



POLICE ENGAGING YOUTH IN SCHOOLS: ROUND TABLE

What We Heard Report

August 2023

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Project background

The Calgary Police Service (CPS) has a goal to reimagine and transform police engagement in schools, so all students feel safe and treated equally. Acting on CPS's commitment to anti-racism, equity, and inclusion and in response to the Notice of Motion published in September 2020, the CPS committed to evaluating whether the School Resource Officer (SRO) program was achieving equitable outcomes for all students.

The evaluation of the SRO program has since been implemented through multiple engagement phases utilizing a mixed methodology of focus groups, interviews, and surveys. Throughout this work, an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and anti-racism (AR) lens was applied to understand how students from diverse communities feel about the SRO program, to determine if program services are being provided in an equitable and inclusive manner, and to understand what improvements could be made to the program.

This report summarizes the engagement outcomes from the final phase of the SRO evaluation project, which consisted of two round table sessions with the school community that were hosted on June 16 and 20, 2023. The Calgary Police Service will use the findings from this and previous engagement phases, to develop a set of recommendations intended to achieve the desired outcome for this program. This will be presented to the Calgary Police commission for consideration in the fall of 2023.

Engagement overview

This section outlines the overall approach to engagement in this phase, including details about the engagement goals, objectives, strategy, and audience.

Engagement goals

To ensure the needs of students are genuinely reflected in the recommendations put forward to transform the SRO program, it was vital to bring the school community together to learn from each other and to develop community-driven solutions. With this as the main goal, the following list of outcomes also needed to be achieved:

- To provide a safe space for participants to share their personal experiences as they relate to this topic.
- To share high-level findings from the completed stages of engagement with participants.
- To explore specific findings from the engagement that may require more examination.
- To provide an opportunity for the community to collaborate in identifying and designing components of an improved SRO program.

- To be transparent about the current limitations of the program (funding) and the realistic situation over the next budget cycle, thereby setting some expectation for participants to help design feasible program changes.

Engagement objectives

As a critical final step to this multi-phased engagement process, it was important that the engagement findings effectively informed the final set of recommendations for transforming the SRO program. In these round table sessions, we intended to:

- Understand from participants which program content would be the most valuable for the SRO to focus on during in-person school visits.
- Explore innovate and alternative ways for the SRO to have a presence in the school, even when they are unable to be there in person.
- Understand from participants how they expect the SRO officer to conduct themselves while at school.
- Identify areas of EDI training that would benefit both CPS and school administration.
- Explore the needs of students through an equity lens and consider if the SRO program is the right program to address them or not.

What we asked

The topics of engagement explored at the round table sessions fell into four key areas:

1. Topic 1- Officer capacity and time spent in school
2. Topic 2- Role of the SRO officer and program content
3. Topic 3- Officer training and quality of interaction
4. Topic 4- Communication and evaluation

Strategy

Each round table session began with a presentation from the project team, other members of CPS, and Engage staff to highlight foundational information to ensure a shared understanding prior to further discussions.

This presentation included a high-level summary of what we heard in previous engagement. Not only was this information helpful for those who may not have been involved in previous phases but was also intended to help avoid gathering similar information in this phase. Instead, this content helped participants to move the conversation forward into community-driven problem solving.

Additionally, it was important for CPS to demonstrate the action being taken internally to respond to their anti-racism commitment, through presentations from members of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team, Anti-racism team and the SRO team lead.

In each session, participants were asked to participate in the first three discussion topics which were facilitated concurrently. Each group of participants cycled through these topics throughout the event and included a mix of parents, students, teachers, principals, and school board representatives to support participant’s learning from others in the school community. Each discussion was facilitated predominantly by young adults to help manage and balance possible power dynamics within groups. Facilitators were supported by The City’s Engage staff and a note taker.

For each topic, participants were presented with the following information to help keep the conversations focused on problem solving:

1. High-level key takeaways from what we heard in previous engagement about that topic.
2. Considerations to keep top of mind throughout the conversation.
3. The problem to be solved and associated key discussion questions.

During the conversations, facilitators also probed into the role of technology, other agencies, and how the school community could participate in solutions.

For the fourth discussion topic, round table participants were divided into their peer groups to ensure their needs for communication and evaluation were effectively captured.

Details of what we heard in these discussions are outlined in the upcoming section of this report. Verbatim quotes from written comments and notes taken from discussions are included in this report as italicized bullet points. To achieve full transparency, these have not been edited for content or grammar.

Audience

The target audience of these sessions were interested marginalized individuals with lived experience of the SRO program including students (ages 12 to 17), new graduates, teachers, school administration, school board members/ representatives, parents/ carers, as well as CPS members (sworn and civilian).

While hearing the voices of marginalized individuals in the school community was important, we also had participation from non-marginalized individuals.

Group	Attendance
School board representatives	7
Principals and Vice Principals	25
Teachers and support staff	23
Students	32
Parents	16
Total	101

Detailed What We Heard

Topic 1- Officer capacity and time spent in school

What we heard: Students need more time with officers to build positive relationships and they need to be more familiar with them to increase comfort levels.

Considerations: There is a limited budget for the program and there are a limited number of SROs, which results in them not always being at the school in person, or otherwise.

The problem to be solved/discussion questions:

- How do we increase time and familiarity of SRO for students? (think innovative solutions)
- What are the needs of each school division?
- What is the best “bang for the buck” in each division?

The conversations about this topic produced the following list of tangible actions that officers and schools can take to help build positive relationships and increase student’s familiarity with a school officer. In addition, this discussion resulted in many common themes about ways to support relationship and trust building between the SRO and students.

Tangible “quick wins”

1. Officially introduce SROs to school community
 - I. In-person during beginning of year school assembly
 - II. Add a short bio of SRO with pictures in school lobby. This is a good opportunity to humanize the officer with a few “plain clothing” photos.
 - III. Add video introduction of SRO on school website and social media accounts.
 - IV. Link to video sent to parents in weekly updates.
 - V. Show videos in homerooms.
 - VI. Show a fun collaborative video of multiple SROs in case another has to cover for the school’s main SRO.
2. Host annual school community BBQ.
3. Have SRO’s attend assemblies, pep rallies and sporting events.
4. SROs create their own social media page to connect with students and families and share relevant and valuable content.
5. SROs contribute to school’s Instagram page.
6. Have SRO be "guest" announcement reader for daily announcement to get presence known.
7. Have SRO go to school council meeting to introduce themselves to parents.
8. Have SRO write an article for school newsletter.

CPS to collaborate across settlement and social service sector

Many participants acknowledged the sensitivity and possible trauma that immigrant youth may experience when faced with law enforcement and a police officer in school. Some suggested that police officers and SRO should participate in newcomer programs as a proactive approach to introducing students to police officers and SROs before they enter the school systems and are suddenly faced with one. Alternatively, these agencies can introduce the SRO program to their newcomer clients. This approach offers the benefit of familiarization for both the student and parents in a safe setting where language translation support is available.

Other possible opportunities for this type of collaboration are further informing SRO program evaluation criteria based on what newcomer youth and parents would like to experience in schools. Staff working with newcomers will be well versed in the trauma they have experienced and may be the best suited to provide training to SROs to help improve their understanding and empathy for possible discomfort and fear these students may experience in their presence at school.

- *SRO @ welcome center/ new comers*
- *SRO role is complex w/ new students/new comers -> best way to evaluate your SROs?"*
- *Equality seeking & marginalized youth may need more facetime*

Along the same lines, participants suggested more inter-agency and school community collaboration, where the SRO programs work more closely with the YARD Program, in addition to non-profits dealing directly with Racialized, LGBTQ2S, Indigenous youth. This presents another opportunity for building positive relationships with equity deserving students in an environment where they could get the focus/support of officers that is not always possible in the school setting. While it may not be their exact SRO, a positive relationship with an officer in general may help to build comfort levels with other officers.

Cultural/ anti-racism training and building empathy

Participants said that anti-racism training and empathy for Racialized students is necessary to ensure that SROs are behaving in ways that show respect and compassion towards students who may be uncomfortable around them. There was also acknowledgement that each school will have a different unique set of demographics and students with lived experience of trauma.

Official training in this capacity is required, but so will be the SRO taking the time to understand each specific school's community, families who are struggling and specific students who may need extra levels of sensitivity and empathy.

- *Need to know "why" the individuals have mistrust. Look at the person in front of them for who they are and don't blanket all individuals under one bad experience or from lived experience.*
- *Background checks. Having SRO officers do background studies with children and navigate who has had negative experiences.*
- *Having SRO be more trauma informed take time to study the school and population they are assigned to. Summarize the roles of the SRO's within the school and introduce them to families and children.*
- *Can SRO's demonstrate more cultural awareness by being present at various cultural celebrations. - Indigenous graduation - **summer solstice** - **Eid** celebration] As learners not leader or position of power*

Give the students a say

Some participants mentioned the benefits of actively involving students and teachers in the recruitment of the SRO and defining how they want the SRO to act in the school.

- *Build a program for each school so students can present their thoughts and ideas on how they expect SRO's to act or how they react when they are present within schools.*

Start building relationships early

While there is need for an SRO to be onsite interacting with students in all divisions, participants clearly stated that there is great value in investing time in elementary to begin creating familiarity and building relationships before students enter junior and high school. Students in junior and senior high experience increased social pressure and anxiety and in absence of a solid foundation and comfort level with CPS, relationship building and prevention will be even more difficult.

- *Starting program on younger grades so that students grow comfortable as they progress through school and make the program mandatory so students will have to attend and learn the purpose of the SRO within the school.*
- *Students also dont engage and attend these programs - it should start in younder grades so they know and are used to it.*

Get clear about SRO role and communicate effectively

Participants shared they do not clearly understand the exact role of an SRO officer. This has resulted in them not being sure what to expect and how officers can best be used as a valuable resource in the school community.

- *be informative to parents - not aware -> communication needs to happen constantly cuz of dif ideas of police in dif countries.*
- *There is no proper understanding and information*
- *Need education about what SRO's are*
- *Students and staff want to be informed who the SRO are and making it easier for students to connect*
- *Better communication, roadmaps as to what SRO's are capable of and resources they offer*

Humanize the SRO

While there may be limitations about what an officer on duty is allowed to wear in the school setting, participants believe that making the officer more approachable, instead of just an intimidating authority figure, would greatly benefit everyone. This could be accomplished by including pictures or videos of the SRO in their everyday life wherever information about the school officer is shared. For example, “just a regular person” pictures could be shared on social media posts, on the school’s Instagram account, the school’s website, posted on the hallway bulletin board, and in any introductory videos.

Some participants mentioned that having the officer speak to the students about stigma and negative perception of police officers in general would also help to humanize the SRO. Addressing “the elephant in the room” would help to acknowledge some students’ current perceptions of police and helps to create a foundation to build on.

- *Asking designated SRO officers and for a bio or picture to see who they are*
- *maybe address some stigma*

Consistent and scheduled face time for all students

All participants shared that adding consistency and predictability to SRO visits would benefit students and school administration alike. For younger students, this would help reduce surprise and possible fear they may experience, and for older students provide known times when they can seek support of the SRO. Some participants also mentioned that if an SRO is unable to come to school at a scheduled time, that another SRO comes in their place.

- *Strategize time for more face to face interaction*
- *Start at the beginning of the year so that new students are more comfortable with having the SRO present. Maybe a meet and greet 2 or 3 times a year.*
- *Substitute SRO's when SRO cannot attend schools*

Communication with parents

Many participants mentioned the need for parents and families to have a better understanding about the SRO, their role and when they may be in schools. This was especially important for newcomer families who may have a very different experience with police in other countries.

- *Communication needs to be shared because some countries do not offer these kinds of programs so newcomers can be intimidated.*
- *Inform families as to what an SRO can and cannot do. Otherwise you are just bringing them in to police the kids. Making it clear as to the lanes (responsibilities) so that the students families know they aren't there t arrest them but to build relationships so students feel safe instead of scared to attend school.*
- *Parents need to understand the role of the SRO + bring SRO + CRO together*

Use media wisely

All participants agreed that while there is a clear role for helping to build relationships with students, it needs to be used wisely and, in an age-appropriate manner. Just like marketers would find the best channel to promote their products to the right demographic of buyers, participants said SROs need to use the best approach for each age group. For junior and high school students, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok are popular channels.

Elementary students will likely not be using social media yet but would respond well to funny videos and face to face play-based interactions with officers that demonstrate the officer is a real person who can be trusted and helpful. By also applying a basic understanding of childhood development and specifically how children and youth develop relationships at different ages will help SRO officers to use effective ways of interacting with students that will have a positive and long lasting impact.

Teachers and education assistants have an education background to work with youth. It was suggested that police officers working with students in school would also benefit from some of this training.

- *Age appropriate media.*
- *Age appropriate social media resources outlets to introduce SRO's things that kids can relate to instead of the "head on the screen". More technology in highschool and being in kids person with younger kids because younger kids are building (learning how) to build those relationships.*
- *In SR high schools SRO's should use social media to their advantage. From personal experience this was a great way to connect w/ my SRO. He would post updates, encourage kids to come by & grab a snack, and eventually his office became a hangout space.*

Flexible hours for SRO

Participants mentioned that some key relationship building activities take place outside of typical workday hours and SRO should be allowed and required to attend events to build and maintain a close connection with the school community. Some also mentioned that this element of the job description could weed out those who may be attracted to the position for the perks of a “safe” 9-5 job. This type of requirement for the SRO job would help to attract those who genuinely enjoy working with youth.

- *More evening shifts 12-10 pm -> for more face time - to be there in little casual events. leaving early in the morning does not do much for engagement.*
- *Flexible scheduling. Making sure to make time and more accessible outside of school hours so that they can connect with students.*

Reduce lockdown drills

This theme was discussed in response to what we heard from elementary school students finding lockdown drills scary and having this experience create a negative association with police officers. While teachers said students knowing what to do in an emergency is necessary, they are recommending that extra time be given to fun and positive relationship building activities instead. Alternatively, SROs could provide training to teachers to execute the drills and the SRO does not participate in them to help break the negative association.

- *Reduce lockdown drills from 2 each year to 1.*

Topic 2- Role of the SRO officer and program content

What we heard: There are many roles and duties that engagement participants believe the SRO should fill, in addition to many topics they want them to teach.

Considerations: Desire for SRO to fill needs and gaps in the system, but what should the SRO role really be? Are they the right person to fill each role?

The problem to be solved/discussion questions:

- What job/content is appropriate for SRO?
- What job/content is NOT appropriate for SRO?
- Who should be filling the role for things not appropriate for officers?
- What are the barriers to this happening?

For this conversation, a complete list of roles and tasks mentioned in previous engagement was presented, and included in Appendix A. It was important to not recreate this list, but rather to

identify which tasks should, and should not, be part of the SRO's role for each school division. Round table participants were asked to place a colored sticker beside the roles they felt should be the focus of the SRO's job. These are presented below, with any supporting written comments that participants provided. Similarly, the task or roles that participants identified as not being a good fit for SRO are listed.

Elementary

Most important roles/tasks for SROs:

1. Visit classrooms- casual pop ins, sit down join in
 - *SRO's are a valuable resource we cannot afford to squander- any amount of goodwill and positive interaction is better than nothing.*
 - *SRO needs to build relationships w/ youth at risk by being present with them as often as they can be in a positive manner as early in their school as they can! Attend school events*
2. Attend school events
 - *PART OF SCHOOL CULTURE ATTEND AS MANY EVENTS AS POSSIBLE*
3. Liaising between parents/families/school
4. Walk the hallways and visit classrooms to casually engage with students
 - *Is there a possibility to have SROs spend a week at an Elementary school in beginning of the year to establish relationship*
5. Participate in or organize sports/play with students during breaks
6. Educating students about bullying and community safety
 - *S4 bring back to elementary*
 - *Elementary SRO both relationship and safety*
 - *I mean I dont want them to come to class lik something is happening and we want to see a smile in there face snd jus be friendly and we don't want kids to see gun's*

Job areas that should be filled by non-SRO staff, not needed or inappropriate for elementary:

1. Law enforcement
 - *LESS OF THIS*
2. Mental health supports
 - *We all need more resources to help with mental health for our students. ex. more counsellors*

- *We all need more training regarding trauma + cultural responsiveness.*

3. Safety- Run lockdown and other safety drills

- *SRO not doing lock down drills*
- *SRO's do not need to do lockdown drills -schools can manage these just like fire drills*
- *eliminate police presence for lockdown drills - let schools do them. Save the police presence for student engagement*

Junior high

Feedback about SRO roles in junior high was very similar. There was more emphasis on attending school events than class activities, but casually engaging with students in neutral common areas like hallways was seen as an important part of the SRO job for this level of school.

An additional role that teacher participants identified that was not included in the original list of tasks, was training and educating teachers and empowering them to connect with other community resources. Comments included:

- *LQS competency = "understanding of wider social context" SRO's can provide PG for school teachers on social issues impacting families and the city*
- *Alberta teaching quality standard includes 'community engagement' SRO can provide PG sessions with staff on community engagement strategies*
- *SRO's should be utilized as expert knowledge among staff of community issues impacting the climate and culture of students learning and family engagement*

Most important roles/tasks for SROs:

1. Attend school events

- *Involvement in coaching after school activities*
- *visibility @ events with the goal of building relationships and being a resource to students, parents and staff.*

2. Walk the hallways- engage with students

3. Visit classrooms- casual pop ins, sit down join in

- *Do officers need to be armed coming into school? (Principal)*
- *connect to curriculum-> teach students something - Physical education - Social studies (gr.9 YCJA)*
- *Youthlink! Fund it!*
- *Student focus groups with SRO on how to forge relationships that are meaningful? white female teacher NE JH school*

4. Education- drugs and gangs

- *How can community liason offciers be utilized within the school*
 - *Teaching about gang consequences or appropriate interactions between youth men & women during dating*
 - *How can community liason offciers be utilized within the school*
5. Participate in or organize sports/play with students during breaks
 6. Provide school wide presentations
 - *Doing this would be like a psa to drill in information to students especially knowing middle schoolers are more immature due to lack of knowledge on what is safe and not (student)*
 - *No connection between YARD and MASST*
 7. Safety- Online and cyberbullying
 - *Pass the buck mentality between the street teams and the SRO. Street "guys" always say oh, a student? call your SRO "not" our problem.*
 8. Provide mentorship
 9. Connect students to resources

Job areas that should be filled by non-SRO staff, not needed, or inappropriate for junior high:

1. Law enforcement at school
 - *Acknowledgement- Recognize the position of power and the implications that come with that. Recognize how social identity plays a role and work on eliminating bias (ex. race, gender, class, ability, etc.)*
2. Mental health support
 - *Inform schools of the # of options (other than an officer) available at public's / schools disposal. "Flow chart style"*
 - *No mental health role/ limited mental health role needed. Relationships are key NE K-9 school.*
 - *work with counsellors and wellness workers, not take it on themselves.*
3. Safety- Run lockdown and other safety drills
 - *Don;t need SRO for lockdown drills (white female teacher NE JH school)*
 - *Are lockdown practice tests use of SROs time? Could this be a different/less paid role? can schools just do this?*
 - *Can trained officers or piece officers conduct school lockdown drills to reduce demand on SRO's?*

Senior high

Most important roles/tasks for SROs:

1. Walk the hallways and visit classrooms to casually engage with students
 - *Officers need soft skills to forge authentic connections with kids.*
2. Education- drugs and gangs
3. Attend school events
 - *Part of school culture, Attend as many events as possible*
 - *Community of cultural involvement of ceremonies such as drumming + singing, smudging, tipi raising, naming ceremonies Indigenous*
 - *Have SRO share or give a presentation- why he/she they are there*
4. Manage fights and bullying at school
 - *SROs can offer presentations to staff about keeping safety in the building. ie: what to do in a room to clear fights*
5. Safety- Cyberbullying
 - *This is probably the #1 thing i call an SRO for. If budget's tight how can we make more efficient. pamphlet what CPS can do/ what it can't- Admin*
6. Liaise between parents/families/school
 - *Families in high school need or can only meet at night or early mornings.*
7. Connect students to resources
8. Law enforcement
 - *All CPS need to participate in "policing" Often "school policing" gets handed off to SRO only (not good). SRO to prevent/proactive need to relationship build, educate, police. Too often All problems/ polices in schools visits get handed off to SRO. Admin*
 - *There are clear divisions of rules with educator and SRO. Schools are here to educate. School cannot also fill the work of safety + security.*
 - *between being a police officer and involving the law vs building relationships and getting to know students. sometimes enforcing the law takes over.*
 - *Help with Transition back to school from legal system*

Job areas that should be filled by non-SRO staff, not needed, or inappropriate for senior high:

1. Mental health related roles, including being a safe person and crises at home or school
 - *mental health - we have our own mental health supports in schools.*
2. Safety education- traffic/road safety and for emergency situations.

Topic 3- Officer training and quality of interaction

What we heard: Respondents were very clear about the qualities and personality traits they want to see in an SRO, in addition to some feeling uncomfortable with police uniforms and guns.

Considerations: It may be possible to modify uniforms, however guns cannot be removed from on-duty officers.

The problem to be solved/discussion questions:

- How do we ensure that officers embody the desired qualities?
 - On the job training
 - Support
 - Pre-requisites/ recruiting
 - Representation
 - Unique school support/ integration
- Uniforms
 - When should officers be in uniform and when should they not?
 - How do we reduce discomfort with officer having weapons?

On the job training and support

Participants shared types of training they feel would be beneficial and necessary to effectively equip and support an SRO in their role. Suggestions included:

- Training to include social skills/soft skills; working with children and youth; equity and trauma-informed, anti-racism.
- Provide equity and diversity 101 resources about microaggressions, implicit bias, intersectionality, active listening, privilege and allyship.
- Provide anti-racism resources such as reading lists and activities to help support not only SROs but also teachers and other student affairs professionals.
- Encourage mentorship from fellow SROs and encourage participation of civilian community mobilizers.
- Create a buddy system with a teacher/school counsellor/psychologist to learn more about youth education and development

Support

Participants shared that supporting SROs should mean increasing their capacity and resources so they can deliver their services consistently. What was identified as equally important for many participants was the length of time that an individual can spend in the role of an SRO officer and working within a specific school.

- *If SRO's succeed let them stay instead of transferring after 5 yrs*
- *Consistency with SRO's- not a different SRO everytime*
- *Consistent visibility*
- *Deployed longer, needed to build relationship*
- *Bottom line = need more officers*

Some participants felt that SROs could be better supported through collaboration with agencies that serve newcomer populations, as they are experts in their field and could possibly offer services to help bridge gaps in the system and between SROs and students.

- *Lots of new comer agencies CBFY CIWA CCIS kindred support work in schools+ need to be leveraged*
- *As they have the cultural capital to support Racialized students and ALL students + work w/ CPS/ schools*

Pre-requisites/ recruiting

Many participants think that a robust screening process should be put in place that targets the desired qualities of SROs and one that gauges their foundational knowledge and understanding of equity and diversity principles. Participants suggested that this content should form part of the recruitment questions.

- *criteria how SRO s are deployed (how they determine, when, how, who, to deploy where)*
- *visible minorities, career questions*
- *How are you asking these questions during recruitment*

A recurring response regarding the selection of SRO is that the SRO must demonstrate a desire to and/or have the skills set to work with youth. One participant commented that a police officer should be given a choice to be a School Resource Officer or that an SRO Recommendation Program for officers to be an SRO could be part of the screening process.

- *officers should be appointed as SROs by choice*
- *Proactive solution: to focus on the youth*

Some student participants think they should have a say in the selection of an SRO. Teachers and principals disagree on the “choice to select” but there was general agreement that a year-end review with students’ and teachers’ feedback should be implemented.

Representation

In general, participants shared that it is great to see diversity within the roster of SRO. However, recruits with a student-centric approach, proper training and clear desire to work with youth appear to be more important to participants than race or gender.

- *Diverse representation of SROs especially in our diverse schools.*

- *visible minorities, career questions*
- *SRO's should be opened and understanding to cultural diversity.*

Unique school support/ integration

Some participants mentioned in-school specialists with whom an SRO could work more closely.

- *Work with Indigenous Teaching Strategists in schools, where they are present*

Uniforms/weapons

Many respondents agree on the benefit of students seeing the SRO in plain clothes, as well as demystifying the weapons and how and when they might be used.

- *Come in non-uniform so kids can see them as a person.*
- *Let students see SRO's in and out of uniform*
- *Explain his weapon and explained it. Rules of pulling out.*

Topic 4- Communication and evaluation

What we heard: Many people are unaware that the school has an SRO, what their role is and what is reasonable to expect from them.

Considerations: Teachers, students, and parents do not have a clear mechanism to communicate praise and concerns with CPS or the SRO's and formally evaluate SRO and their experience with them.

The problem to be solved/discussion questions:

- What do you need/expect from CPS/SROs regarding communication about the program and visits to the school?
- What is the best mechanism for each group to communicate praise/ issues/ concerns/ overall evaluation?

Principles and school board representatives

The conversation with principal and school board representatives was very valuable and provided insightful and actionable feedback to improve communication and evaluation of the SRO and the program. Principals shared an inconsistent experience with their SRO and the communication they receive.

Participants suggested that evaluation criteria should be based on the clear job description of the SRO, so all officers are being evaluated against the same standard. In addition, some shared that evaluation indicators on anti-racism, cultural training/appropriateness and other valuable data points should be included to help show positive progress over time.

School board and CPS communication

School boards reps overall shared very positive feedback and experience in working with the SRO contact in CPS. They felt that the communication between the two was effective and said that any changes to the SRO program should be communicated directly to the school district representatives, for them to share with school principals.

Principal communication with SRO

Many principals also shared positive feedback about the current communication with their SRO. They said that they have a great working relationship with direct open communication. For these principals, they appreciate how responsive their SRO is, and spoke of emailing and texting directly with the SRO as the best forms of communication. One of these principals said that the service they receive is great and it would be even better if the SRO roles were all filled.

- *they are responsive, no issue*
- *direct comms + will stop by*
- *always responds to email or texts and send his colleagues a response*
- *17 vs 38 police - imagine having more staff*
- *whats working well? working close together were a team*

Other principals, however, did not share this experience. They said they do not get the communication and response that they hope for and expect. While some recognized that other schools may have more need, that doesn't negate their need for an SRO when issues arise. These principles reiterated the need for more officers.

- *higher needs schools, sometimes it's days*
- *assumption south has less problems*
- *He is over whelmed over worked*
- *want relationship with an SRO*
- *SRO's cannot build relationships, or be more proactive*

Principal evaluation of SRO

Principals shared that although they know they can speak with the school district superintendent, they are unsure of who to direct their concerns about their SRO or the program in general. They also want to know how to communicate their praise.

- *who do we talk to about the SRO in our school*
- *know who we should talk to in case of concern*
- *Who could we communicate to keep our SRO?*

Some principles find evaluating the SRO challenging because they have zero authority over what they do or their job.

- *no principal has authority over an SRO*
- *student's perspective is principal has control over SRO's*

Evaluation Criteria

Following this, participants shared thoughts about what the evaluation criteria would consist of, as there are still uncertainties about an SRO's exact role and what their effectiveness should be evaluated against. A clear role description would help principals to evaluate against a set standard that would help to measure inconsistency between schools.

Another participant mentioned evaluation criteria to measure cultural appropriateness and any cultural training CPS provides to SRO officers. Another suggested that evaluation should include progress of program goals and associated data points.

- *what criteria to become SRO - suitable - same criteria given to staff to see if the SRO's is fulfilling their duties.*
- *Holding CPS accountable for cultural training*
- *measure what the common goals are? research data, different points.*
- *"Evaluating anti racism as a concept" -> be intentional w/ SRO*

Evaluation tactics

1. Feedback forms/survey- Principals suggested a similar survey to the engagement one they received as part of this engagement process.
 - *teacher liked the survey to give good feedback literally the first time hearing it.*
 - *Feed back form if the are fulfilling their duties.*
 - *make providing feedback easy and more accessible*
2. Annual and formalized SRO evaluations- Participants suggested evaluation be completed by teachers and principals and presented in a formalized way at the end of every year.
 - *would like an SRO come to evaluation*
 - *SRO's deserve our reference letters so they see it.*
 - *Having mini engagement so that the needs of the school that is being served are being addressed.*
3. An anonymous evaluation method- A few participants mentioned the benefits of having a more anonymous method of evaluation, but also stated this might be more necessary for teachers and students.

Suggestions to improve communication

1. Improve internal CPS communication and program alignment. A few participants shared examples of incidents where two CPS programs were not communicating or in alignment. One respondent said, *"Yard + SRO didn't know they were responding to the*

same student.” Participants shared that better internal communication and coordination would improve resourcing and capacity limitations.

2. School principal and SRO should work together at the beginning of each school year to make an acceptable plan for effective communication and issue management based on the needs of the school and the SRO. This could be followed by regularly scheduled check-in meetings.
 - *SRO + staff mingle and make a plan at the beginning of the year.*
 - *need regularly scheduled meetings + plan w/ police/school*
 - *Two way street of communication what the school + SRO need*
3. SRO’s and/or SRO lead in CPS should attend the High School Principal Association’s monthly meeting as a consistent point of communication to all high school principals about trends, SRO staffing changes etc.
4. Data sharing between public education, police, anti-racism policy to improve everyone’s effort on this work over the long term. This data sharing should show progress with specific measurements.

Teachers

Teachers shared that they would like to have a relationship and be able to communicate with the SRO as well, and that it should not only go through the school principal. Teachers shared that they want to meet the SRO at the beginning of the school year and have a mechanism to communicate directly with the SRO when needed, especially during an emergency.

- *teachers should also be comfortable to go to their SRO*
- *SRO is a resource for teachers as well*
- *need a relationship with teachers and SRO. Need to be a part of the team*
- *First SRO visit should be a staff meeting*

Students

Students said they would like receive communication about, and from, the SRO program through:

- Through school's regular email updates to parents and students
- Announcements made by teachers as students for the most part trust and listen to their teachers.
- The school and SRO social media accounts

Students would like ways to share feedback about their SRO and their experiences that are easy and accessible, with the following given as ideas:

- Signs throughout schools with QR codes
- Link to survey for students
- Paper feedback drop-boxes

Parents

Parent participants referred to the existing and accessible forms of communication used by the school to communicate about the SRO and the program. Specifically, parents mentioned having the SRO present at parent advisory committee meetings and using the school emails to parents to introduce the SRO, their role/purpose in the school and specific days that they are expected to be at the school.

One parent shared an expectation that this gets communicated to parents and not just to the authority figure (Principal) of the school. Another parent said that teachers should play a role in ensuring students have an opportunity to formally share feedback about their SRO a few times a year.

- *Actively involve teachers in gathering feedback from students about SROs once or twice a year*
- *Involve SRO in parent advisory committee*
- *Make communication more accesible in the light of limited resources. How often?*

Appendix A- List of possible roles SRO's could fill

Desired role of SRO	Elementary School	Comments
Visit classrooms- casual pop ins, sit down join in		
Provide school wide presentations		
Attend school assemblies		
Attend school events		
Participate in or organize sports/play with us during breaks		
Walk the hallways- engage with students		
Safety- Run lockdown and other safety drills		
Safety- Traffic and road safety education		
Safety- Community safety		
Safety- Online		
Law enforcement at school		
Managing cyberbullying		
Manage fights and bullying at school		
Mental health support crisis at home		
Mental health support- safe person to talk with		
Mental health support- providing referrals		
Provide legal assistance for students		
Education- drugs and gangs		
Education- bullying		
Education- information about being an officer		
Education- what to do in emergency situations		
Liaise between parents/families/school		
Provide mentorship		
Connect students to resources		