a student of color, and by taking students to events.

SROs identified school personnel and community entities that called them to intervene on issues. Most commonly, administrators and teachers called SROs, but so do other school staff on occasion. In the community, businesses, social workers and citizens reached out to SROs as well.

When not on calls SROs report they are working with students, working with school staff and the community, and doing general work. Most commonly, SROs are in the halls interacting with students, spending time with students and staff to get to know them better, building positive relationships with students and staff and working on routine work. When not working in the schools, SROs are on patrol in the community and a part of La Crosse Police Department teams that have more specialized functions.

SROs identified a number of incidents that they felt justified the presence of SROs in the buildings. These included investigating and stopping threats to students and staff, the ability to intervene when fights occurred, and preventative actions like de-escalating crises. SROs also

identified that they were sought out by students as a critical contact they would prefer to speak to over administrators sometimes and when events occurred out-of-school but they preferred to talk to the SRO as opposed to a general police officer.

When asked what skills police officers who respond to a school incident to have, SROs responded that patience was the most important skill. SROs also felt understanding the background of students was important along with a number of other skills including compassion, understanding how schools work, active listening, ability to build rapport with students, and critical thinking.

Finally, SROs indicated there were a number of trainings that were important for a police officer to have when responding to school incidents. The most commonly identified trainings included training from the National Association of School Resource Officers, Youth Mental Health First Aid, and crisis intervention training. SROs also identified de-escalation training, fair and impartial policing, racial justice training and diversity training as important.

Additionally, the officer overseeing the SRO program, provided detailed answers on a number of questions the Board of Education requested information on in the Charge (Appendix D). This information goes into great detail explaining hiring practices, the formal relationship between the La Crosse Police Department and the School District of La Crosse, an explanation of certain practices, how emergencies would be handled without SROs and the reforms that are in the process of being implemented.

Survey Results. Surveys were provided to staff, students and parents on school discipline and safety. Responses to preferred strategies for when misbehavior occurs shows that all groups surveyed prefer preventative strategies, reflective conversations, meetings with teachers and

counselors and did not prefer punitive strategies such as time outs, detentions, suspensions, tickets, and arrests (see Table 26). Further results are disaggregated in the following sections.

Table 26: Preferred Strategies for Student Misbehavior.

Strategy	Staff	Parents	Students
Prevention strategies	67%	59%	36%
Reteaching correct behaviors	62%	53%	18%
Reflective conversation	60%	55%	32%
Collaborative problem solving	61%	57%	27%
Restorative practices	49%	34%	12%
Call to family	60%	72%	19%
Time out	23%	21%	11%
Meet with teacher	54%	57%	35%
Meet with school counselor	52%	51%	31%
Meet with school social worker	42%	29%	13%
Meet with principal	55%	44%	18%
Meet with school resource officer	49%	39%	14%
Counseling	50%	44%	22%
Mentoring	51%	46%	16%
Detention	16%	26%	16%
In school suspension	25%	22%	10%
out-of-school suspension	20%	12%	7%
Referral to social services	26%	8%	4%
Referral to police	16%	8%	4%
Citation	15%	7%	3%
Arrest	10%	6%	3%

Staff. Staff in the School District of La Crosse were provided an opportunity to answer questions on a School Discipline and Safety survey. Staff who work in the middle and high schools where SROs are stationed have a greater opportunity to interact with SROs than staff who work in the elementary schools. To account for this difference, responses are disaggregated by school level (Appendix E). Staff provided 602 responses.

Half of the middle and high school staff and elementary staff felt suspensions were effective in changing behavior. Half of elementary staff and two-thirds of middle and high school staff felt tickets and arrests were effective in changing behavior.

Middle and high school staff reported seeking out an SRO for help and talking with an SRO more frequently than elementary school staff. Nearly all staff (97%) reported that when seeking an SRO for help or interacting with an SRO that the SRO was helpful and the interaction was positive. Nearly all staff (96%) felt safe at school and nearly no staff (2%) reported that SROs made them feel less safe.

Parents. Parents in the School District of La Crosse were provided an opportunity to answer questions on a School Discipline and Safety survey. Parents provided 1,193 responses. Results were disaggregated by the characteristics of the parents' children (Appendix F).

Parents of Black, Hispanic and Asian children as well as parents of children with a disability and an English learner report that SROs were less collaborative than other staff when their child misbehaves. Parents of Hispanic children also rated counselors as less collaborative than other staff and parents of Asian children and those of English learners also rated social workers as less collaborative than other staff. Parents of Black children rated administrators and SROs as treating their children less fairly than other staff members and parents of Asian children, children with a disability, and English learners reported SROs as treating their children less fairly than other staff members.

Two-thirds of all parents (65%) felt suspensions were ineffective with few Black parents (18%) and parents of children with a disability (15%) rating suspensions as effective. Half of all parents (51%) felt tickets and arrests were effective but only 30% of Black parents felt tickets

and arrests were effective. Of those parents whose child was suspended, ticketed or arrested, only 25% found those disciplinary responses to be effective.

One-fifth of parents (22%) sought out an SRO for help, with parents of Asian children (10%) and parents of English learners (8%) seeking out an SRO for help less often. For parents that sought out an SRO for help, 89% of all parents indicated the SRO was helpful. Black parents (79%), Asian parents (63%), parents of children with a disability (78%), and parents of English learners (60%) reported having a less helpful experience than other parents. Parents whose children interacted with SROs reported a positive experience most of the time (94%). Black parents (67%) and parents of students with a disability (82%) reported having a positive experience less often than other parents. The presence of an SRO made 10% of parents as a whole feel unsafe or very unsafe. Some parents felt SROs made them feel very unsafe or unsafe at higher levels including Black parents (20%), Hispanic parents (21%), Asian parents (18%), and parents of children with a disability (16%).

Two thirds of all parents (66%) indicated they were afraid their child would be harmed at school. However, 92% of all parents indicated they felt their child was very safe or safe at school. Parents of all children in all demographics reported feeling their child was safe at a rate of 88% or greater.

High School Students. Students in middle school and high school in the School District of La Crosse were provided an opportunity to answer questions on a School Discipline and Safety survey. Students provided 921 responses. High school responses (Appendix G) were evaluated separate from middle school responses (Appendix H). Data was disaggregated by race, disability, gender, and English as a first language.

High school students generally felt teachers, counselors, and social workers were more helpful and more fair than administrators and SROs. Black and Native American students rated all five categories of staff as less helpful and less fair than other students. Students rated administrators and SROs as similarly helpful and fair except for a few student groups:

1. Black students rated administrators as more helpful than SROs but administrators were rated as less fair than SROs.
2. Hispanic students rated administrators as less helpful and less fair.
3. Native American students rated both administrators and SROs as unhelpful and unfair entirely.
4. Students with disabilities rated administrators as less helpful and fair than SROs.

Two-thirds of high school students felt suspensions (66%) were ineffective in changing behavior but felt tickets and arrests were more effective (58%). Of those high school students that had been suspended, ticketed, or arrested, two-thirds felt that those consequences were ineffective in changing behavior. Students with disabilities reported feeling suspensions, tickets, and arrests were more effective than other student groups.

As it relates to interactions with SROs, Black and Native American high school students reported being less comfortable approaching an SRO to report a problem, had sought an SRO for help more frequently, and when seeking out an SRO reported that the SRO was helpful less frequently than other students. Black and Native American students also reported having more interactions with SROs overall and when they did interact, they felt the interaction was more negative than how other students felt. Students with disabilities reported being more comfortable approaching an SRO with a problem, had sought out SROs more often, and felt the SRO was more helpful than students without disabilities. Students that identified as transgender or

non-binary indicated they sought out an SRO for help less frequently and when they did have interactions with SROs, they were more negative interactions than other students reported.

Black and Native American students reported feeling less safe at school than other students. They also reported feeling unsafe at school in a way that affected their ability to learn and concentrate more than other students. Black and Native American students also reported that the presence of an SRO made them feel unsafe at three to four times the rate of other students.

Middle School Students. Middle school students generally felt teachers and counselors were more helpful and more fair than social workers, administrators and SROs. Black and Native American students and students with disabilities rated all five categories of staff as less helpful and less fair than other students. Hispanic students rated all staff members except counselors as less helpful than students as a whole. Students rated administrators and SROs as similarly helpful and fair except for a few student groups:

1. Black students rated administrators as less helpful than SROs
2. Hispanic students rated administrators as more helpful than SROs.
3. Native American students rated both administrators and SROs as entirely unhelpful.
4. Students identifying as two or more races rated SROs as less helpful than administrators.
5. Students with disabilities rated administrators as less helpful and less fair than SROs.

Half of middle school students felt suspensions (51%) were ineffective in changing behavior but felt tickets and arrests were more effective (68%). Of those middle school students that had been suspended, ticketed, or arrested, two-thirds (69%) felt that those consequences were ineffective in changing behavior.

As it relates to interactions with SROs, Black, Asian, and Native American middle school students reported being less comfortable approaching an SRO to report a problem. Black and Asian middle school students did not report seeking out an SRO for help. Middle school students with disabilities reported seeking out an SRO for help more often than other students but they, along with transgender/non-binary students felt SROs were less helpful than other students thought. Black students, students with disabilities and transgender/non-binary students reported having fewer interactions with SROs and having more negative interactions with SROs than other middle school students.

Black and Native American middle school students along with students with disabilities and transgender/non-binary students reported feeling less safe at school than other students. Black and Native American students as well as students with disabilities also reported that the presence of an SRO made them feel unsafe at three to six times the rate of other middle school students.

In combination, middle school and high school student surveys show that Black and Native American students report more negative interactions with SROs, that SROs make them feel less safe, and that they feel less safe in school generally than other groups of students.

Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The [Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) (YRBS) is part of a national effort by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention to monitor risk-behaviors in high school students. These behaviors are correlated with higher mortality and morbidity rates during youth and in adulthood. Some of the questions on the YRBS provide stakeholder feedback from students to aid in the examination of the SRO Program, school safety and school discipline. Survey results are disaggregated by a number of student characteristics.

Gender. A selection of questions from the YRBS show that female students rated a number of questions as more concerning than male-identifying students (see Table 27). Areas where female students expressed greater concerns were: (1) missed school due to safety concerns (twice the rate); (2) agree/strongly agree that violence is a problem at school (one and a half times the rate), and; (3) two measures of bullying (one and a half times the rate). Female-identifying students also indicated feeling less safe at school (-6%) and that they belong less (-7%) than male-identifying students.

Table 27: 2019 YRBS Results For Select Questions Disaggregated by Gender.

YRBS Question	Female Students	Male Students
Missed school due to safety concerns (past 30 days)	10%	5%
Brought a gun to school (past 30 days)	0%	0%
Threatened or injured with weapon at school (past 12 months)	6%	6%
Most of the time or always feel safe at school	73%	79%
In a physical fight on school property (past 12 months)	6%	9%
Agree/strongly agree that violence is a problem at school	46%	32%
Bullied on school property (past 12 months)	23%	15%
Agree/strongly agree that bullying is a problem at school	49%	34%
Were offered, sold, or given drugs on school property (past 12 months)	12%	10%
Attended school under the influence of alcohol or drugs (past 12 months)	9%	8%
Participate in school activities, teams, or clubs	70%	63%
Agree or strongly agree that they belong at school	60%	67%
Have at least one teacher or other adult at school to talk to	72%	71%

Sexual Orientation. The YRBS also compares responses for students identifying as LGBT and straight-cisgender (see Table 28). Areas where LGBT students expressed greater

concerns were: (1) missed school due to safety concerns (twice the rate); (2) threatened or injured with a weapon at school (twice the rate); (3) agree/strongly agree that violence is a problem at school (one and a half times the rate); (4) two measures of bullying (20% more likely); (5) were offered, sold, or given drugs on school property (twice as likely), and; (6) attended school under the influence of alcohol or drugs (twice as likely). LGBT students also indicated feeling less safe at school (-11%) and that they belong less (-28%) than straight-cisgender students.

Table 28: 2019 YRBS Results for Select Questions Disaggregated by Sexual Orientation.

YRBS Question	LGBT	Straight-Cisgender
Missed school due to safety concerns (past 30 days)	13%	6%
Brought a gun to school (past 30 days)	0%	0%
Threatened or injured with weapon at school (past 12 months)	9%	5%
Most of the time or always feel safe at school	67%	78%
In a physical fight on school property (past 12 months)	7%	7%
Agree/strongly agree that violence is a problem at school	48%	37%
Bullied on school property (past 12 months)	32%	26%
Agree/strongly agree that bullying is a problem at school	52%	40%
Were offered, sold, or given drugs on school property (past 12 months)	19%	10%
Attended school under the influence of alcohol or drugs (past 12 months)	16%	8%
Participate in school activities, teams, or clubs	62%	68%
Agree or strongly agree that they belong at school	41%	69%
Have at least one teacher or other adult at school to talk to	65%	73%

Disability. Students filling out the YRBS can identify if they have a disability or a condition (see Table 29). Areas where students who identified having a disability or condition expressed greater concerns were: (1) missed school due to safety concerns (three times the rate); (2) threatened or injured with a weapon at school (four times the rate); (3) in a physical fight on school property (three times the rate); (4) agree/strongly agree that violence is a problem at school (25% more likely); (5) two measures of bullying (twice the rate for bullied on school property); (6) were offered, sold, or given drugs on school property (twice as likely), and; (7) attended school under the influence of alcohol or drugs (twice as likely). Students who identified having a disability or condition also indicated feeling less safe at school (-7%) and that they belong less (-20%) than straight-cisgender students.

Table 29: 2019 YRBS Results for Select Questions Disaggregated by Disability or Condition.

YRBS Question	Disability or Condition	No Disability or Condition
Missed school due to safety concerns (past 30 days)	16%	6%
Brought a gun to school (past 30 days)	0%	0%
Threatened or injured with weapon at school (past 12 months)	16%	4%
Most of the time or always feel safe at school	72%	79%
In a physical fight on school property (past 12 months)	17%	6%
Agree/strongly agree that violence is a problem at school	48%	38%
Bullied on school property (past 12 months)	34%	16%
Agree/strongly agree that bullying is a problem at school	50%	42%
Were offered, sold, or given drugs on school property (past 12 months)	21%	9%
Attended school under the influence of alcohol or drugs (past 12 months)	15%	8%
Participate in school activities, teams, or clubs	65%	69%

Agree or strongly agree that they belong at school	48%	68%
Have at least one teacher or other adult at school to talk to	69%	73%

Broad Racial Categories. Finally, the YRBS disaggregates data based on broad categories of race using the designations: Hispanic; white non-Hispanic; and other non-Hispanic. The other Non-Hispanic category includes all other students of color and it is relabeled as such in the table (see Table 30). Areas where students who identified as Hispanic expressed greater concerns (compared to white non-Hispanic students) were: (1) threatened or injured with a weapon at school (one and have times the rate), and; (2) in a physical fight on school property (twice the rate). Students who identified as Hispanic also indicated feeling less safe at school (-9%) and that they belong less (-10%) than white non-Hispanic students. Non-Hispanic students of color did not express greater concerns on most categories listed compared to white non-Hispanic students. However, non-Hispanic students of color did indicate feeling less safe at school (-14%) and not having a teacher or adult to talk to (-8%) than white non-Hispanic students.

Table 30: 2019 YRBS Results For Select Questions Disaggregated by Racial Category.

YRBS Question	Hispanic	White non-Hispanic	Of Color Non-Hispanic
Missed school due to safety concerns (past 30 days)	9%	7%	9%
Brought a gun to school (past 30 days)	0%	0%	0%
Threatened or injured with weapon at school (past 12 months)	9%	6%	4%
Most of the time or always feel safe at school	71%	80%	66%
In a physical fight on school property (past 12 months)	19%	7%	7%

Agree/strongly agree that violence is a problem at school	42%	39%	37%
Bullied on school property (past 12 months)	19%	21%	13%
Agree/strongly agree that bullying is a problem at school	44%	41%	43%
Were offered, sold, or given drugs on school property (past 12 months)	12%	12%	9%
Attended school under the influence of alcohol or drugs (past 12 months)	11%	9%	7%
Participate in school activities, teams, or clubs	48%	68%	65%
Agree or strongly agree that they belong at school	55%	65%	61%
Have at least one teacher or other adult at school to talk to	55%	74%	66%

The YRBS survey shows that female students, LGBT students, students with disabilities, and Hispanic students engage in and experience more dangerous behavior at school, feel less safe at school, and feel like they belong less at school than their comparison groups. The data further shows that non-Hispanic students of color engage in and experience less dangerous behavior than white non-Hispanic students yet feel as though they belong less and have fewer connections to teachers and adults.

Key Findings on Stakeholder Feedback. The data gathered from stakeholders shows that:

1. Correspondence from stakeholders who proactively communicated with the School District were more frequently supportive of removing SROs from schools due to student fear of SROs, perpetuation of the school-to-prison pipeline, and criminalization of students.

2. Administrators and SROs felt SROs presence in schools led to increased safety and positive relationships and indicated that having a consistent officer with the right training responding to incidents led to better outcomes for students.
3. Non-punitive and therapeutic approaches to student misbehavior were preferred by students, staff and parents and were felt to be more effective than suspensions, tickets, and arrests.
4. Black students and their parents and students with disabilities and their parents report more negative interactions with SROs and more frequently indicate that SROs make them feel unsafe at school.
5. Non-Hispanic students of color feel as though they belong less and have fewer connections to teachers and adults.

Comparison to SRO Program Recommendations

A comparison of the La Crosse SRO program to recommendations for SRO programs indicate the La Crosse SRO program meets most criteria (see Table 31). The two areas where the existing program falls short of recommendations are the evaluation process and collecting and reporting data. SROs themselves are evaluated but the SRO program itself is not evaluated in an ongoing manner. Data, while collected, is not routinely reported or analyzed to inform program change.

Table 31: Comparison of School District of La Crosse SRO Program to Recommendations.

Recommendation	La Crosse SRO Program
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Provide juvenile specific training to SROs	<p>The La Crosse Police Department requires SROs to attend the following trainings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fair and Impartial Policing ● Mental Health First Aid & Mental Health First Aid youth module ● Crisis Intervention Training ● YWCA’s Racial Justice/Racial equality workshop ● National Association of School Resource Officer Basic and Advanced training courses
Establish a memorandum of understanding or a memorandum of agreement between the agencies involved	A memorandum of understanding is in place between the La Crosse Police Department and the School District of La Crosse.
Clearly identifying the roles, responsibilities and scope of the SRO program	The memorandum of understanding outlines duties and responsibilities of SROs and the schools.
Have an evaluation process for SROs	SROs are evaluated through the La Crosse Police Department.
Collect and report data on the SRO program	Data is collected on calls and arrests. Juvenile arrests are reported through the Wisconsin Department of Justice Uniform Crime Reporting system.
Recruit and hire effective SROs	SROs are hired through a collaborative process between the School District of La Crosse and the La Crosse Police Department. Where ineffective officers have been in place temporarily, they have been removed (Appendix C).
Involve cross-sector collaboration	The School District of La Crosse and the La Crosse Police Department are involved in numerous cross-sector collaborations including the ongoing Criminal Justice Management Council and previous working groups and task forces.

Key Findings on Comparisons to SRO Recommendations. A comparison of the La Crosse SRO program to recommendations for SRO programs found that:

1. The School District of La Crosse SRO program not meet the recommendations to collect and report data or to have an evaluation process in place.

SRO Programs in Other School Districts

Other school districts with similar demographics have SRO programs that vary in costs and funding source (see Table 32.) All but one school district with similar demographics has an SRO at each secondary building. Local school districts also have SRO programs (see Table 33). Local school district SRO programs typically have a single SRO and pay for the costs out of the General Fund.

Table 32: Characteristics of SRO Programs in School Districts with Similar Demographics.

Local School District	Number and Location	Funding and Source
Fond du Lac	5 officers, one at each secondary school	50% of cost (\$289,984) Community Service fund
La Crosse	5 officers, one at each secondary school	\$250,000 Community Service fund
Manitowoc	3 officers, one at each secondary school	50% of cost (~\$180,000) General fund
Stevens Point	3 officers, one at each secondary school	\$179,000 General fund
Wausau	4 officers, one at each secondary building	\$140,000 Community Service fund
Wisconsin Rapids	2 officers, one at the high school, one for all other buildings	\$62,000 General fund

Table 33: Characteristics of SRO Programs in Local School Districts.

Local School District	Number and Location	Funding and Source
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Holmen	1 officer for the District	50% of cost (\$28,500) General fund
La Crosse	5 officers, one at each secondary school	\$250,000 Community Service fund
Onalaska	1 officer for the District	50% of cost (\$33,480) General fund
West Salem	1 officer for the District	\$70,000 General fund

Staffing and funding rates for SRO programs vary between school districts with similar demographics (see Table 34). The School District of La Crosse has the lowest student-to-SRO ratio and the second highest cost per student relative to school districts with similar demographics. The School District of La Crosse student to SRO ratio and cost per student expense is one and half times greater than the average school district with similar demographics.

Table 34: SRO Program Comparison Between School Districts with Similar Demographics.

District	Enrollment	SROs	Costs	Student-to-SRO Ratio	Cost per Student
Fond du Lac	7,050	5	\$289,984	1,410	\$41
La Crosse	6,449	5	\$250,000	1,290	\$39
Manitowoc	4,961	3	\$180,000	1,654	\$36
Stevens Point	7,159	3	\$179,000	2,386	\$25
Wausau	8,311	4	\$140,000	2,078	\$17
Wisconsin Rapids	5,114	2	\$62,000	2,557	\$12
Average				1,896	\$28
Average w/o La Crosse				2,017	\$26

Local school districts also vary in staffing and cost ratios (see Table 35). The School District of La Crosse has a student-to-SRO ratio more than twice that of the average of other local school districts. The School District of La Crosse also incurs a cost per student twice that of the average of other local school districts.

Table 35: SRO Program Comparison Between Local School Districts.

District	Enrollment	SROs	Costs	Student to SRO Ratio	Cost per Student
Holmen	3,916	1	\$28,500	3,916	\$7
La Crosse	6,449	5	\$250,000	1,290	\$39
Onalaska	3,171	1	\$33,480	3,171	\$11
West Salem	1,838	1	\$70,000	1,838	\$38
Average				2,554	\$24
Average w/o La Crosse				2,975	\$19

Key Findings on Comparisons to SRO Programs in Other School Districts. A

comparison of the La Crosse SRO program to programs found in other school districts found that:

1. The La Crosse SRO program is staffed and funded at a higher rate than other school districts.

Alternatives to SRO Programs

A variety of options are presented in the literature as alternatives to SROs. Meiners (2011) identifies restorative and transformative justice practices that include, “peace circles, peer juries, motivational interviewing and many other forms of building relationships and community” (p. 14). Other options identified include:

... Positive and supportive school climate; Quality academic instruction and proactive measures to minimize academic difficulty; Student and family involvement in school planning and policy; Less of an institutional mentality focusing on control of "inmates"; and Prevention programs involving anger management, social skills training, peer mediation, and conflict resolution techniques. (Mayer and Leone, 1999, p. 336)

One additional recommendation from the literature is social workers (Mallett, 2016).

Community correspondence opposed to SROs identified a range of supports that could supplant SROs. These included social workers, counselors, restorative justice practices, teachers and school programs, mental health resources and cultural liaisons. The DPI [noted](#) a couple of considerations when hiring SROs that may preclude the need for SROs including school climate and cultural competency. The DPI also identified [resources](#) that could be implemented in place of SROs to include: school mental health resources, restorative practices, positive behavioral interventions and supports, engagement strategies, transition programs, and anti-bullying programs.

Conclusion

School-to-Prison Pipeline in La Crosse

The literature review examined the school-to-prison pipeline and defined it as punitive disciplinary measures in schools resulting in exclusionary discipline and increased rates of juvenile arrest. The school-to-prison pipeline is also characterized by disproportionate outcomes by race and disability and ultimately leads to lower graduation rates and incarceration of youth. Evidence to support the school-to-prison pipeline has previously been reported by various working groups and task forces in La Crosse County. Key findings from the data show that the

markers of the school-to-prison pipeline are present in the School District of La Crosse. These key findings are listed below:

1. The School District of La Crosse relies on exclusionary discipline at higher rates than other school districts.
2. The School District of La Crosse disproportionately disciplines and suspends students of color, students in poverty, male students, and students with disabilities.
3. Juvenile arrests occur at higher rates in the City of La Crosse than in comparable cities.
4. Black juveniles are disproportionately arrested in the City of La Crosse.
5. Graduation rates for Black students and students with disabilities have declined while graduation rates for reference groups have grown or stayed the same, expanding graduation gaps.
6. The La Crosse SRO program is staffed and funded at a higher rate than other comparable school districts.

Mission, Vision, Values and Goals in the La Crosse School District

The mission, vision, and values of the School District of La Crosse highlight equity as a practice and an outcome that should be present in the district. The administrative goals for the School District of La Crosse are as follows:

1. All students graduate, college and career ready.
2. All students read proficiently.
3. All students feel like they belong.
4. All students are engaged.
5. Student outcomes do not correlate with student demographics.

Key findings from the data show that equitable outcomes are currently not being achieved, that not all students feel like they belong, and that student outcomes are correlated with student demographics. The system as it is currently constructed is not working for all of our students.

These key findings are listed below:

1. Non-punitive and therapeutic approaches to student misbehavior were preferred by students, staff and parents and were felt to be more effective than suspensions, tickets, and arrests.
2. Black students and their parents and students with disabilities and their parents report more negative interactions with SROs and more frequently indicate that SROs make them feel unsafe at school.
3. Students of color feel as though they belong less and have fewer connections to teachers and adults.

Stakeholder Input

The Board of Education requested stakeholder input on the SRO program. These key findings are below:

1. Correspondence from stakeholders who proactively communicated with the School District were more frequently supportive of removing SROs from schools due to student fear of SROs, perpetuation of the school-to-prison pipeline, and criminalization of students.
2. Administrators and SROs felt SROs presence in schools led to increased safety and positive relationships and indicated that having a consistent officer with the right training responding to incidents led to better outcomes for students.

SRO Program Recommendations

The literature reviewed a series of recommendations for SRO programs. The key findings show that the La Crosse SRO program meets most recommendations but not all. The key finding is listed below:

1. The La Crosse SRO program meets most recommendations but does not meet the recommendations to collect and report data or to have an evaluation process in place.

Recommendation

Board of Education policy, OE-10 Learning Environment, states, in part, that, “The Superintendent shall establish and maintain a learning environment that is physically, socially and emotionally safe, welcoming, inclusive, respectful and conducive to effective learning,” and that “The Superintendent may not: Tolerate any behaviors, actions, discrimination or attitudes by adults who have contact with students that hinder the academic performance or the well-being of students.” The key findings show that systems in the School District of La Crosse have produced outcomes that perpetuate the school-to-prison pipeline, and are in opposition to the mission, vision, values, goals, and policies of the School District, hindering academic performance and the well-being of students. Knowing that our current system does not reflect the expectations of the Board of Education, we are compelled to make systematic reforms to serve our students as they deserve.

Previous efforts to reduce exclusionary discipline, juvenile arrests, and disproportionate outcomes in La Crosse have not led to substantial improvements in those areas. Systemic change must be made in order to make progress on these outcomes. The responsibility for exclusionary discipline, the initiation of many citations and arrests, and disproportionate outcomes lies with the School District of La Crosse. The current system does not work for all students and views

students through a punitive, criminalized lens that is propelled by exaggerated fears of school violence and a misguided belief that tough on crime approaches are effective (see Dr. Kruse's letter, Appendix I). A better school system is possible where all students and families are safe, welcome, and included and where all students are able to reach their full potential. School District of La Crosse systems and practices must change if outcomes are to improve.

Addressing systemic change includes reexamining the current relationship between the School District of La Crosse and the La Crosse Police Department. A reduction in punitive practices in the district will necessarily reduce the need for SROs over time. But, as this review shows, there is compelling evidence from both peer reviewed studies and from students, families, community members, and organizations that time is of the essence when it comes to addressing this issue. Further, the fact that the La Crosse SRO program is staffed and funded at a higher rate than other comparable school districts is inconsistent with the school district's goal to reduce punitive practices and eliminate the criminalization of students. At the same time, evidence in this review also indicates some time is needed to build up therapeutic supports, restorative practices, and social services if the SRO program is scaled back or terminated. Further, there will be occasions when law enforcement will need to interact with students at school, and as this review shows, students benefit in these instances when a consistent, specially-trained police officer who is familiar with the school district and known by staff and students responds. Therefore, considering all the evidence collected during the SRO program review and the school district's commitment to do what is best for all students, the following recommendations are submitted to the Board of Education:

1. Develop and implement School District of La Crosse philosophies and disciplinary practices that reduce punitive approaches to student misbehavior and eliminate the criminalization of students.
2. Develop and implement School District of La Crosse philosophies and practices that lead to proportionate disciplinary and arrest outcomes for historically marginalized students.
3. Expand and shift to therapeutic and restorative practices for students who have challenges with behavior.
4. Expand proactive social service resources within the School District.
5. Reduce the ongoing, routine presence of SROs in school buildings while retaining consistency of responding officers.
6. Establish an SRO Oversight Committee.

In order to implement this recommendations, the following action steps will be taken:

1. The Superintendent will create a School Discipline Committee comprised of stakeholders within and outside the School District by January 1, 2021.
2. The School Discipline Committee will be charged with providing an action plan for change to the Superintendent and the Board of Education by May 1, 2021:
 - a. Actions for the Committee to consider include:
 - i. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
 - ii. School climate
 - iii. School culture
 - iv. De-escalation strategies
 - v. Social emotional learning

- vi. Mental health supports
 - vii. Systematic data analysis
 - viii. Continuous improvement models
- b. Work already completed in analyzing the School District's disproportionate outcomes in special education should help inform the recommendations of this committee.
3. The School Discipline Committee will collaborate with current community partners and School District Student Services staff to expand therapeutic and restorative practices by September 1, 2021.
- a. Practices for the Committee to explore include:
 - i. Restorative justice
 - ii. Peace circles
 - iii. Peer juries
 - iv. Peer mediation
 - v. Motivational interviewing
 - vi. Conflict resolution
 - vii. PBIS
4. The School District of La Crosse will collaborate with La Crosse County Human Services and other local agencies to increase proactive social service resources available within schools by July 1, 2021.
- a. Programs for the School District to consider include:
 - i. System of Care
 - ii. Restorative Justice

- iii. Community Schools Coordinators
 - iv. Cultural Liaisons
 - v. Other historically successful programs funded through the Community Services Fund
 - b. The Community Service Fund levy for proactive social service resources will increase by \$100,000 for the 2021-2022 school year and by \$50,000 for the 2022-2023 school year.
5. The School District of La Crosse will collaborate with the La Crosse Police Department to reduce the number of SROs assigned to the School District from five to three by July 1, 2021 and from three to two by July 1, 2022.
- a. A phased reduction is recommended to provide time to build up other therapeutic supports, restorative practices, and social services as SRO supports are scaled back.
 - b. The Community Service Fund levy for the SRO program will be reduced from \$244,000 for the 2020-2021 school year to \$150,000 for the 2021-2022 school year and to \$100,000 for the 2022-2023 school year.
 - c. The reduction of officers and costs will bring the SRO program in-line with other comparable districts and eliminate the routine, ongoing presence of SROs in individual schools in favor of developing connections across the School District to ensure consistency of law enforcement responders when required.
6. The School District of La Crosse will collaborate with the La Crosse Police Department to implement revisions to the SRO program beginning July 1, 2021 that:

- a. Address the concerns about the SRO program identified in this review, particularly concerns identified by students and families from historically marginalized groups.
7. The Superintendent will create an SRO Oversight Committee comprised of stakeholders from within and outside the School District by July 1, 2020 to provide on an annual basis:
 - a. A review of data related to the SRO program
 - b. An evaluation of the ongoing effectiveness of the SRO program
 - c. Recommendations for future improvements

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Appendix A

La Crosse School District SRO Survey Responses from the Executive Director of Business Services of the School District of La Crosse

1. What is the reason for Fund 80?

Fund 80 is used to account for activities such as adult education, community recreation programs such as evening swimming pool operation and softball leagues, elderly food service programs, non-special education preschool, day care services and other programs which are not elementary and secondary educational programs but have the primary function of serving the community. Expenditures for these activities - including cost allocations for salaries, benefits, travel, purchased services, etc. - are to be included in this fund to the extent feasible. The district may adopt a separate tax levy for this fund.

2. What are the parameters for use of Fund 80?

Under Wis. Stats. 120.13(19), the school board of a common or union high school district, a unified school district or a first-class city school district may establish and maintain community education, training, recreational, cultural or athletic programs and services, outside of its regular curricular and extracurricular programs for pupils.

PI 80.02 - Ineligible Costs

A school board may not expend monies on ineligible costs for community programs and services. The following are ineligible costs:

- costs for any program or service that is limited to only school district pupils;
- costs for any program or service whose schedule presents a significant barrier for age-appropriate school district residents to participate in the program or service;
- costs that are not the actual, additional cost to operate community programs and services under s. 120.13(19), Stats; and
- costs that would be incurred by the school district if the community programs and services were not provided by the school district.

3. What scrutiny have we had regarding use of Fund 80?

In February 2020, the DPI School Finance Director and one of the DPI School Finance Consultants requested a phone meeting with Superintendent Nelson and Exec. Director of Business Services, Ms. Sprang regarding questions related to La Crosse's Community Service Fund 80. The change in the Fund 80 Levy from 2018-19 to 2019-20 increased by \$424,500 for a total 2019-20 Fund 80 Levy of \$1,375,535. This concerned the DPI, and they had the following questions and directives:

- Difficult to find Community Service Fund information on the District's website. Not mandatory but if services in Fund 80 are truly available to the community, this information should be more obvious and available.
- Community Liaisons: What do they do during the day? Need proof for the auditors that the liaisons are supporting private schools as well. Is there

documentation that these liaisons have reached out to the private schools and community? Do the non-public schools know that if they have an issue these people are available to them?

- Police Liaisons: If they are funded in Fund 80, their role is not for safety and security and yet the description in the Budget Plan Document refers to “a commitment to safety and security.” Need to change description in Budget Plan Document and remove safety and security reference. How are the non-public schools benefiting from the Police Liaisons program?
- After School Programing: How do private schools know they can participate? Need to have supporting documentation for communications to private schools.
- Facility Use: Make sure the process used to track utilities and overhead costs related to 3rd party facility use is defined and a reimbursement to the General Fund 10 from Fund 80 is made.
- Early Childhood Liaison: How is this available to all? Make sure this is documented.
- Community Schools Coordinator: Need to document how they are available to other non-public schools.
- Budget summary breakdowns request by program. The budget for the year exceeds the levy by \$500,000. Why is this?
- Make sure every program in Fund 80 is documented well as to availability to the community including private schools.

4. Does the SRO program fit within the Fund 80 program?

Yes. The funding of SROs in Fund 80 is acceptable because the SRO program:

- jurisdiction of this position is not confined to the walls of the school;
- the individual communicates with service groups, churches, other municipal teams, local businesses, and citizens to assist them in understanding the student issues in the community;
- the work schedule of this position is not limited to the work hours of the school day;
- students reach out to this individual about issues on and off school property; and
- there is a concerted effort to document this as a community-wide program (including private schools) and this documentation will be available to auditors.

Appendix B

La Crosse School District Administrator SRO Survey Responses

* Quantities indicate the number of unique administrators responding to that category.

Secondary Administrators Coded and Categorized Responses	Elementary Administrators Coded and Categorized Responses
<i>When are SROs Called?</i>	
<p>Student safety - 8*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical altercations/fights/ violence - 5 ● Threats of violence - 2 ● Disturbance - 1 ● Outside threats/suspicious visitors - 2 <p>For unlawful activity - 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, paraphernalia - 4 ● Weapons - 4 ● Under the influence - 2 ● Thefts - 2 <p>School Associated Issues - 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attendance - 2 ● Disruption or refusal to comply - 1 ● Bullying - 1 ● Possible Vacate - 1 <p>The are generally present - 3</p> <p>As a Resource - 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Legal questions - 2 ● Medical response team - 1 <p>Celebrations - 1</p> <p>By request - 1</p>	<p>School Associated Issues - 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attendance - 4 ● Vacate property - 1 ● Proactive - 1 ● Safety and order/unsafe behaviors - 2 ● Traffic flow - 1 <p>For investigating crime - 1</p> <p>Threatening parents - 1</p>
<i>Who calls SROs?</i>	
<p>Administrators - 10</p> <p>Administrative Assistant - 4</p> <p>EBD/ID Teacher - 2</p> <p>Teachers - 1</p> <p>Student Services - 1</p> <p>Counselor - 1</p> <p>Any staff - 1</p> <p>Parents - 1</p>	<p>Administration - 4</p> <p>Counselor/social worker - 3</p> <p>Administrative Assistant - 2</p>

<i>How frequently is an SRO relied on in their role to enforce the law?</i>	
Multiple times daily - 4 Weekly - 1 Periodically - 1 Rarely/Infrequently - 2 Proactively - 4	Monthly - 1 Rarely/Infrequently - 3
<i>What are the types of responsibilities SROs are taking on in our schools?</i>	
<p>Provide Student Support or Resources - 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relationship building - 8 ● Supervision - 5 ● Connect students to resources - 3 ● Assisting classroom instruction - 3 ● Assist with struggling students - 2 ● Conduct home visits - 2 ● Answer legal questions from students- 2 ● Transport students home or provide rides - 2 ● Implement restorative justice - 1 ● Communicate with parents - 1 ● Be visible and available - 1 ● Follow up on CPS calls - 1 <p>Address Crimes and Misbehavior - 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Address violence - 1 ● Address drugs - 2 ● Address weapons - 2 ● Follow up on incidents - 1 ● Address truancy/ attendance issues - 2 ● Address bullying/ cyberbullying - 2 ● Investigate crime - 1 ● Assist with System of care - 2 <p>Assist in School Safety - 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct threat assessments - 3 ● Participate on various teams - 1 ● Develop re-entry plans or students - 1 ● Ensure staff safety - 1 ● Assist with safety drills - 1 ● Develop safety protocols - 1 ● Assist with crisis planning - 1 ● Conduct security checks on buildings - 1 ● Communicate with LCPD - 1 	<p>Address Crimes and Misbehavior - 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Address truancy - 3 ● Investigate crime - 1 <p>Provide Student Support or Resources - 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relationships - 1 ● Point of contact for families and staff - 2 ● Be a liaison for community - 1 <p>Assist in School Safety - 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist with traffic flow - 1 ● Assist with safety and order - 1
<i>Have the responsibilities of SROs changed in recent years?</i>	
Responsibilities have remained the same - 5 Provide More Student Support/Resources - 4	Responsibilities have remained the same - 3 Have become less accessible - 1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase in relationship building - 3 ● More active in classes - 1 ● House visits - 1 ● More proactive/focused on prevention - 2 ● Provide resources - 1 <p>Assist more in School Safety - 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More involved in neighborhood crime 1 <p>Address New Crimes and Misbehavior - 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● System of care - 1 ● More involved in cyber issues - 1 	
<i>Rank the purposes of the SRO program (scored 1-4, 1 most important, averages reported)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain a safe and secure environment on school grounds. - 1.7 ● Establishing positive relationships between the SRO and the student population. - 1.8 ● Building rapport between the SRO and parents, faculty, staff and administrators. - 3.7 ● Reducing offense committed by juveniles and young adults. - 2.8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain a safe and secure environment on school grounds. - 2.8 ● Establishing positive relationships between the SRO and the student population. - 2.0 ● Building rapport between the SRO and parents, faculty, staff and administrators. - 1.8 ● Reducing offense committed by juveniles and young adults. - 3.5
<i>In what way have SROs worked to build relationships with students of color (SOC) and their families?</i>	
<p>Purposeful Contact/Relationship Building - 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intentionally builds relationships/shows interest in SOC lives - 5 ● Regular contact with SOC/mentorship - 3 <p>Nothing specific - 2</p> <p>Provides Services - 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducts home visits - 1 ● Gives SOC rides - 1 ● Provides bus passes to SOC - 1 	<p>Nothing specific - 3</p> <p>Intentionally builds relationships - 2</p>
<i>Do SROs ever interfere with school curriculum?</i>	
<p>Never interferes with curriculum - 10</p> <p>Adds to curriculum - 2</p>	<p>Never interferes with curriculum - 4</p>
<i>Are there times when SROs get involved beyond what you would prefer as an administrator?</i>	
<p>Never - 7</p> <p>Very rarely if at all - 1</p> <p>Yes - 1</p> <p>Non-SROs only - 1</p>	<p>Never - 4</p>
<i>Are there individuals (beyond SROs) in the district going "above and beyond" as it relates to</i>	

<i>intervening in student disciplinary measures?</i>	
None identified - 4 School District Staff - 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most staff - 4 • SPED Staff - 1 • Counselors - 1 Community Partners - 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System of care - 2 • YWCA - 2 	School District Staff - 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most staff - 4 • Integrated support staff - 1 • Counselors - 1
<i>If we no longer have SROs in schools, how will building emergencies be handled?</i>	
Call dispatch/911 - 6 Other School District Staff - 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Others in the building - 3 • Emergency team will respond - 1 • Administrators would respond - 1 	Call dispatch/911 - 3 Same procedure - 2
<i>If we no longer have SROs in schools, how do you imagine emergency service response time will be impacted?</i>	
There will be a delayed response - 9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slower - 5 • Significant delay - 2 • From 1 min to 10-30 min - 2 • Variable response time - 1 • Will have to explain the situation delaying intervention - 2 • On call officer will arrive after the event 1 	There will be a delayed response - 2 No difference - 1 Depends on availability and urgency - 1
<i>If we no longer have SROs in schools, what kind of impact would a different responding officer each time have on our students?</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will have a negative impact • The responding officer will be less effective. • It will increase the possibility of a negative interaction with police. • Students are less willing to share or respond to random officers. • Not all police officers can be great SROs - they do not all have the necessary skills. • There will be a loss of consistency, trust, relationships and a resource to families. • Relationships will not be formed with police officers. • New officers can escalate situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a loss of consistency. • There will be a loss of relationships with students. • It will not be a factor.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be less restorative practices, less investment in the students lives, and sometimes can be more rough with students. • It will be a huge detriment with a loss of training and no background knowledge of the students. • It will have no impact. 	
<p><i>If we no longer have SROs in schools, what would be more beneficial for our students - consistency or new officers each time?</i></p>	
<p>Consistency - 9 It would be the same either way - 1</p>	<p>Consistency - 3 It is not a factor - 1</p>
<p><i>If we no longer have SROs in schools, what resource do you think would be effective in supporting students?</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social worker - 6 • Counselors - 3 • Cultural liaison - 1 • System of Care worker - 1 • Mental health resource - 1 • School psychologist - 1 • Adults available to de-escalate - 1 • Other additional staff - 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselor - 3 • Social worker - 3 • Staff to work with student behaviors - 2
<p><i>What skills do you want a police officer who responds to an incident to have?</i></p>	
<p>School Specific Skills - 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-escalation - 4 • Understand youth - 3 • Restorative approach - 1 • Understand students with disabilities - 1 • Familiar with wrap around services - 1 <p>General Skills - 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to build relationships - 2 • Listening skills - 2 • Communication skills - 2 • People skills - 1 • Professionalism - 1 • Proactive thinker - 1 <p>Attributes - 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience - 3 • Tact and grace - 1 • Compassion - 1 • Empathy - 1 	<p>General Skills - 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to build relationships - 3 • Communication skills - 1 • Good listener - 1 • Problem solver - 1 <p>Attributes - 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience - 1 • Calm - 1 • Common sense - 1 • Rational - 1 • Approachable - 1
<p><i>What training do you want a police officer who responds to an incident to have?</i></p>	

<p>How to Address Student Situations - 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● De-escalation - 6 ● Conflict resolution - 2 ● CPI - 2 ● Trauma informed - 1 ● Mental health crisis training - 1 ● Least restrictive measures - 1 ● Training on youth - 1 <p>Cultural and Systems Training - 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cultural awareness/ sensitivity - 2 ● Understand systemic oppression and white supremacy - 1 ● Understanding how police are viewed in some communities - 1 <p>Safety Training - 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School safety - 1 ● Active shooter training - 1 <p>Prevention and Restorative Training - 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GREAT prevention training - 1 ● Restorative justice - 1 	<p>How to Address Student Situations - 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● De-escalation - 1 ● CPI - 1 ● PBIS - 1 ● Zones of regulation - 1 ● Mental health awareness - 1 <p>Cultural and Systems Training - 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cultural competence/ awareness - 2 ● Implicit bias training - 2
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Appendix C

La Crosse School District SRO Survey Responses from SROs

* Quantities indicate the number of unique SROs responding to that category.

<i>What are the types of responsibilities you are taking on in our schools?</i>
<p>Student Safety- 4*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Safety and security - 3● Reentry plans for students - 1● Medical team - 1● Staff training - 1 <p>Interacting with Students Proactively - 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Counselor - 3● Mentoring/Role model - 3● Mediator - 2● Talk with students and staff about legal issues - 2● Build relationships - 1● Deliver classroom programs - 1● Collaborate with the community - 1● Be a sounding board for students and staff - 1 <p>Addressing Student Issues - 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Assist with student situations - 1● Problem solve with others on student issues - 1● De-escalation - 1● Help administrators with student refusals - 1● Give rides - 1● Home visits - 1 <p>For Legal Issues - 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Address truancy - 2● Enforce the law - 1● Event supervision - 1● Find students that vacate the premises - 1
<i>Have your responsibilities changed in recent years?</i>
There has been an increase in mental health issues - 2 No - 2
<i>What does a typical day look like for you?</i>
Officer 1 - There does not tend to be a typical day as an SRO. I begin my day by welcoming kids to school at one of the four schools I am responsible for. I then check my police department email to determine if any of my kids were involved in an out of the ordinary experience over the course of the evening. I check in with the administration and school counselors to share any concerns or discuss the events planned for the day. I participate in classroom activities, spend time in the SPED classrooms and

assist with any issues that arise throughout the day in any of the four schools. I regularly have planned or spontaneous meetings with students, parents, staff and community members. I try my best to be as visually present throughout the day as possible, participating in recess and lunchroom responsibilities.

Officer 2 - I monitor students as they come into the building and are in the lunchroom before school. I work with administration with student issues that come to the office. I speak to students that come to office that have questions or just want someone to talk to. I visit with students in the hallways between classes and during the lunches. I monitor students as school is being let out.

Officer 3 - I get to the school around 7:15am. I go to the entry point and greet students coming into the school. After school starts, I will go to my office, check e-mail and complete paperwork. If I am teaching G.R.E.A.T. I will teach 2 periods in the morning. I will then assist with 2 of the 3 lunches. At the end of the school day I am usually at the bus loading area or out front while students are leaving. During the day I will respond to calls for assistance from teachers, staff and administrators. For kids being disruptive in the school, suspicious people near the school, kids leaving the classroom and so on. I walk the halls to check safety and talk with kids. I respond to my 4 elementary schools when needed.

Officer 4 - I arrive in the morning, prior to most students being there. I greet staff and students as they arrive. I return to my office, if able, to review emails, conduct meetings, and to take care of business. I am requested by staff or students randomly throughout the day. I tend to each incident individually and help provide the assistance needed to come to a solution. Throughout the day I will walk the halls and exterior campus to provide a presence and security. During this time, I make myself available for any questions from students or staff. Towards the end of the day I continue to make myself available to students, staff, counselors, social workers, etc.

Please rank these purposes of the SRO program as stated in the MOU in terms of importance.

The roles are intertwined and difficult to rank - 3
Prioritize building relationships with students - 1

In what ways have you worked to build relationships with students of color and their families?

Treat all students the same - 2
Treat all with dignity and respect - 1
Open door policy - 1
Reach out to students of color - 1

What events do you attend within the community (separate from any district sanctioned event) to support communities of color?

BSU @ UWL
Community conversations
Hmong New Year
Juneteenth celebration
Funeral of a SOC
Blue Crew at the BGC
Take students to events

Who calls you to intervene in an issue?

School Personnel - 4

- Administrators - 4
- Teachers - 4
- Integrated support staff - 1
- Building staff - 1
- Students - 1
- Parents - 1

Community - 2

- Businesses - 2
- Community members - 1
- Social workers - 1

What are you doing when you are not on calls?

Working with Students - 4

- In the halls interacting with students - 3
- Spend time with students getting to know them - 3
- Building positive relationships with students - 2
- Home visits - 1
- Sit in on classes - 1
- Teach GREAT - 1
- Guest reader at ES - 1
- Help with homework - 1
- Meet with students and staff who stop in - 1

Work with School Staff and the Community - 4

- Spend time with staff getting to know them - 3
- Building positive relationships with staff - 2
- Meetings with counselors, community organizations, or CPS - 1
- Build positive relationships with the community - 1
- Meetings with staff - 1

General Work - 2

- Paperwork/assigned work/email - 2
- Develop new ideas for the school and community - 1

What do you do when you are not working in the school?

On patrol
 Emergency Response Team
 Domestic Abuse Reduction Team

Relate any incidents you believe have justified the presence of an SRO in the school.

Threats to Students or Staff - 2

- Investigated threats to students and staff - 2
- Intervened with a student who had a weapon and a specific plan - 1
- Stopped and prevented fights - 1

Enforce the Law - 1

- Ordinance violations - 1
- Arrests in some cases - 1

Preventative Actions - 2

- De-escalated crises - 1
- Contacted suspicious people around school property - 1
- Crisis intervention for students in crisis - 1

Critical Contact for Students - 2

- Some students would rather speak to an SRO than an administrator - 1
- SOC who had weekend incidents and waited until school to speak with an SRO instead of calling the police - 1
- Providing insight for students into the consequences of their actions - 1

What skills do you believe a police officer who responds to a school incident should have?

Attributes - 4

- Patience - 4
- Compassion - 1
- Empathy - 1

School Specific Skills - 3

- Understand the background of students - 2
- Understand how children think and process incidents - 1
- Understand how schools work - 1
- Understand the SRO role - 1

General Skills - 3

- Active listening - 1
- Ability to build rapport with students - 1
- Critical thinking - 1
- Not take things personally - 1

What training do you believe a police officer who responds to a school incident should have?

National Association of School Resource Officers Training - 4

Youth Mental Health First Aid - 4

Crisis intervention training (NAMI) - 3

De-escalation - 1

Fair and Impartial Policing - 1

Racial Justice training (YWCA) - 1

Diversity training - 1

Appendix D

La Crosse School District SRO Survey Responses from the Officer in Charge of the SRO Program

1. How are SROs involved in truancy enforcement?

Schools approach officers with attendance records & ask the officer to cite the truant student. Based on the school's attendance records provided, the officer will issue the citation and note the absence time. Every school's threshold is different for citing. The SRO's don't monitor attendance records to make their own determination as to when or who to cite. SROs do participate in truancy revision meetings.

As stated in Chief Kudron's re-envisioned SRO program, La Crosse Police will no longer cite for truancy. Truancy, we believe, is a family/social issue that cannot be solved through law enforcement action.

2. What type of social justice training do SRO's receive?

See answer #19

3. How have the schools been part of the selection process of SRO's?

A member from the District office & a member from the school admin where the SRO is needed are on the interview panel. Additionally, they get to choose what questions will be asked of the applicants and any additional questions during the interview. Then when the interview is complete the School District staff has input on the actual selection & we then send our recommended selection to the Chief for final approval.

4. What does a typical day of an SRO look like?

This is a tough question to answer. Each school's call volume is different and experience different issues at each site. However, the officers are in and around the school grounds as students arrive at school in the morning, in the halls between classes, moving around the school during the lunch hours, and then in and around the school during the close of the day. During this time they interact with the students informally. They will have office time to check email and complete any paperwork associated with their duties. They obviously respond to any calls for service and work with school administration on ongoing issues. They may go with social workers or counselors to do home visits with students that are struggling with attendance or home issues. While in their office they do get informal drop-ins from students. They collaborate with county social workers and the "system of care". Our Middle School SRO's do teach GREAT during the school year.

5. In what ways are SROs under the supervision and jurisdiction of the school district? SRO's on a daily basis interact and work with School Admin to address issues within each school.

Essentially, their daily activities to address school concerns are established by the Schools. Their reports, time off, daily payroll and other training activities are determined by and supervised by the Police Department. We always have and will continue to put the schools needs before the Police Department. Principals and school admin have an open line to the SRO supervisor & do exercise that option to address concerns. We do not want an SRO in a school where the school admin has issues with the officer.

6. The SRO MOU states that "The Police Department reserves the right to remove any SRO at any time if Police Department staffing levels fall below acceptable norms." When would this provision apply and why is it included in the MOU?

In my time here we have never pulled SRO's for an extended time due to street staffing levels. When we have done it has been for a specific event (one day for Oktoberfest, maybe a Presidential visit) but never taken an officer out of a school to fill street shortages that I am aware of.

7. Why does the MOU state that SROs remain the sole responsibility of the Police Department in section four?

Essentially, they are a City employee and the school pays for the service. As with any position, there has to be an entity that has the responsibility for the employee. So all actions of the SRO are covered by the City liability, not the school; all benefits and employee law issues are the responsibility of the City not the school; all equipment, squads, uniforms are the responsibility of the City; etc.

8. How are SROs selected? What level of involvement does the school district have in selecting SROs?

See #3 above.

9. If the school district believes an SRO is no longer effective, how would they be removed from that position?

We did have that situation with a temporary SRO and we worked with the school district to get it filled otherwise. Also see #5

10. Please rank these purposes of the SRO program as stated in the MOU in terms of importance:
 - a. Maintaining a safe and secure environment on school grounds.
 - b. Establishing positive relationships between the SRO and the student population.
 - c. Building rapport between the SRO and parents, faculty, staff and administrators.
 - d. Reducing offenses committed by juveniles and young adults.

There is a need to balance all of these as the purpose of the SRO's. They are all essential and interlinked. Developing positive relationships with students can influence a safe school environment, build rapport with families, and reduce juvenile offenses. None of these functions occur within a vacuum; they all can have an effect on the others. Therefore, no one aspect is singularly more important than another.

11. What has the SRO program done to address racial disproportionality in citations, tickets, and arrests?

In 2017 the PD participated in the development of the "system of care" specifically based on disproportional minority contact numbers.

12. How many calls and tickets do SROs respond to each year?

See attached for each school.

13. Who decided SROs should be in full uniform?

That decision was made years ago when the program first started. I do know that the philosophy was getting kids comfortable approaching an officer uniform on a daily basis was good. Over the years, the SRO have reported to their schools in uniform the majority of the time, but were wearing plain clothes occasionally. Based on concerns voiced, we have committed to having them in plain clothes full time.

14. If we no longer have SROs in schools, how will building emergencies be handled?

A call would be made to dispatch and an available officer(s) would be sent. (See answer 15 for more information). The responding officer(s) will possibly be different and not the same from call to call.

15. How do you imagine emergency service response time will be impacted if SROs are not in the buildings?

First and foremost, any emergent situation is going to generate an immediate police response. General police operations by its very nature are unpredictable, therefore there may not be an officer in the area of the school. That might mean it will take a short time to respond and get into the school. Other days, we may have an officer just around the corner that can respond.

16. Even if SROs are removed from our schools, there will still be times when police officers will need to respond to situations. What plan would be in place?

See #14

Would responses be handled by consistent officers, or would we be relying on beat officers?

See #14

What kind of impact would different responding officers have on our students?

Before answering that question, let me assure everyone student and staff safety is of the utmost importance to us. Additionally, any responding officer is going to be well trained and with a high level of service handle each situation to the best of their ability.

Currently our SRO's have a working relationship with the school admin and understand the general management of each school. Additionally, SRO's have general knowledge of the kids in the school. They may have extensive knowledge of what efforts have taken place with child and family to address ongoing issues. A responding beat officer likely will not have that connection with the school, students or the student's family. As currently designed, the SRO program provides a "customized" response specific to the schools, calls for service, and interventions with students – that would definitely be lost.

What would be more beneficial for our students – consistency or new officers each time?

Consistency, see the above answer for reasons why.

17. We have a year left in the contract. Would the La Crosse Police Department be willing to use the next year to implement changes in the program?

La Crosse Police are prepared to incorporate Chief Kudron's changes that he submitted to the School District as soon as school goes back into session.

18. What skills do you want a police officer who responds to an incident at school to have?

All La Crosse Police Officers have the skill set required to handle a call for service effectively at the schools. However, it is the relationships with staff, students and parents as well as the knowledge of how the school system works combined with additional training that provides a more effective and customized response. For example, a street officer and a school resource officer both can be empathic, patient and understanding while being proficient in investigations, report writing, and enforcement decision making. The SRO however will have these additional traits that really provide a customized response. A response that maybe different for each situation and each school.

19. What training do you want a police officer who responds to an incident at school to have?

Chief Kudron provided a list of the trainings we are committed to our SRO's having. That list is:

- a. National Association of School Resource Officers 40 hour Basic
- b. Fair and Impartial Policing – 8 hour US Department of Justice training

- c. Crisis Intervention Training through the National Alliance on Mental Illness
- d. Mental Health First Aid Training – Adult and youth module
- e. Racial Justice Training through the YWCA on racial equity
- f. Any School District training as recommended by the School District.

20. Relate any incidents you feel justified having SROs in the building.

Over the 27 years of the SRO program, there are obviously a variety of incidents and scenarios we have been involved in. These range from true safety issues and violence, to just creating connections with kids and families. I am sure individual SRO's and school administrators could articulate specific incidents to answer this question better. On the whole, I see the partnership that led to the development of "the system of care" as an example of multiple entities coming together to improve outcomes for students.

21. Relate any incidents you feel questioned having SROs in the building.

I would not say there is a particular incident that has caused question as to why we have SRO's in the schools. We (LCPD and School District) have worked our way through issues over the years and have evolved the program to best serve both organizations.

22. What do you see as the future of the SRO program?

I see the Police Department engaging in Chief Kudron's vision of the SRO program with an emphasis on relationship building. Continuing to work with the School District to provide a safe, vibrant learning atmosphere in our schools.

23. Please add anything else you think would be beneficial for the Superintendent and the School Board to understand as it relates to the SRO program.

A great deal of what the SRO's do in the schools is foster positive relationships with the students. SRO's work as coaches, mentors, assist students with homework and countless other activities that are not captured in the MOU. Many of the SRO's attend after school activities on their own time to support their students. Additionally, SRO's are frequently asked by students for daily advice on many issues. SRO's are regularly asked by students for assistance in seeking employment, they provide job references and referrals for military, they are invited to college graduations and weddings for students long after they have moved on. The SRO's do make a positive impact on the students.

Lastly the schools are regularly consulted by the SRO's supervisor, and bi-monthly meetings are held to discuss issues and successes. The school administration always has access to the SRO supervisor and open dialogue regularly happens.

Appendix E

La Crosse School District Staff SRO Survey Responses

Results Disaggregated by School Level

Questions	Answer Categories	All Staff	Middle/ High School	Elementary School
Q10: Do you feel out-of-school suspensions are effective in changing student behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	49%	50%	48%
Q12: Do you feel tickets and arrests are effective in changing student behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	59%	67%	48%
Q18: How safe do you feel at school?	Very safe/ safe	96%	94%	99%
Q19: Have you sought out an SRO for help?	Yes	73%	85%	57%
Q20: How helpful was the SRO?	Very helpful/ Helpful	97%	98%	94%
Q27: In the past year, how many times have you had a conversation with the SRO that lasted more than five minutes?	Never	29%	14%	49%
Q21: If you had an interaction with an SRO, how was the interaction?	Very positive/ Positive	99%	100%	97%
Q22: How does the presence of an SRO affect your view of school safety?	More unsafe/ Much more unsafe	2%	1%	4%

Appendix F

La Crosse School District Parent SRO Survey Responses

Results Disaggregated by Child Demographics

		A Child Who Identifies as Race and/or Ethnicity						Disability		English First language	
		Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Amer. Indian	Yes	No	Yes	No
If your child(ren) misbehaves at school, how collaborative are the following staff members? (Very Collaborative/ Collaborative)	Teachers	93%	93%	94%	92%	98%	86%	93%	93%	93%	91%
	Counselors	89%	89%	83%	76%	93%	89%	86%	89%	89%	86%
	Social Workers	80%	81%	81%	82%	76%	93%	76%	81%	80%	68%
	Administrators	83%	83%	83%	83%	81%	84%	79%	84%	83%	73%
	SROs	82%	82%	60%	74%	67%	83%	70%	84%	82%	57%
How fairly do you feel the following staff members treat your child(ren)? (Very fair/ Fair)	Teachers	98%	98%	95%	100%	98%	100%	99%	98%	98%	92%
	Counselors	97%	98%	97%	96%	98%	100%	95%	98%	98%	92%
	Social Workers	94%	95%	95%	88%	90%	94%	92%	94%	94%	91%
	Administrators	93%	93%	86%	93%	91%	91%	89%	94%	93%	88%
	SROs	92%	93%	79%	92%	85%	89%	83%	94%	93%	73%
Q10: Do you feel out-of-school suspensions are effective in changing behavior?	Very effective/ Effective	35%	34%	18%	44%	29%	36%	27%	37%	35%	31%
Q12: If yes, was an out-of-school suspension effective in changing their behavior?	Very effective/ Effective	25%	24%	10%	0%	43%	33%	15%	29%	25%	25%
Q13: Do you feel tickets and arrests are effective in changing behavior?	Very effective/ Effective	51%	51%	30%	48%	39%	52%	40%	53%	52%	37%
Q15: If yes, was the ticket or arrest effective in changing their behavior?	Very effective/ Effective	25%	21%	46%	0%	29%	75%	13%	27%	25%	20%
Q17: How fearful are you of your child(ren) being harmed at school?	Very fearful/ Fearful	66%	68%	67%	57%	53%	54%	55%	68%	66%	48%
Q18: How safe do you feel your child(ren) is/are at school?	Very safe/ Safe	92%	93%	92%	86%	96%	88%	88%	93%	92%	92%
Q19: Have you sought out an SRO for help?	Yes	22%	21%	22%	18%	10%	33%	26%	21%	22%	8%
Q20: How helpful was the SRO?	Very helpful/ Helpful	89%	89%	79%	100%	63%	86%	78%	91%	90%	60%

Appendix G

La Crosse School District High School Student SRO Survey Responses

Results Disaggregated by Race and or Ethnicity

High school last year, current grades 10-12		Race and/or Ethnicity						
		Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native Amer.	Two or More
If you misbehave at school, how helpful are the following staff members? (Very collaborative/ Somewhat collaborative)	Teachers	80%	81%	60%	100%	94%	60%	69%
	Counselors	81%	82%	50%	100%	94%	80%	73%
	Social Workers	81%	82%	67%	100%	94%	100%	69%
	Admin.	68%	70%	67%	75%	76%	0%	65%
	SROs	71%	74%	50%	100%	71%	0%	62%
How fairly do you feel the following staff members treat you? (Very fairly/ Somewhat fairly)	Teachers	94%	95%	89%	100%	94%	80%	85%
	Counselors	94%	95%	63%	100%	100%	60%	89%
	Social Workers	93%	93%	78%	100%	100%	100%	92%
	Admin.	83%	86%	60%	50%	88%	0%	85%
	SROs	83%	85%	50%	100%	88%	0%	81%
Q10: Do you feel out-of-school suspensions are effective in changing behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	34%	36%	20%	25%	41%	20%	21%
Q12: If yes, was an out-of-school suspension effective in changing your behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	29%	31%	43%	0%	33%	33%	0%
Q13: Do you feel tickets and arrests are effective in changing behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	58%	60%	40%	50%	71%	40%	41%
Q15: If yes, was the ticket or arrest effective in changing your behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	33%	35%	29%	0%	40%	50%	17%
Q18: How safe do you feel at school?	Very safe/ Somewhat safe	87%	87%	60%	100%	94%	60%	96%
Q25: Has feeling unsafe in school made it difficult for you to learn and concentrate on your school work during class?	Not at all/ sometimes	92%	93%	70%	100%	88%	40%	100%
Q26: How comfortable do you think you would be in approaching the SRO to report a problem you are having at school?	Very comfortable / Somewhat comfortable	55%	58%	50%	75%	50%	0%	48%
Q19: Have you sought out an SRO for help?	Yes	23%	23%	60%	0%	20%	40%	15%
Q20: How helpful was the SRO?	Very helpful/ Somewhat helpful	76%	82%	40%	100%	78%	33%	38%

Q27: In the past year, how many times have you had a conversation with the SRO that lasted more than five minutes?	Never	72%	73%	50%	75%	88%	40%	73%
Q21: If you had an interaction with an SRO, how was the interaction?	Very positive/ Positive	76%	81%	56%	100%	83%	0%	62%
Q22: How does the presence of an SRO affect your view of school safety?	More unsafe/ Much more unsafe	17%	15%	50%	0%	7%	60%	17%

Results Disaggregated by Disability, Gender, and English Learner

High school last year, current grades 10-12		Total	Disability		Gender Identification			English Learner	
			Disability	No Disability	Male ID	Female ID	Transgender / Nonbinary ID	Eng. Learner	Not an Eng. Learner
If you misbehave at school, how helpful are the following staff members? (Very collaborative/ Somewhat collaborative)	Teachers	80%	90%	79%	80%	88%	76%	80%	89%
	Counselors	81%	90%	81%	81%	88%	77%	81%	89%
	Social Workers	81%	80%	81%	81%	87%	80%	81%	78%
	Admin.	68%	63%	69%	68%	79%	65%	68%	78%
	SROs	71%	75%	70%	71%	79%	69%	70%	78%
How fairly do you feel the following staff members treat you? (Very fairly/ Somewhat fairly)	Teachers	94%	100%	93%	94%	95%	92%	93%	100%
	Counselors	94%	81%	94%	93%	95%	92%	93%	100%
	Social Workers	93%	90%	93%	93%	95%	92%	93%	100%
	Admin.	83%	80%	83%	83%	87%	82%	83%	78%
	SROs	83%	90%	82%	83%	89%	80%	82%	100%
Q10: Do you feel out-of-school suspensions are effective in changing behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	34%	45%	33%	34%	38%	32%	33%	56%
Q12: If yes, was an out-of-school suspension effective in changing your behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	29%	50%	26%	29%	23%	32%	27%	67%
Q13: Do you feel tickets and arrests are effective in changing behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	58%	68%	57%	58%	65%	55%	58%	67%
Q15: If yes, was the ticket or arrest effective in changing your behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	33%	78%	24%	33%	38%	32%	30%	100%

Q18: How safe do you feel at school?	Very safe/ Somewhat safe	87%	95%	87%	87%	93%	86%	87%	100%
Q25: Has feeling unsafe in school made it difficult for you to learn and concentrate on your school work during class?	Not at all/ sometimes	92%	80%	93%	92%	96%	90%	91%	100%
Q26: How comfortable do you think you would be in approaching the SRO to report a problem you are having at school?	Very comfortable/ Somewhat comfortable	55%	62%	55%	56%	67%	52%	55%	67%
Q19: Have you sought out an SRO for help?	Yes	23%	32%	23%	26%	22%	15%	24%	0%
Q20: How helpful was the SRO?	Very helpful/ Somewhat helpful	76%	92%	74%	76%	80%	73%	75%	100%
Q27: In the past year, how many times have you had a conversation with the SRO that lasted more than five minutes?	Never	72%	64%	73%	68%	74%	83%	72%	89%
Q21: If you had an interaction with an SRO, how was the interaction?	Very positive/ Positive	76%	75%	76%	83%	76%	29%	75%	100%
Q22: How does the presence of an SRO affect your view of school safety?	More unsafe/ Much more unsafe	17%	10%	17%	16%	13%	18%	17%	0%

Appendix H

La Crosse School District Middle School Student SRO Survey Responses

Results Disaggregated by Race and or Ethnicity

Middle school last year, current grades 7-9		Race and/or Ethnicity						
		Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native Amer.	Two or More
If you misbehave at school, how helpful are the following staff members? (Very collaborative/ Somewhat collaborative)	Teachers	83%	85%	47%	33%	90%	67%	87%
	Counselors	86%	87%	71%	83%	90%	67%	77%
	Social Workers	71%	74%	38%	17%	83%	0%	69%
	Admin.	69%	72%	33%	50%	80%	0%	70%
	SROs	72%	75%	47%	33%	83%	0%	61%
How fairly do you feel the following staff members treat you? (Very fairly/ Somewhat fairly)	Teachers	92%	92%	67%	100%	100%	75%	90%
	Counselors	96%	97%	73%	100%	100%	75%	97%
	Social Workers	93%	93%	71%	100%	100%	75%	97%
	Admin.	89%	90%	60%	100%	100%	75%	90%
	SROs	91%	92%	62%	100%	100%	75%	93%
Q10: Do you feel out-of-school suspensions are effective in changing behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	51%	52%	44%	50%	55%	0%	53%
Q12: If yes, was an out-of-school suspension effective in changing your behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	31%	26%	38%	0%	50%	0%	45%
Q13: Do you feel tickets and arrests are effective in changing behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	68%	69%	47%	67%	73%	0%	74%
Q15: If yes, was the ticket or arrest effective in changing your behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	30%	36%	13%	100%	0%	0%	38%
Q18: How safe do you feel at school?	Very safe/ Somewhat safe	89%	89%	79%	100%	90%	75%	90%
Q25: Has feeling unsafe in school made it difficult for you to learn and concentrate on your school work during class?	Not at all/ sometimes	88%	90%	62%	100%	96%	75%	78%
Q26: How comfortable do you think you would be in approaching the SRO to report a problem you are having at school?	Very comfortable / Somewhat comfortable	58%	61%	38%	83%	39%	0%	63%
Q19: Have you sought out an SRO for help?	Yes	14%	15%	0%	33%	0%	33%	27%
Q20: How helpful was the SRO?	Very helpful/ Somewhat helpful	76%	78%	50%	100%	79%	50%	76%

Q27: In the past year, how many times have you had a conversation with the SRO that lasted more than five minutes?	Never	73%	72%	69%	80%	92%	100%	59%
Q21: If you had an interaction with an SRO, how was the interaction?	Very positive/ Positive	89%	93%	63%	100%	100%	0%	83%
Q22: How does the presence of an SRO affect your view of school safety?	More unsafe/ Much more unsafe	7%	6%	27%	0%	0%	33%	7%

Results Disaggregated by Disability, Gender, and English Learner

Middle school last year, current grades 7-9		Disability			Gender Identification			English Learner	
		Total	Disability	No Disability	Male ID	Female ID	Transgender / Nonbinary ID	Eng. Learner	Not an Eng. Learner
If you misbehave at school, how helpful are the following staff members? (Very collaborative/ Somewhat collaborative)	Teachers	83%	60%	84%	84%	84%	63%	83%	83%
	Counselors	86%	53%	88%	90%	83%	81%	85%	87%
	Social Workers	71%	27%	73%	82%	66%	50%	71%	74%
	Administrators	69%	27%	72%	75%	67%	53%	69%	74%
	SROs	72%	40%	73%	85%	66%	47%	72%	73%
How fairly do you feel the following staff members treat you? (Very fairly/ Somewhat fairly)	Teachers	92%	73%	92%	92%	93%	76%	91%	96%
	Counselors	96%	60%	98%	97%	96%	88%	96%	96%
	Social Workers	93%	47%	95%	93%	94%	87%	93%	95%
	Administrators	89%	33%	92%	88%	92%	69%	89%	95%
	SROs	91%	47%	93%	93%	92%	73%	91%	95%
Q10: Do you feel out-of-school suspensions are effective in changing behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	51%	53%	51%	45%	55%	50%	51%	52%
Q12: If yes, was an out-of-school suspension effective in changing your behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	31%	29%	28%	27%	28%	56%	29%	60%
Q13: Do you feel tickets and arrests are effective in changing behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	68%	43%	69%	71%	67%	50%	66%	86%
Q15: If yes, was the ticket or arrest effective in changing your behavior?	Very effective/ Somewhat effective	30%	14%	33%	21%	31%	44%	29%	50%
Q18: How safe do you feel at school?	Very safe/ Somewhat safe	89%	54%	90%	93%	89%	63%	89%	91%

Q25: Has feeling unsafe in school made it difficult for you to learn and concentrate on your school work during class?	Not at all/ sometimes	88%	62%	90%	94%	89%	50%	87%	100%
Q26: How comfortable do you think you would be in approaching the SRO to report a problem you are having at school?	Very comfortable/ Somewhat comfortable	58%	46%	59%	65%	55%	40%	59%	37%
Q19: Have you sought out an SRO for help?	Yes	14%	31%	14%	11%	17%	13%	15%	5%
Q20: How helpful was the SRO?	Very helpful/ Somewhat helpful	76%	30%	80%	82%	77%	38%	76%	71%
Q27: In the past year, how many times have you had a conversation with the SRO that lasted more than five minutes?	Never	73%	58%	74%	72%	75%	60%	72%	94%
Q21: If you had an interaction with an SRO, how was the interaction?	Very positive/ Positive	89%	50%	92%	91%	92%	56%	89%	100%
Q22: How does the presence of an SRO affect your view of school safety?	More unsafe/ Much more unsafe	7%	42%	5%	9%	5%	8%	7%	0%

Appendix I



November 13, 2020

Dear Board of Education for the School District of La Crosse,

First, I want to thank and commend you for the incredibly challenging and important work that you have been doing for the safety and well-being of students, staff, and administrators as well as the larger community. I cannot imagine that it has been easy to make decisions on virtual learning at the same time that you are reviewing the SRO contract. It is clear that you are making these decisions considerately, carefully, and based on best evidence.

I am an associate professor of criminology and sociology at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. My primary area of expertise in criminology overlaps somewhat with school discipline and school resource officers. I have both reviewed the literature on SRO programs as well as served as a co-evaluator on the Juvenile Justice Task Force for La Crosse of which the System of Care was established. The report I co-authored as part of this task force outlined the incredible disparity in arrests and suspensions of our students of color, particularly black youth, and the high arrest rates of juveniles in the city of La Crosse overall. I understand that you've been hearing from a variety of experts so I will not use this time to review the literature on SRO programs.

Instead, I would like to focus on what comes next in case the discussion has not involved plans moving forward. If this has been part of the conversation, I'll just use this statement to add my voice in support of these considerations. The presence of School Resource Officer programs in school and the increased criminalization of juvenile behavior is a product of a larger culture of control in which a tough on crime narrative is preferred. Politicians lose without this narrative and those in leadership positions are scrutinized for straying from this logic. It is the product of exaggerated fears of violent, senseless crime. It is a "better safe than sorry" mentality. There is a belief that we can control crime and prevent senseless, random acts of violence through this approach. This is an illusion of control and is also counter to scientific evidence^{1 2}. For example, it is believed that school shootings are random acts of violence but in reality we have a lot of evidence for the reasons these occur: for example, mass school shootings are more likely to happen in rural areas where there is less tolerance for diversity and higher levels of gun ownership³. In focusing on exaggerated fears, we lose an understanding of how to prevent crimes but also, how to promote well-being and desistance from crime in the long-term. Overall, we'll never completely prevent crimes and we must be aware that our efforts to control crime actually increase the problem we are trying to prevent.

Of course, school shootings are tragic and terrible events and it is important that we work to protect our students from this violence. But tough on crime has not shown to prevent these crimes or protect students. Further, tough on crime comes with a host of other damages. In the long-term, criminalization and tough on crime penalties

¹ Garland, D. 2001. *The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

² Simon, J. 2007. *Governing through Crime: How the War on Crime Transformed American Democracy and Created a Culture of Fear*. New York: Oxford University Press.

³ Madfis, E. 2016. "'It's better to overreact': School officials fear and perceived risk of rampage attacks and the criminalization of American public schools." *Critical Criminology*, 24: 39-55.

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actually increase criminality rather than decrease it. It does not promote public safety⁴. And we should be worried about the harm of these policies in the immediate and long-term.

All this to say that ending the criminalization of youth behavior and tough on crime approaches will take a cultural shift. It will take an acknowledgment that not all crimes can be prevented but that the harm in trying to so tightly control the population, especially certain populations, in order to prevent all crimes from happening, is both not possible and also causes tremendous harm. It is not just the presence of SROs that have led to the criminalization of youth. It is also teachers, staff, administrators, parents, youth, and community members that contribute to criminalization, embracing the programs that criminalize youth and the harsh penalties that come with this type of response to youth behavior. Evaluating, changing, or removing SRO programs from the school is just a starting point. The work ahead in implementing worthwhile changes to reduce the harm we see in the data will be complicated and challenging and will take a dedicated commitment from the larger community and to evidence-based practices⁵.

Without that commitment, whatever changes are made are likely to be used as the culprit of any negative occurrences in the future, whether these changes can be attributed to these changes or not. There will be a desire to go back to the old ways of doing things, to bring back criminalization of youth, and to be tough on crime. To prevent moving backward, it is important to consider the contribution of the environment, all the players in the criminalization of youth, and to shift the cultural thinking that harsh, criminal justice-oriented punishment is the solution to problems. In short, it will take a contextualization of the problem where the significant long-term consequences become part of the conversation on weighing the harms⁶. It will take the white community in La Crosse acknowledging the voices of communities of color and the disproportionate weight of this harm on the shoulders of our youth of color and our youth with disabilities. This is a problem for all of us, not just some of us⁷.

The scientific evidence is clear that the punishment/zero tolerance approach is counter to the well-being and the safety of the community and students. Thank you for your dedication to centering evidence-based practices in decisions and conversations about promoting a safe, welcoming, and productive school environment for students. In a time where there is a lot of resistance to scientific evidence, this is no small task.

Respectfully,

Dr. Lisa M. Kruse
Associate Professor
Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

⁴ Hirschfield, P.J. 2008. "Preparing for prison? The criminalization of school discipline in the USA." *Theoretical Criminology*, 12(1): 79-101.

⁵ Kuchik, A. 2010. *Homeroom Security: School Discipline in an Age of Fear*. New York: New York University Press.

⁶ Waller, I. 2013. *Smarter Crime Control: A Guide to a Safer Future for Citizens, Communities, and Politicians*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

⁷ Morris, M.W. 2016. *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools*. New York: The New Press.