

## **SRO Program - 26 August 2020**

My name is Maya Basudde and I am here on behalf of SES Canada, where we are strategizing towards transforming Canadian education in a way so that it is no longer influenced by systemic racism.

I am here as a member of the community, and a former Black OCDSB student who was encouraged by the motion to Defund the SRO program and Gloucester and Ridgemont and frightened by how marginalized students will be affected if this motion does not take place.

Policing, for someone like me, not only represents years of oppression and violence because of its history and what is shown on the media, but because of mine.

I was a victim of police brutality when I was 15 years old, and a student at an OCDSB school. I suffered from PTSD as a result of my traumatic experience. It didn't help that I was later expected to trust armed police officers as they stood in the one place I really needed to feel safe and where I sought an education.

While many have the privilege of viewing armed police in school as a source of security and effective way to solve problems, I want you to take a moment to consider those around you who are not so privileged. I challenge you to expect more from our school boards. If the funds that went towards policing were allocated towards youth mental health resources, school programs like sports and the arts and more, we could foster an educational environment not focused on punishment or control, but on healing and growth. The outcome? A lesser desire for armed law enforcement, and students who are better supported, more successful, and most importantly, happy.

Since graduating high school in 2015, I have faced my trauma and returned to work in schools such as Ridgemont to support students who are facing systemic racism. I have heard their stories, I have witnessed their traumas, I have wiped their tears, and I cannot stress enough the need for this motion to defund the SRO program.

Defund the SRO program and place that funding in ways that ensure the mental, physical, and emotional security of ALL students. Together, we can transform education.

Maya Basudde