



Police Task Force

SRO Program - LAHS



Agenda

- Goal of Task Force
- Our Approach
- Information on SRO program
- Goals of SRO Program
- Deep Dive into Goals
- Testimonials
- Summary of our findings
- **Task force Recommendation**
- Answering areas of known concerns
- Q&A

Goal of Task Force - SRO Review for LAHS

If City Council wishes to continue to have an SRO program,

- What changes, if any, would you recommend making to the current program?
- Any such recommendation should factor in feedback received from former and current students, teachers, parents, and the school administration.
- The City may also opt to apply some of the recommendations to the Los Altos Police Department's presence at the Los Altos High School in general.
- Also, if City Council adopts any of the recommendations, the City may need to work with the School District to implement the recommendations

Scope: SROs at Los Altos High School (LAHS)

Research - oriented approach

- Research and data at local, regional & national level
- Spoke to LAPD
 - Cap. Krauss
 - Cap. McCrossin
- Spoke to LAHS
 - Sup. Meyer
 - Principal Satterwhite
 - Testimonials from teachers and students

Information on our SRO Program

- The single LAPD SRO is shared among 16 schools
- School admin actually call LAPD not SRO for any situations
- Between 2015 - 2020 the SRO responded to the call 13% of the time
- The other 87% are regular LAPD officers who responded to the call

Conclusion: LAHS depends mostly on regular LAPD officers who are very responsive and immediately available

Goals of SRO Program

School Admin Goals

1. School safety
2. Fostering positive communication

LAPD Goals (not in any priority)

1. Divert juveniles from criminal justice system
2. Build positive relationships
3. Serve as a resource, counselor & educator
4. Conduct educational classes on DARE, cyberbullying, etc.
5. Intervention in mental health crisis
6. Train school staff on campus threat response

Conclusion: LAHS and LAPD have differing goals.

1. School Safety - Deep Dive

“The biggest focus for having an SRO is campus safety”

-Principal Satterwhite

- (a) Stopping school shootings
- (b) Everyday school safety - bullying, fighting, truancy, vandalism

1. School Safety - Deep Dive

From LAPD: Active shooter is not the reason for SRO

Conclusion: School shooting concerns should not factor in to the decision to have the SRO. POLICE will be called on campus.

1. (b) Everyday School Safety - Deep Dive

- There is no clear evidence that the use of school resource officers (SROs) is effective in preventing school violence. [13]
- A review of 40 years of evaluations of school policing showed no positive impact on school safety outcomes. [1]
- Police presence on campus “criminalizes” non-criminal student behavior [2]
- Research shows that school security measures (including SROs) generally increases students’ fear and negatively impacts students’ perceptions of safety. [3]
- Students of color are less likely to say they feel safer with police in their school. [4]
- Extensive low-level police contact significantly reduces test scores for African-American teenage boys, perpetuating racial inequalities in educational outcomes. [5]
- Consistent negative effects of feeling unsafe affect test scores. [6]
- One negative contact can outweigh 10 positive contacts [7]

Conclusion: Our research shows that SROs have no effect on school safety, but they have a detrimental effect on students feeling safe

2. Building positive relationships - Deep Dive

Who can build positive relationships?

- Improved student-teacher relationships meant students were less likely to get in trouble and had higher academic achievement, even controlling for factors like earlier problems and sociodemographic background. [8]
- Schools with stronger relationships among students, parents, and teachers saw improved safety, and were able to resolve conflicts, regardless of factors like neighborhood crime. [9]
- School mental health services – provided by counselors, social workers, nurses, and psychologists – are demonstrated to improve behavior and school climate, and reduce disciplinary referrals. [10]
- CPS Schools that consistently implemented restorative justice programs saw a decrease in violence and disciplinary issues, along with improved school culture and performance – similar to results from schools across the country.[11]

Conclusion: Teachers, counselors, etc., foster positive relationships with students, not armed SROs

2. Building positive relationships - Deep Dive

“One of the things we do really well at our high school is...we do actually build relationships with our kids”

- Principal Satterwhite

Conclusion: School faculty & staff are already building positive relationships. An SRO would negate these effects.

Goals of SRO Program

School Admin Goals

1. School safety
2. Fostering positive communication

Conclusion: Both goals for School Admin are being met in other ways.

LAPD SRO Program Goals

Divert juveniles from criminal justice system

- NO DATA
- From PD - Juvenile crime in Los Altos is already very low

Serve as a resource, counselor & educator

- We already have those - staff/coaches, counselors & teachers. We don't need an armed police officer to fill those roles

DARE/Education programs

- There are currently no DARE classes being taught at LAHS
- The SRO teaches lessons on drug and alcohol abuse in Health class

Intervention in mental health crisis

- Should be handled by professional mental health experts unless imminent danger
- 40 hours of training in mental health is no comparison
- Santa Clara County Mobile Response Team

Campus Threat Response Training

- Could be given by any police officer

Conclusion: There are better ways to achieve the LAPD goals than having an armed SRO.

Student Testimonials - Kiyoshi T.

Kiyoshi was stopped multiple times by a police officer in 2015 while walking his bike to school. The officer threatened him with citations for not wearing his helmet. All the while other students would ride by without helmets and would not be stopped.

In another incident security guards and the SRO threw him into the back of a golf cart to interrogate him about a potential fight and assumed that he didn't go to LAHS - that he came for the fight because of the way he looked.

“In all these situations I was completely terrified, not just because of the SROs but because of how I've been treated outside by those police forces in the Los Altos and Mountain View communities...so to be interrogated and stopped and harassed by them when I'm trying to go to class, it just wasn't a safe environment”

Student Testimonials - Kai M.

Kai in 2017 was called in to the office by campus security to talk to the SRO about a report that was filed about his car three months prior about a young male driving recklessly. He was 16 at the time and neither the school nor the PD called his parents before he was interrogated. He was just assumed guilty.

“I was scared. I had seen him a few times on campus...in the gym, he was there a few times, I had seen him looking at me...I didn't feel comfortable reporting him when I'd seen him multiple times per week” - Kai M.

Teacher Testimonials - Kalinda P.

Ms. Price, a teacher for 15 years at LAHS, told about a time in 2017 where there was some incident happening on campus, so there were a lot of police cars. She introduced herself as a teacher and her student to the police officer, but the police officer threatened to throw her to the ground and arrest her.

In another incident, the SRO approached her very aggressively for being on the phone thinking she was a student. Referring to had it been a student “...that aggressiveness could have made the situation all different”

“Ultimately, what you feel is...the same fear ..as you do even when you are outside of school...just that fear when you are approached by an officer of what’s going to happen”



This is why we are here

This is no longer abstract research.
These are REAL interactions that have
happened right here at LAHS



Goals of SRO Program

School Admin Goals

- ~~1. School safety~~
- ~~2. Fostering positive communication~~

LAPD Goals (not in any priority)

- ~~1. Divert juveniles from criminal justice system~~
- ~~2. Build positive relationships~~
- ~~3. Serve as a resource, counselor & educator~~
- ~~4. Conduct educational classes on DARE, cyberbullying, etc.~~
- ~~5. Intervention in mental health crisis~~
- ~~6. Train school staff on campus threat response~~

Conclusion: These goals are not being met or can be met in better ways than having an SRO.

Summary of our Conclusions

- The goals for the program are not being met or can be met in better ways than having an SRO.
- Testimonials have shown the harm that the SROs are causing

In addition

- There is no data collection, tracking or assessment of the SRO program
- There is a lack of awareness among students and parents about the SRO program

Based on these conclusions, the task force recommendation is:

Task Force Recommendation (7-2 vote):

Eliminate the SRO program at Los Altos High School and the City encourage MVLA to investigate and implement other non-police models to foster overall student well-being and create a safe and equitable environment

Other SRO program eliminations

- Fremont (FUSD Nov 2020)
- San Jose (Alum Rock Union & ESU - June 2020)
- Oakland (2020)
- San Francisco (2020)
- San Rafael (2020)
- San Mateo (SM-FC Elementary School District Aug 2020)

They have increased their mental health support and implemented restorative justice programs



Answers to Known Concerns

Things we've heard from the
community or misconceptions



Defunding Police

We are not recommending anything related to defunding police. We are not even eliminating an officer position, as this is a shared SRO, and the SRO would continue to service the 15 other schools. We are making a recommendation about the very specific SRO program at LAHS based on the fact that the program is not meeting its stated goals.

Violent Crime

To be clear, police will still be called to deal with any violence or immediate danger on campus.

But by removing SRO's we seek to minimize student interaction with police for non-violent incidents (bullying, truancy, etc) and the negative impacts that can result.

Why not add more SROs so they can actually develop relationships?

We have already shown how detrimental a uniformed police officer on campus is to student well-being, especially for students of color. Increasing SROs would only exacerbate the problem. Teachers, counselors, coaches are much more approachable and make better mentors, guides and confidantes.

What about school admin wanting the SROs?

We gathered data to come to an informed conclusion.

What are the alternatives to SROs?



Postponement of a decision

We have done our work.
Now it's time to do yours.


Task Force Recommendation (7-2 vote):

Eliminate the SRO program at Los Altos High School and the City encourage MVLA to investigate and implement other non-police models to foster overall student well-being and create a safe and equitable environment



Q & A

The task force will be happy to answer
any questions





Back Up Material



What happened with the student survey

Really invalid results

- Only 28 responses out of 2200 students
- One person answered 4 times
- One person was a recent grad, 3 were 9th graders
- 18 identified as Caucasian, so we did not reach our desired demographic

Restorative Practices

Restorative practices are processes that proactively build healthy relationships and a sense of community to prevent and address conflict and wrongdoing.

Instead of giving punishments which may alienate students even more, restorative justice focuses on righting wrongs and repairing harm done, resulting in much deeper learnings.

Can police be trained in restorative justice?

It would be inappropriate for police to be trained as restorative justice facilitators. Police are trained in law enforcement and that is their first obligation and priority – also, they are armed. Both of those things do not align with effective or meaningful restorative justice practice.

Source: Findings from Fremont Police Task Force:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/fremont/Board.nsf/files/BV4342820196/\\$file/SRO%20Final%20Report%20-%20Adopted%20-%20v11.4.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/fremont/Board.nsf/files/BV4342820196/$file/SRO%20Final%20Report%20-%20Adopted%20-%20v11.4.pdf)

Other quotes from students - Kenan M

- “it was no longer a safe place for me to learn, it was no longer a place that I felt comfortable...”
- “Who am I supposed to tell? You can’t go to the police with that, they’re the ones who are doing it.”

School shooting data

Research on school shootings between 1999-2018 show that only 3 out of 199 shootings were stopped by SROs - 1.5%, even though 68 of them had SROs - 34%

Note: Even the US Secret Service doesn't make any recommendation on having SROs on campus for stopping school shootings.[12]

*Source: Congressional Research Service https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R45251.html#_Toc519072612

School Shootings

8 Steps for From Secret Service's report on Protecting America's Schools

- Threat Assessment Team
- Identify concerning behaviors & be able to report
- Establish procedures to handle

CREATING A TARGETED VIOLENCE PREVENTION PLAN

In July 2018, the Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) released *Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence*, which outlined eight actionable steps for implementing a comprehensive targeted violence prevention plan in schools. The guide, which is available on the Secret Service public website, provides a framework for schools to identify, assess, and manage students who pose a risk of violence or other harmful behavior.

Step 1: *Establish a multidisciplinary threat assessment team* of school personnel including faculty, staff, administrators, coaches, and available school resource officers who will direct, manage, and document the threat assessment process.

Step 2: *Define concerning behaviors*, including those that are *objectively concerning or prohibited*, which should trigger an immediate intervention (e.g., threats, violent acts, or weapons on campus), and other *lower-level concerning behaviors* (e.g., depressed mood, interest in violent topics, or conflicts between classmates).

Step 3: *Establish and provide training on a central reporting system*, like a smartphone application, an online form, or a dedicated school email address or phone number. Ensure that it provides anonymity to those reporting concerns, and is monitored by personnel who will follow-up on all reports.

Step 4: *Determine the threshold for law enforcement intervention* especially if there is a risk of harm to self or others.

Step 5: *Establish threat assessment procedures* that include practices for maintaining documentation, identifying sources of information, reviewing records, and conducting interviews. The assessment should be guided by an understanding of the thinking and behavior observed in past school attackers, as described in **Protecting America's Schools: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence**.

Step 6: *Develop risk management options* to enact, once an assessment is complete. Create individualized management plans to mitigate identified risks. Notify law enforcement immediately if the student is determined to pose an imminent risk of harm to self or others. Take steps to ensure the safety of potential targets, create a situation less prone to violence, redirect the student's motive, and reduce the effect of stressors.

Step 7: *Create and promote a safe school climate* built on a culture of safety, respect, trust, and emotional support for students. Encourage communication, intervene in conflicts and bullying, and empower students to share their concerns.

Step 8: *Provide training for all stakeholders*, including school personnel, students, parents, and law enforcement.

Step 7: Create and promote a safe school climate built on a culture of safety, respect, trust, and emotional support for students. Encourage communication, intervene in conflicts and bullying, and empower students to share their concerns.

Student Testimonials

- 13 year old black student had a what looked like a weapon pointed at him for an unbuckled bicycle helmet. For the next two weeks, the same officer was waiting for him every day while he was going home. (2012)
- “Constantly being watched and followed...as a 13 year old, school was supposed to be your safe place to learn. It was supposed to be the place you can go to learn who you are and who you want to become. But for me, when I would have interactions with the police there, when I would see them there on campus, **it was no longer a safe place for me to learn, it was no longer a place that I felt comfortable...**” - Kenan Moos

“Anytime I saw any cop on campus, that’s the feeling I got. It was that being black was seen as a threat to these police officers.” - Kenan

Teacher Testimonials

Meghan Blach

“...they are representing an institution that to others, is violent and they shouldn't be on our campus, making students feel triggered by their outside experiences with the police that are often violent and uncomfortable”

References

[1] <https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/JPRC-Police-Schools-Brief.pdf>.

[2] The ACLU of California, *The Right to Remain a Student: How California School Policies Fail to Protect and Serve* (2016) citing Paul J. Hirschfield, *Preparing for Prison? The Criminalization of School Discipline in the USA*, 12 *Theoretical Criminology* 79, 80 (2008).

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[5] Legewie, J. and Fagan, J. *Aggressive Policing and the Educational Performance of Minority Youth*. *American Sociological Review* (2019).

[6] <https://www.mathematica.org/our-publications-and-findings/publications/too-scared-to-learn-the-academic-consequences-of-feeling-unsafe-in-the-classroom>

[7] [Ojjdp.gov Interactions Between Youth and Law Enforcement](#) p. 14

[8] Crosnoe, R., Johnson, M.K., Elder, G., *Intergenerational Bonding in School: The Behavioral and Contextual Correlates of Student-Teacher Relationships*. *Sociology of Education* (2004)

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- [9] Steinberg, M.P., Allensworth, E., Johnson, D.W. *Student and Teacher Safety in Chicago Public Schools: The Roles of Community Context and School Social Organization*. Consortium on Chicago School Research Report (May 2011); Stevens, W.D. et al; *Discipline Practices in Chicago Schools: Trends in the Use of Suspensions and Arrests*, Consortium on Chicago School Research Report (March 2015).
- [10] National Association of School Psychologists, *Rethinking School Safety: Communities and Schools Working Together* (2013); ACLU, *Cops and No Counselors: How the Lack of School Mental Health Staff is Harming Students* (2019).
- [11] High HOPES Campaign, *From Policy to Standard Practice: Restorative Justice in Chicago Public Schools* (Fall 2011).
- [12] <https://www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/ussc-analysis-of-targeted-school-violence.pdf>
- [13] See, e.g., Tanner-Smith, E. E., Fisher, B. W., Addington, L. A., & Gardella, J. H. (2018). *Adding security, but subtracting safety? Exploring schools' use of multiple visible security measures*. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 43, 102–119; Addington, L. A. (2009). *Cops and cameras: Public school security as a policy response to Columbine*. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 52, 1424–1446; Phaneuf, S. W. (2009). *Security in schools: Its effect on students*. El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC.