



MEMORANDUM

Memo No. 21-061

TO: Trustees
Student Trustees

FROM: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education
Mary Jane Farrish, Superintendent of Instruction

DATE: 26 May 2021

RE: **Update on 2021-2022 OCDSB Budget Item:
Priority School Resource Officers (SROs)**

In response to interest expressed specific to the priority school resource officer expenditure in previous years' budget deliberations, we are providing a status update at this stage in our current year's budget preparation. As the interest in this item in previous budgets resulted in a motion with actions pertinent to this year's budget allocations, we felt that this update was prudent at this time.

Feedback collected through the Police Involvement in Schools consultation process to date has revealed data that will inform the preparation of our staff recommended budget with respect to the OCDSB expenditure of \$95,000 paid to Ottawa Police Service (OPS) for two (2) priority school resource officers (SROs) who are assigned through an annual Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support the Urban Priority High Schools (UPHS) and their elementary feeder schools.

Context

OPS contributes the remainder of the salary expense for 2 SROs. The sum of the investment directed to two UPHS and seven elementary feeder schools through this MOU with the OPS amounts to approximately \$200,000.

This memo provides a brief rationale for our decision to discontinue this expenditure to OPS as outlined within the MOU in the 2021/2022 staff recommended budget for your reference.

Specific reports of experiences and perceptions, a summary of research and reports, and a detailed analysis of consultation activities will be provided within an upcoming report, reviewing our practices and the impacts of police involvement in schools. This full review will include recommendations in addition to the decision to discontinue the current investment through the MOU.

Consultation activities are being completed for this full review and the anticipated date for presentation of the report is June 8th, 2021 at the committee of the whole meeting. The revised Police Involvement in Schools policy will be presented to the board of trustees in fall 2021.

Impact

The participant engagement informing this decision includes voices from students, former students, parents/guardians/caregivers, community and staff as well as input from current and past SROs assigned to both schools and the staff sergeant who oversees them.

Input shared through the consultation activities includes reports of harm being experienced by students, staff and families who are minoritized, in response to the presence and involvement of police officers in school settings and processes.

Many participants in the consultation discussions expressed concerns about inbuilt systematic racism and bias in the education system combined with systemic racism in the policing system resulting in over-exposure and involvement of Indigenous, Black and racialized students with the police at school.

With police involvement in schools, some consultation participants from minoritized communities expressed that their feeling of safety was impacted negatively. The theme of feeling surveilled and targeted in their neighbourhood and school communities emerged and the connection to having police present in their schools, and the impacts shared reflected limitations to full participation in school life and in realizing the potential of a productive and successful 'home and school' partnership.

Concerns were raised that the high visibility of police officers and vehicles at the schools reinforced and perpetuated incorrect, negative stereotypes about the students, school and community as dangerous and criminal.

Next Steps

As part of the current budgetary preparation process, staff will consider opportunities for investments that can support this group of schools, consistent with the commitments stated in the Indigenous, Equity and Human Rights Roadmap and consistent with the multi-year plan strategic plan goals in the all three culture areas.

Trustees can anticipate specific details with respect to budget commitments, such as this investment, as part of the scheduled COW budget discussions.

Engagement with the steering group continues to guide our Police Involvement in Schools review process including the development of the upcoming report and a policy revision scheduled for fall 2021.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mary Jane Farrish, Superintendent of Instruction at mary.jane.farrish@ocdsb.ca if you have any questions.

cc Senior Staff
 Manager, Board Services

Corporate Records