

I will be addressing the Board regarding the decision making for the opening of school.

To Teachers, Parents and Students: A Primer for Opening Your School

The President, Secretary of Education and Republican Governors are “demanding” that school’s not delay their openings and offer “full in seat instruction”. Absurd!

These unconscionable pronouncements are being made when the Coronavirus is surging across the country. One thousand Americans are dying daily, among them a nine-year-old Floridian.

The European countries who successfully reopened their schools had a case positivity range of 3.5% to .081%. **In contrast, on July 16, in the United States 33 states exceeded a 5% positivity rate!**

Who does have the legal authority to open schools? The legal principle of *in loco parentis* makes it the legal responsibility of the **local** public school. Not the President, federal officials, or governors.

During the Pandemic era, the opening of schools should be framed by answering three essential questions. First, what type of learning environment minimizes the health risks? Second, what educational delivery method aligns best with the current virus data? Third, do we have the human and financial resources available to execute the plan?

The CDC Guidelines published on their website May 19, 2020, should be the benchmark for all schools to follow regarding the safe opening of schools. Ignore the newly released “CDC Guidelines” which were ghost written by the White House.

The May 19 guidelines address the risks for the spread of COVID-19 in three different educational settings: remote, hybrid and full in person.

The seminal benchmark for school opening must be data. The following model is such. If a school’s geographic area has a positivity rate of 5% or higher: Remote Learning only. 3% to 4.99%: Hybrid Learning. 0% to 2.99%: Face to Face Learning. These rates must be stable for 14 days for the appropriate learning delivery method to be implemented.

The CDC provides a detailed blueprint for opening of school logistics. Policies and Procedures, Facilities and Supplies, Education and Training, Communication and Messaging, and Gatherings, Visitors and Events, Transportation and Food service are all addressed.

A technology plan must be developed the identifies the resources and strategies necessary for the implementation of remote or hybrid learning models. Components should include devices, connectivity, and instructional support for students, teachers, and parents.

The appropriate human and capital resources must be allocated for the above steps to be implemented. The Center for Progress reports, “Based on a range of estimates from the major professional education associations these requirements could cost more than \$200 billion.”

Public school decisions rest in the hands of America’s citizens. Your local school district is the owner of your local school buildings and property. It is your taxpayer money that funds the schools. “Federal and State Funds” are your own hard-earned tax dollars that are being funneled back to your school district.

The planning for the safe opening of schools belongs in the hands of the local school district and its teachers, parents, and students. Each school district, each building is unique. **Together you can and will create a plan that is best for your children.**

Once your plan is set demand from the President, Congress, your Governor, and state officials that they return **your tax dollars** to fund the plan.

Parents, you have **the fundamental right to withhold your child/children** from physically attending their school until you believe that all the components are in place that will ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for them.

William Northrup
1050 Putney Drive Worthington, Ohio

Hi, I am strongly recommending the school districts end their SRO agreement.

Shawna LaRue Moraille
385 Riley Avenue

Dear Worthington School Board Members,
Our family has close ties to Worthington schools. My children and grandchildren (non-POC) attended/attend Worthington schools, and I continue to reside in the Worthington school district.

There is little research to support the efficacy of SROs:

<https://wfpl.org/do-school-resource-officers-prevent-school-shootings/>

<https://www.thetrace.org/2019/04/guns-armed-guards-school-shootings/>

Further, the presence of SROs is harmful in many ways:

<https://www.npr.org/2020/06/23/881608999/why-theres-a-push-to-get-police-out-of-schools>

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2019/03/13/we-are-spending-millions-to-put-more.html>

I'm sure you are aware of Claude Steele's (*Whistling Vivaldi*) research about how stereotype threats affect learning. Black WTHS alumni have commented on the presence of SROs and police in general. Their comments support Steele's work: the presence of police is very distracting, all mental energies go toward the fear of *what might happen* if they are approached by a PO; upon seeing a PO, they feel their heart in their throat. The stark vision of the murder of George Floyd reinforces this as a rational fear.

The mental health of all our students is important. Replacing the SRO with a nurse or a counselor is a much better return on investment. <https://www.childtrends.org/blog/research-to-consider-as-schools-address-community-demands-to-renegotiate-school-police-partnerships>

Please be on the right side of history AND improve the health of our children and the community.

We are (and especially educators and leaders) are bound by an ethic of care which can be energized by removing SROs now.

Respectfully,
Jill A Ritchey, MA, MSN, RN
Assistant Professor
Pronouns/She, Her, Hers
Columbus State Community College
Union 535

Dear Worthington Board of Education member,

I am writing in support of the removal of SROs from Worthington schools.

As a clinical social worker with a private practice in Clintonville, with personal and professional ties to Worthington, I am very concerned about the role that SROs play in the school to prison pipeline for students of color.

I am also concerned about the traumatic effect that it may have on children of color to have police officers in their schools. School needs to be a place that is psychologically safe for children, for them to be able to focus and learn. The presence of police officers may be triggering to children who see the police force as a source of oppression and control that excessively targets people of color for punishment, even for small infractions.

I encourage you to continue on your commitment to an anti-racist education system in Worthington by removing SROs and increasing student access to trauma-informed preventative and therapeutic mental health services. Our schools need counselors who can focus on building relationships with children and on interceding before crises develop. They also need ongoing relationships with mental health agencies for easy

referral for students who need more intensive therapeutic services.

This is an opportunity for the BOE to take a step in the right direction, away from a system that harms Black and Brown children and toward a system that supports them in fulfilling their potential.

Thank you for your time,

Joely Tweel, LISW
4041 N. High St, Ste. 402 E
Columbus, OH 43214

Dear Worthington School Board Members,

After attending the Worthington for Black Lives Teach-In this weekend, my 70 year old white father summed what he learned this way: "you can't be an anti-racist school district and have SROs in your schools." It's pretty simple. Follow through on your resolution to be anti-racist and remove SROs.

If white people feel afraid about losing police officers, help them find ways to assuage their fears. But the time to prioritize white comfort over Black and brown safety is long over.

Thank you for taking action for our Black students and other students of color - and for any other student who feels fearful when they see a police officer patrolling their hallways with a lethal weapon.

Dearly hoping you'll do the right thing,

Tricia Jones Narayanabhatta
5704 Foster Ave, 43085

I want to voice my opinion on the SRO vote. I have two daughters currently attending TWHS and one who has graduated. I fully support having officers in the school. After speaking with our daughters, I believe it would be a mistake to end the contracts.

Sincerely,
Laura Burnham
6759 Bowerman St. W
Worthington 43085

Also my address is 292 Bristol Woods Ct., Worthington, OH 43085. I would appreciate a response as I emailed all board members about this very issue previously and received not a single response from any of them. Safety is not something to take lightly or decide based on current politics. It's literally a matter of life or death.

> On Jul 26, 2020, at 10:07 PM, Rachel Luckhart Olson <rachlucko@gmail.com> wrote:

>

> Dear School Board,

>

> As a Worthington resident, taxpayer, and mother of a future student, I was shocked to see a motion moving forward to remove SROs from our schools. As I've said before in a previous email, it should NOT be the job of educators or other personnel who are not professionally trained in law enforcement and de-escalation techniques to break up fights, deal with drugs, and intervene when a student or intruder decides to bring a gun to school. The fact that you would even consider jeopardizing student safety in this manner is quite frankly disgraceful. I implore you to continue SRO presence. I pray it doesn't take a tragedy for you to realize what a grave mistake you are about to potentially make.

>

> A concerned mother,

> Rachel Olson

As a student in the Worthington school district I would like to urge you to remove all School Resource Officers from your campuses. As a person of color I don't feel comfortable around police as the policing systems have historically persecuted people of color leading to higher incarceration rates among African and Latinos. By placing officers in schools you are creating a hostile environment for many students and furthering the school to prison pipeline.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Cassell-Ramirez

5731 Andover st.

I am writing in support of keeping the SRO role in our high schools. I disagree with the motion proposed by Ms Hudson during the July 27 meeting. Our high school teachers and administrators should be free to focus on teaching students, without having to take on the full responsibility for enforcing discipline and insuring student safety. ALL parents deserve a safe school environment for our children. Removing SRO's compromises that environment. A small but vocal group of parents and/or residents should not be able to dictate policy on student safety. I believe most opposition to SRO presence is based on a questionable narrative of rampant police brutality against minorities, which is currently generating substantial news coverage. I have not seen objective proof any such problems exist in the Worthington high schools. On behalf of my two current WKHS

students, I ask you keep the SRO contracts in place

Douglas Knuth
6489 Brookbend Drive
Columbus, OH. 43235

Dear Worthington School Board Members,

I urge you to remove SROs from Worthington Schools. I am the mother of a senior at Linworth/Thomas Worthington HS. I understand the desire to keep our kids safe, but SROs are not the solution.

A few year ago, I felt differently. My fear about school shootings made me believe that a police officer in the school would be a good idea. But I have done more research, and I have seen that there are no clear benefits to having SROs. My response was based in fear, not facts. I ask you to conduct your own research. I ask that you make a decision based on the facts, and not fear.

SROs are costly, and that money could be spent on personnel that can provide support for students, like a mental health professional or social worker. I would love to see restorative justice practices in our schools. I urge you to think about what would be best for all students.

Thank you,
Maria Ramirez
5731 Andover St, Worthington, OH 43085

Hello, my name is Gene Kim. I am an alumnus of Worthington Kilbourne Class of 2019 and one of the authors of the letter calling for the removal of SROs from Worthington Schools.

Firstly, I would like to thank you all for taking the time to listen to our voices and demands. We have appreciated your willingness to listen, to learn, and to become part of this conversation.

I support the removal of SROs. From the information cited in our letter to the points discussed at our teach-in, there is overwhelming evidence as to why SROs should be removed. Furthermore, this is a step forward in accordance with Worthington's Anti-Racism Resolution: one cannot be anti-racist and still have SROs.

As one of the student organizer during the March for Our Lives movement, I understand the circumstances which led to the introduction of SROs in our schools. However, seeing as SROs do not address the issue of school shootings and instead add more issues for

students, particularly Black students, I ask that the School Board reconsider its previous decision and make the decision remove the SROs.

As stated in our demands at the time of the March for Our Lives and with our new demands in our letter for the removal of SROs, we believe that there are better, more effective, solutions to these issues that put the wellbeing of the students' at the forefront.

Once again, I would like to thank you for your time. There are a lot of things happening right now, both in the district and in the world; I hope you will take this one step towards improving things.

Kindest Regards,
Gene Kim
Georgetown College 2023

To whom this my concern,

I have heard, but could not find in writing, that there are considerations for removing the SRO (Police Officer) from the schools – specifically WKHS.

I have a daughter that has two (2) more years as a student at WKHS. One of the things that gives me peace during the day – while she is at school – is the fact that there is an on-site, ready and available quick reaction to any disturbance, violence that may occur or is attempted against the students at that school.

Basing the removal of that officer on current temporary negative media interpretation of the Police and Law Enforcement – in conjunction with actual reduction in police force as a result (which slows outside response times) is a recipe for disaster.

School shootings and violence have not disappeared. As a matter of fact – violence is on the increase – in some cities as much as 200 to 300 percent.

Prevention by way of on-site resources is pro-active and statistically one of the best ways to prevent an attack at a school or institution.

The reason I am writing my objection to the removal of LE from any school that has had this resource in the past – is that I am strongly against any such action – especially at this time in our history.

Additionally it is for documentation and future reference if needed.

I would hate to think that there would come a day when we as a community have to discuss and concede to malfeasance, nonfeasance, deliberate inaction and wrongful death as a result of a poor safety decision and I was not a part of trying to stop it.

Respectfully,

Alex Rayner
Lt. Alexander C. Rayner MA, MCI, MET, PELC
The Ohio State University Police Division
Investigative Services Unit
901 Woody Hayes Dr.
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Dear Worthington Board of Education,

We are writing to share with you the impact that the District operating on the Remote learning schedule would have on Care After School (CAS). We serve over 700 Kindergarten through sixth grade children whose families have come to rely on our services and consider it an extension of their school day.

CAS is 100% tuition funded. If the District implements a full Remote learning schedule, we anticipate either severely limited or zero income. This may result in the closure of the CAS program.

CAS employs 70-80 staff members to care for our District's children after school. We were fortunate enough to be able to sustain our employees through the spring after the buildings shut down; however a continued loss of income will likely result in the inability to retain many of our employees. If we cannot retain our employees, we cannot guarantee when we would be able to resume operations if/when schools move to the Hybrid or All-In models, potentially causing additional hardship to our District's families.

Additionally, this loss of income will impact our ability to cover our operational costs, including rent paid to the District.

CAS has enjoyed a strong partnership with the District for over 35 years. We are hoping to continue that relationship and hope you will consider the value our program brings to the community when determining the District's Plan.

Make it a Great Day,
Kathy

Kathy Rayner, Director
Care After School
200 E. Wilson Bridge Road
Suite 340

Dear Worthington BOE,

I am writing in support of the removal of SROs from Worthington schools.

As a clinical social worker with a private practice in Clintonville, with personal and professional ties to Worthington, I am very concerned about the role that SROs play in the school to prison pipeline for students of color.

I am also concerned about the traumatic effect that it may have on children of color to have police officers in their schools. School needs to be a place that is psychologically safe for children, for them to be able to focus and learn. The presence of police officers may be triggering to children who see the police force as a source of oppression and control that excessively targets people of color for punishment, even for small infractions.

I encourage you to continue on your commitment to an anti-racist education system in Worthington by removing SROs and increasing student access to trauma-informed preventative and therapeutic mental health services. Our schools need counselors who can focus on building relationships with children and on interceding before crises develop. They also need ongoing relationships with mental health agencies for easy referral for students who need more intensive therapeutic services.

This is an opportunity for the BOE to take a step in the right direction, away from a system that harms Black and Brown children and toward a system that supports them in fulfilling their potential.

Thank you for your time.

Joely Tweel, LISW
4041 N. High St, Ste. 402 E

I resubmit to you an email expressing my concerns about discontinuing School Resource Officers. I cannot even begin to express my disappointment in our School Board with the announcement yesterday that a vote will be put on the agenda regarding this topic. At the initial meeting when this was discussed, I believe that there was a commitment to solicit structured feedback from students and teachers of Worthington Schools. Where is this data? Has the report been made public of the SRO activities during the 2018 and 2019 School year? Seems it should have been emailed to every person expressing support for or no support for having SROs in the schools.

During a time when everyone is already extremely unsettled about the upcoming school environment and the impact it will have on our children, as a Board you have done a

disservice to our community by not collecting the data needed to make an informed decision. This topic should not be about the national research, which is varied on this topic. I have heard multiple comments that the SROs are feeding the school to prison pipeline. Where is the data in our community that supports this? Clearly it does not exist.

I would expect our Board members to not jump on the “defund the police” bandwagon and consider what is best for our community. Have you taken the time to look at rising crime rates in cities that are initiating efforts to defund police? Are you prepared to address at future Board meetings the increase of incidences in our schools? Are you prepared to take responsibility in the event of significant injury to a student or a teacher as a result of this decision?

Please follow-up on the original commitment to solicit feedback from teachers and students. You at least owe this to our community. The final decision should clearly reflect what fits the majority of our community, with teacher and administrator input weighing heavily on this decision.

Melissa Winesburg

Dear Worthington School Board members:

It has come to my attention that school board president, Nikki Hudson, is trying to cancel the SRO contract with both the Columbus Police Department and the Worthington Police Department. I am writing to address my concerns with this proposal and to strongly disagree with it.

School resource offices are a vital part of a healthy school environment and integral to the community policing models that are so strongly supported by all sides of the political spectrum. There is no way this contract should be canceled with our local law enforcement.

From an archived blog from the Barack Obama White House, here is an excerpt regarding the importance of school resource officers: “School resource officers, or SROs, are members of the law enforcement community who teach, counsel, and protect the school community. When SROs are integrated into a school system, the benefits go beyond reduced violence in schools. The officers often build relationships with students while serving as a resource to students, teachers, and administrators to help solve problems.”

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2013/03/28/school-resource-officers#:~:text=School%20resource%20officers%2C%20or%20SROs,beyond%20reduced%20violence%20in%20schools.>

From the National Association of School Resource Officers report on the SRO and the prevention of violence in schools:

“The goal of the Report is to provide uncluttered reference points for school policymakers as they conduct needs-assessments in response to legitimate, local safety incidents. The arguments set forth by the critical commentary muddle policymaking, suffering from an inherently superficial and flawed methodology. Therefore, the focus of this Report is to more accurately explain school resource officers and the role they play in supporting educational objectives. School resource officers experience a distinctive and welcomed role in the campus community and enjoy an effective relationship with the school officials with whom they serve. The main points addressed are straightforward: 6 Summary "Overwhelmingly, individuals in the law enforcement community got into this profession to help people; there is no greater opportunity to help someone than in the role of school resource officer. These law enforcement officers are presented with opportunities on a daily basis to help a child out of a bad situation or to help a child turn their lives around."

- Educators are succeeding in maintaining a safe campus climate;
- Local interagency partners are all in on the goal of balancing campus safety alongside student rights and the rights of victims;
- Attacks against the school resource officer are superficial and polemical; and
- SROs are effective in reducing campus disruptions while enhancing feelings of school safety by educators, parents, and students.”

Material taken directly from the report

here: <https://www.nasro.org/clientuploads/About-Mission/NASRO-To-Protect-and-Educate-nosecurity.pdf>

This is taken DIRECTLY from President Obama’s Plan to Reduce Gun Violence in schools, from 2013, which “includes tools to create a safer environment at schools across the country and includes a call to put as many as 1,000 new school resource officers and counselors on the job.”

https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/wh_now_is_the_time_full.pdf

“3: MAKING SCHOOLS SAFER We need to make our schools safer, not only by enhancing their physical security and making sure they are prepared to respond to emergencies like a mass shooting, but also by creating safer and more nurturing school climates that help prevent school violence. Each school is different and should have the flexibility to address its most pressing needs. Some schools will want trained and armed police; others may prefer increased counseling services. Either way, each district should be able to choose what is best to protect its own students.

11 PUT UP TO 1,000 MORE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS AND COUNSELORS IN SCHOOLS AND HELP SCHOOLS INVEST IN SAFETY Putting school resource officers and mental health professionals in schools can help prevent school crime and student-on-student violence. School resource officers are specially trained police officers that work in schools. When equipped with proper training and supported by evidence-based

school discipline policies, they can deter crime with their presence and advance community policing objectives. Their roles as teachers and counselors enable them to develop trusting relationships with students that can result in threats being detected and crises averted before they occur. School psychologists, social workers, and counselors can help create a safe and nurturing school climate by providing mental health services to students who need help. Not every school will want police officers or additional school counselors, but we should do what we can to help schools get the staff they determine they need to stay safe.

- Take executive action to provide incentives for schools to hire school resource officers: COPS Hiring Grants, which help police departments hire officers, can already be used by departments to fund school resource officers. This year, the Department of Justice will provide an incentive for police departments to hire these officers by providing a preference for grant applications that support school resource officers.
- Put up to 1,000 new school resource officers and school counselors on the job: The Administration is proposing a new Comprehensive School Safety program, which will help school districts hire staff and make other critical investments in school safety. The program will give \$150 million to school districts and law enforcement agencies to hire school resource officers, school psychologists, social workers, and counselors. The Department of Justice will also develop a model for using school resource officers, including best practices on age-appropriate methods for working with students.
- Invest in other strategies to make our schools safer: School districts could also use these Comprehensive School Safety Grants to purchase school safety equipment; develop and update public safety plans; conduct threat assessments; and train “crisis intervention teams” of law enforcement officers to work with the mental health community to respond to and assist students in crisis. And the General Services Administration will use its purchasing power to help schools buy safety equipment affordably.”

There is so much material out there that shows tremendous support for this vital community role of school resource officer. I cannot possibly believe someone on our school board has the audacity to propose canceling this position.

I absolutely cannot and will not stand idly by and watch more of this “cancel culture” take over our society. The position of school resource officer is vital to our schools and our children.

The school board cannot be so reckless and irresponsible with the lives of our children. Your job is to provide the best resources and environments possible to support our children -academically, socially, emotionally, and physically safe. Canceling the position of SRO would jeopardize the lives of our children, and for what purpose? To jump on the latest “social justice bandwagon”? This proposal is absolutely ridiculous and cannot proceed.

I am appealing to the sensible and rational members of the school board, Amy Lloyd, Jennifer Best, and Sam Shim. Please do the job you were elected to do and keep our kids safe.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Fuller, Worthington Hills resident, mother of 3 children in the Worthington School District

Fuller.jen@gmail.com

8220 Markhaven Dr

As a former student of Thomas worthington high school I appreciate the support the removal of SROs.

In my time at thomas I do not remember one instance in which the SRO stopped a fight from occurring, in 99% of cases of a fight was going to happen it was going to happen. I know of more instances in which counselors who talked kids down from fighting than SROs. The only thing SROs have done for school fights are reactive. Ik of an instance in which a black minor was put in a cop car and detained for fighting in school which by no means is acceptable but is not ideal nor effective to stop further negative behavior.

My junior year a gun was brought into the school and the reason it was handled so well is because the principal took care of it. That's not to say he should've or not, but consider the kid got hostile if an SRO tried to handle the situation and others were hurt or the kid was hurt.

Someone on here said 200k per year isn't enough to fund proper mental health resources for kids.. and they are absolutely right, BUT it's a start simple fact of the matter is people and society don't seek mental health enough but as of now, especially following the recent events with black people and the police, people will seek out counselor before cops when dealing with life's problems. So if we are to invest 200k why would we invest 200k in a reactive measure that data has shown to not be effective. Overtime we need to increase the the amount of mental health resources we provide to students to truly prevent bad behaviors rather than react to them.

As our school district expands and the racial data aligns more to the national average Id assume and predict that our SRO data will follow. We have a chance to stop that now before it happens.

Jonathan Tchounguen
[177 Brownsfell Dr](#)
[Columbus OH](#)

Good morning,

This email is being sent to address my opinion regarding the removal of our SRO at WKHS.

I'm appalled that there is consideration in removing our SRO, it's a disservice to our students, teachers and parents. This is the wrong time to make that decision—we're in the middle of a Pandemic and continue to transition to the "new norm," and not to mention the heated politics kids are tuned into these days..I worry how disputes could play out with students! Shootings in communities are on the rise and yes, we are blessed to be in a good school district but that doesn't seem to matter in this day and age.

Why is removing the SRO a consideration? Is it a political stance? This is a topic of discussion that I'm certain most parents would appreciate being part of and certainly students! I personally would like to know why it is up for discussion? As a parent I have felt and feel more at ease sending my children to HS knowing an officer is on the premises if issues arise.

My HS students are both more comfortable knowing the resource officer is in the building.

Teachers are not equipped to handle the job of a SRO, they need that support.

I certainly hope that this is not something that is decided without more input from the schools and communication within our community.

Thank you.

Aimee Moghannam
1571 Clubview Blvd. S

If the school moves to distance learning (which I think it should) over the hybrid schedule what happens to the families that have signed up for online learning the first semester?

I would like my daughter to work with her assigned teachers and IS instructor as much as possible, but because of my own health issues we can't risk exposure.

If we opt for online learning can she still get support from Mr. Kolp? He knows her and knows how she learns.

Thanks
Tammie Ezzo
7646 Alta View Blvd
43085
614-286-2770

Who are you and what are you doing here?" I asked the cop who showed up at my school one day.

When I first saw him from my vantage point at the lunch table, my first reaction was to wonder what happened for him to be there. But he was there the next day. And the day after that. He stood overlooking the commons, thumbs tucked beneath his belt, his gaze unbroken, for seemingly hours at a time. My friends encouraged me to finally ask about his role in the building.

He introduced himself as a "student resource officer," a phrase I'd never heard before that moment. I was told that we were one of the last schools to get an officer, that it was about time. That we could come to him with any problems, academic, personal, or otherwise. I thought it was odd for someone with so many responsibilities to be so stationary, but I nodded along and went back to eating my lunch.

My life never changed dramatically after that. I felt no safer than I felt before. Many of my classmates shared my indifference. Some even called him Paul Blart.

I have no doubt I felt this way because I am white. My indifference was a privilege. My Black and Brown peers cannot ignore his presence. Cops are a distraction to learning. The mere sight of a cop is a reminder, especially to POC students, that discipline is more important than the education they came to get, that obedience is more valuable than free thought.

I wish I would've continued questioning the logic of having a show of force in a place of learning. I regret nodding along and accepting the regular presence of a cop that was a threat to my POC classmates. I now realize that wondering, "What's the big deal with having an officer?" is a privilege, and I hope you will share my realization.

It's time to remove them from our schools. They don't help anything. And most of all, you CANNOT be anti-racist and still have cops in school. It's impossible.

Thank you for listening to my concerns,
Annie Marazita
1266 Amol Lane
Columbus, OH 43235

Sorry- my name is Lori Kratzer
My address is 8126 Storrow Dr, Westerville OH 43081- Worthington Park.

Hello! My question is regarding the Hybrid Model... is it possible to live stream the classroom for the students learning from home? (ie: group A in the building, group B watching a live feed or even a recorded lesson from the classroom?)

Or a computer set up on a zoom that students can log on and see the lesson live?

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to share my comments tonight. My name is Meg Kane, and I live at 167 Abbot Avenue here in Worthington. I am a pediatric nurse practitioner specializing in adolescent medicine and school health, and a pediatric sexual assault forensic examiner. I am the clinical quality coordinator for the department of Community Wellness at a local children's hospital, which means I use quality improvement principles to apply system-level change to improve outcomes related to disparity for a variety of marginalized populations. I have over 15 years of experience in clinical research and I serve on a number of national pediatric and adolescent special interest groups related to advocating for best practices and outcomes for youth, particularly youth in the school setting. I'm also the parent of a 2018 TWHS grad and a current KMS 8 th grader, both of whom are black. We are a transracial family. Here is why that matters- my personal and professional life are dedicated to finding what is in the best interest of youth and then implementing evidence-based system level change to making it happen. I'm here today because it is not in the best interest of youth to have police in schools.

As you know, these programs had their genesis after the Columbine shooting because we as a nation were terrified and it felt logical at the time to put police in schools to protect our kids. Unfortunately, this is not what happened. We now have longitudinal data demonstrating over several decades that these police officers have not only not ensured safety in the most extreme situations- school shootings- they have actually made schools more dangerous for our female students, our marginalized students, and our students of color. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends against police in schools because not only does it further criminalize adolescent behavior, the officers "often arrogate to themselves authority that extends well beyond the narrow mission of securing the safety of the students and teachers," such as enforcing dress codes. 53% of students reported that officers yelled, swore, or otherwise talked to them in a way that made them uncomfortable; 27% reported being touched or otherwise made uncomfortable by the conduct of the officers, including many girls who were made to lift their shirts or unzip their pants to confirm they were not concealing metal objects, and students who were frisked despite not setting off metal detectors." (AAP, 2018) Our community is not exempt from this conduct- a CPD SRO was arrested for soliciting several minors in the school where he worked to "help him with his sex addiction." An analysis by the Washington Post of over 200 school shootings found that resource officers or security guards were present during four of the five worst rampages (which left the highest number of people dead or injured): Columbine and Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Marshall County High in Kentucky, and Santana High in California in 2001. So the idea that an SRO could stop a school shooting has not been observed in the data thus far, and deleterious effects to their presence have been noted: meta-analyses (high level research) have noted that the presence of SROs is associated with more suspensions and expulsions, and findings regarding the effect SROs have on student arrests suggest that the presence of SROs might increase the chances that students are arrested for some low-level offenses such as disorderly conduct. For this reason and

others, many teacher unions no longer support the measure (American Federation of Teachers for example).

Please note that a 2013 study of SRO self-assessment found that: 37% of SROs had arrested a student to

calm them down when they were disrupting a class, 55% of SROs had arrested a student because teachers asked them to, 68% of SROs reported arresting a student for a minor infraction to teach them that "actions have consequences," and 77% of SROs reported arresting students just to calm them down. These are what the officers themselves endorsed as appropriate use of their roles. When you consider what sequelae occur after a child is arrested, these statistics are not to be taken lightly.

SROs are expensive and it's interesting to consider alternative uses of those funds, such as investing in mental health services. Data suggests this would improve attendance rates, academic achievement, graduation rates, and lower suspensions, expulsions, and other disciplinary problems. Improved mental health professional ratios improves outcomes for BOTH students and school safety- SROs cannot claim that. When in schools, police officers do what they are trained to do, which is detain, handcuff, and arrest.

Tonight, you will hear from the community that if we remove the police from our schools that we are endangering our staff and students. That is a false equivalency- those are not the only choices and one does not beget the other. Every single person in this room is united in their desire to protect our educators and our students. Feeling safer with SROs in the building does not actually mean the children are safer. Perception is not reality. I have been in parent teacher conferences where our educators explain to me how they teach writing with evidence by having students refer to and rely on the source- this is a sound method that will serve these kids well throughout their lives. I'm asking you all to do the same. The sources here do not support SROs. Please do the right thing. Please know that in doing so, you will have community support in problem solving and finding the right solutions for our children. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Best,

Meg Kane, MSN, RN, CPNP-PC, P-SANE

My apologies, I didn't include my address for public comment.

2037 Smoky View Blvd
Powell Ohio 43065

Duane Price

Good morning, I wanted to send you an email regarding your desire to cancel the

contract on the School Resource Officers. I have 2 children that attend Worthington Kilbourne High School. These officers are valuable assets to the school, not to mention piece of mind as a parent that there is a trained security presence at the school on a daily basis. My kids view these officers as a friend, mentor, and feel safe with them in the building. Removing this officer is a HUGE mistake. I am asking the school board to reconsider this vote and keep these officers in place.
In the interest of my children's safety.
David and Holly Price

Dear Members of the Board

Thanks for taking up this important issue.

As a 15 year parent in the Worthington district, and current parent of a HS student, and as a person of color whose family has direct experience of explicit and implicit racism in this community, I support the idea of removing the SROs from our schools.

Some of you, and those in our community, Might be surprised by the connection I am making between Police in schools and experiences of racism.

For those of you who support police in schools, this is simply a matter of safety and has nothing to do with racism. Safety from disruptive students, safety from fights and confrontations, or safety from the idea that a mass school shooting would be prevented by having an armed force in the school.

Now, just on those counts, it is debatable whether police with little to no training in social work or mental health support can actually solve those conflicts and scenarios that happen in our schools In the best way possible for the continued health and safety of our students. It is certainly quite questionable whether the real problem of mass school shootings in our country will be prevented by having an armed cop at the gate.

Don't think that I'm minimizing those problems. I grew up in a school in New Jersey where fistfights were not uncommon, and my mom taught 25 years in a public HS. And I know the fear of being a parent who drops off their kid to school on the day after a school shooting. There is nothing easy about any of these things.

The move to get cops out of schools comes from an understanding of safety and well-bring that *includes* these things but *also* from a recognition that police – rather than equaling safety – contribute to the harm that Black and other POC students feel, in our society and in our schools.

Why would we introduce or maintain the presence of a force that people in our community consider harmful, on the name of safety? Why can't we reimagine schools so that safety is inclusive of all students needs, and not only the white majority?

And—for all students, of all races—why can't we conceive of social and mental wellbeing in ways that highlight counseling and collective healing rather than an agent of the criminal justice system?

I hope that, at the very least, those of you opposed to my position recognize the argument: that keeping SROs and saying we are for inclusion and against racism is contradictory.

Sincerely

Dr. Pranav Jani
1224 Drumbarton Court
Columbus OH 43235

Dear Worthington Board of Education Members,

As a Worthington resident and parent of recent TWHS alumni and children of color, I have a deep concern for our community and schools. I respectfully urge you to vote to remove SRO's from the schools.

I attended the teach-in on Saturday and understand that there is no evidence to suggest that police presence in schools makes the schools any safer and plenty of research to show that police presence makes these spaces harmful and less safe to students of color. There are many sources to support this. Here is just one.
https://www.npr.org/2018/03/08/591753884/do-police-officers-in-schools-really-make-them-safer?fbclid=IwAR3bYS5noMfCRLlWnNGBEfmyrcVe7TPAMj9VNSi4JHjVPBT_slOFk82m4qA

I have read Nikki's page, and am aware of the many white parents of white children asking for SRO's to remain in the schools. It is my hope that you are listening to the perspective of black voices on this issue as well.

Respectfully,
Susan Gladden
6055 Flora Villa Dr.

As a parent of 4 Worthington students (2 of which attend TWHS), I do not support this decision. I learned about this agenda item at the 11th hour from another Worthington parent. One of the priorities of the Worthington Board is to protect students, teachers, and staff. This rash decision responding to trends in society is disappointing to say the least. Have the students and staff been surveyed or interviewed? Shouldn't this issue have been thoroughly vetted within the Worthington Schools community before placing it on the docket? Does this decision involved paying for the contract until the end of the term without utilizing the officers? A lot of unanswered questions....

Holly Heitkamp
783 Oxford Street
Worthington, OH 43085
614.620.0343

To whom it may concern,

As a graduate of Thomas Worthington High School, I'm writing this email in support of the motion to remove Student Resource Officers (SROs) from schools in our district.

Much of the research on the effectiveness of these SROs offers data to suggest that they have a minimal impact on the prevention of harmful incidences that occur in our schools. I believe that it would be a much better use of the district's money to redirect funds to hiring mental health professionals and social workers who are trained in de-escalation techniques. These trained professionals would also be better-equipped with the skills to prevent any incidences that may be harmful to students or staff.

The presence of SROs detrimentally impacts students of color, particularly Black students, who are disproportionately targeted by officers. Additionally, the presence of SROs serves to perpetuate the school-to-prison pipeline, which pushes students out of schools and into the criminal justice system. To quote an interview with Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, as a result of zero tolerance rhetoric that has been implemented in our schools, "[schools] began viewing children as criminals or suspects, rather than as young people with an enormous amount of potential struggling in their own ways and their own difficult context to make it and hopefully thrive. We began viewing the youth in schools as potential violators rather than as children needing our guidance." As representatives of a district that claims to value diversity, I urge you to consider the safety and well-being of *all* of your students who have a right to attend school without a fear of an altercation with a law enforcement officer.

Sincerely,
Abbie Miller
572 Lambourne Ave.
Worthington, OH

I ask that you share data and information on School Resource Officers in Worthington Schools and listen to parents and most importantly - listen to students. Funding would be better spent on counselors and a hiring a more diverse group of teachers and staff. As we know, not all people feel that officers are there to protect them and to help them, instead, many feel that they are harassed and targeted by officers. Students should feel safe, protected and supported in the schools. A student should not feel policed when going to school. Please re-consider having SROs in the schools.

Allison DeSantis

6829 Merwood Street, Columbus OH 43235

Mother of 2 students at Brookside Elementary and Worthington Graduate

Name: Madison Price

Address: 6850 Worthington Galena Rd

As a recent graduate of Worthington schools, I strongly support the district ending its contract with the SROs.

As many educational resources have already been shared with the board and community as to why the district needs to end its contract with the SROS, I am going to touch on several points that keep being brought up as an argument to keep SROs.

Firstly, this is not a matter of popular opinion within our community. Worthington is overwhelmingly white and much of our community is simply uneducated and ignorant on the effects of SROs on students of color. Although many have made information available about the harm of SROs time and time again, community members have made it evident through posts and comments online that they choose to not listen to the voices of their community members of color. Students and other community members have given this board and this community the evidence. You now know for a fact that SROs are detrimental to students of color in so many ways. You now know that SROs contribute to the school to prison pipeline. If ANY students are being hurt by the decision to keep SROs, let alone an entire population of students, it should be no question that SROs have got to go. The popular opinion does not matter. The near 2,000 people in our community who have signed the petition are trying to tell you that this is a problem. An entire global movement is trying to tell you that **this is a problem**. A problem is a problem, no matter how many people choose to see it.

Secondly, Worthington is not immune to systemic racism. We do not have a unique SRO program that is an exception from other statistics. We do not have a special police force that is exempt from systemic racism. SROs ARE police officers and the police force is systemically racist. There is absolutely no denying this. It's origins are racist and the

statistics prove that this continues today. It does not matter if our SROs are "nice" cops. It does not change the fact that even the nicest SROs are harmful to our students of color. It does not change the fact that the next SROs to take their place may not be so "nice." It does not change the fact that SROs come from and support a racist system.

SROs statistically do absolutely nothing to stop school shootings. You have the statistics for this. Worthington is paying thousands to someone who is extraordinarily likely to not even serve their intended purpose. The event that most triggered the hiring of SROs was Parkland. Parkland had a form of an SRO, yet we all saw what happened. Students and other community members have provided lists of things that actually do prevent these tragedies, like increased counseling and mental health specialists. Stop funding a racist system and start funding things that actually make a difference.

This is not a matter of pros and cons. This is a matter of supporting students of color or not. If students are harmed by SROs, then the "pros" do not matter. Find another approach.

Your job is to serve ALL students and if you are not doing that, then you are not doing your job. You claim to support students of color, so vote accordingly.

To the Worthington School Board:

We teach our children to avoid making decisions based on emotion. We encourage them to think things through and use solid reasoning rather than feelings when they have to make an important choice.

Recently, the teachers union representing all Worthington School District teachers in each of the district's 23 buildings voted unanimously to keep the Student Resource Officers in our district's high schools.

Their reasoning was based in common sense. SRO's help keep schools safe. They help develop a bond within the community. They provide a presence that discourages behavior that distracts from the educational pursuits of the school. And they provide a resource for those working and learning in the building.

Ms. Hudson will suggest canceling the contracts that provide for these SROs. I've not yet seen her reasons for this suggestion and I'm curious to hear her fact-based argument for what seems to be an emotional decision. It's not a reach to assume her opinion is likely couched in what has become an all-out assault on law enforcement locally and nationwide. It's not a reach to assume her politics lay at the base of her decision to make a suggestion that flies in direct opposition to the teacher's union.

Let's keep politics out of this and keep our Student Resource Officers in the schools. It is

the responsible thing to do for all concerned.

I'm the proud parent of three graduates of Thomas Worthington High School, a rising McCord Middle School student and an outstanding elementary school teacher at Evening Street.

Please feel free to read this letter at tonight's board meeting.

Dave Maetzold
8237 Copperfield Drive
Columbus, OH 43235
(614) 519-6855

Worthington School Board Members,

The matter of providing School Resource Officers (SROs) in our schools is of high importance to the safety and education of our children, and so it requires exercising proper care, due diligence and prudence on behalf of the Board prior to any decision regarding the removal of this service. This decision should not be made based on emotion or as part of any one Board Member's personal journey to self-betterment, but rather based on a data-driven process.

At a minimum, before any motion or vote, a prudent process should include:

1. State the problem and reason for study
2. Data Collection Phase from Stakeholders and Experts including:
 - a. Interviews with all Worthington School SROs to understand their experiences, allocation of time spent to various types of activities, etc.
 - b. Input from all School Administrators and faculty and staff including data on number and types of incidents, interactions, mentoring, education events with SROs
 - c. Assembly of reports from expert studies and summary of findings
 - d. Parent feedback and experiences
 - e. Experiences from other school districts
 - f. Consideration for timing and bandwidth - in context of the pandemic upheaval as well as the racial equality movement
3. Data Analysis and Summary of Findings (shared with district)
4. Development of Recommendations (shared with district for comment) including:
 - a. If a change in role for the SRO is recommended, then a substitute recommendation should be included as well as a solid explanation for why others are better suited for the role

b. Thoughtful analysis as to outcomes under a different model (if needed) and pros/cons

c. If data warrants a change, consideration should be given to a combination of resources to fill the roles where there is still a role for the SRO - rather than the "throw the baby out with the bathwater" approach of completely eliminating SROs.

d. Are there other ways to address racism in our schools - or even just the racial issues surrounding SROs - without creating safety concerns?

As of today, it is not clear to the community, in general, that the Board has exercised proper care, due diligence, or prudent required for this decision. Has the Board stated a clear reason for making a change? Has the Board collected the data necessary for making an informed decision? What are the findings from that analysis? What alternative options were considered and how did you arrive at this recommendation?

It is clear that the community is divided and we do not have the tools and are not in a position to perform a proper study. We have elected the Board Members to do this for us.

We have a system in place with SROs that was developed with the best of intentions, but we should always strive to improve on our systems to make them work better for our students. Let's give this issue the proper consideration it deserves.

Megan Schaffernocker
1149 High Grove Dr.

Worthington School Board Members,

The matter of providing School Resource Officers (SROs) in our schools is of high importance to the safety and education of our children, and so it requires exercising proper care, due diligence and prudence on behalf of the Board prior to any decision regarding the removal of this service. This decision should not be made based on emotion or as part of any one Board Member's personal journey to self-betterment, but rather based on a data-driven process.

At a minimum, before any motion or vote, a prudent process should include:

1. State the problem and reason for study
2. Data Collection Phase from Stakeholders and Experts including:
 - a. Interviews with all Worthington School SROs to understand their experiences, allocation of time spent to various types of activities, etc.
 - b. Input from all School Administrators and faculty and staff including data on number and types of incidents, interactions, mentoring, education events with SROs
 - c. Assembly of reports from expert studies and summary of findings
 - d. Parent feedback and experiences
 - e. Experiences from other school districts

f. Consideration for timing and bandwidth - in context of the pandemic upheaval as well as the racial equality movement

3. Data Analysis and Summary of Findings (shared with district)

4. Development of Recommendations (shared with district for comment) including:

a. If a change in role for the SRO is recommended, then a substitute recommendation should be included as well as a solid explanation for why others are better suited for the role

b. Thoughtful analysis as to outcomes under a different model (if needed) and pros/cons

c. If data warrants a change, consideration should be given to a combination of resources to fill the roles where there is still a role for the SRO - rather than the "throw the baby out with the bathwater" approach of completely eliminating SROs.

d. Are there other ways to address racism in our schools - or even just the racial issues surrounding SROs - without creating safety concerns?

As of today, it is not clear to the community, in general, that the Board has exercised proper care, due diligence, or prudent required for this decision. Has the Board stated a clear reason for making a change? Has the Board collected the data necessary for making an informed decision? What are the findings from that analysis? What alternative options were considered and how did you arrive at this recommendation?

It is clear that the community is divided and we do not have the tools and are not in a position to perform a proper study. We have elected the Board Members to do this for us.

We have a system in place with SROs that was developed with the best of intentions, but we should always strive to improve on our systems to make them work better for our students. Let's give this issue the proper consideration it deserves.

Megan Schaffernocker
1149 High Grove Dr.

Dear Worthington Board of Education,

I want to thank you for taking the time to discuss SROs today. As a recent Worthington alum, I am hopeful that this conversation is a sign our district is changing for the better. That more than the school district I left, Worthington Schools today is aware of the bubble that our suburb creates and is willing to rethink its role in the larger Columbus community and to stand in solidarity with broad social justice movements outside our town. Thank you.

I want to express my support for the removal of SROs. When I was at WKHS before the SROs, I regularly heard quite a few rumors from my peers about fights breaking out among students. People filmed them and circulated the footage. Fights were like spectacles that many would watch with a mix of awe and disdain. When the SRO came, these fights and rumors continued. No one I spoke with seemed to feel like there was less conflict. No one seemed to feel like justice was served. Instead, the rumors became more dramatic—once, I heard a rumor that the SRO had tased a student. Because of the SRO, fights simply became more of a spectacle for those who were not involved. And when we think about the way that classes and friend groups in the school are so racially segregated, it begs the question: which students were people objectifying? Which students became the spectacle?

I understand that you are receiving a lot of pushback from some community members for considering ending your contracts with police. I want to emphasize that if you feel compelled not to remove SROs at this point, you can still take steps to reduce police harm that do not involve investing more time and money in policing. For instance, you can disarm the SROs in our buildings—many of the issues that people claim they help with can be solved without a gun. You can limit the power of SROs so there is no way that they can criminalize our own students.

As you move forward, urge you to listen to the students and families in our district who are from marginalized communities. Make sure their voices are part of your conversations and decisions.

Thank you for taking this important step toward following your resolution to be an anti-racist district.

Meena Jani
1224 Drumbarton Ct
Columbus, OH

My name is Nichole Mabry - 1533 Cross Club Drive Westerville Ohio 43081. I have a child, Kyleigh Mabry at Worthingway.

I want to know what is being done about special education (IEP) students who are going to be all online. When everything went all online, there was little to know discussion at all about her IEP. Now that we are so close to school starting, there STILL is no discussion of how that will go. I do not want my child returning to school, I do not see how it would be good, so I need to know how she will continue to be educated correctly so she does not fall behind.

Nichole Mabry

It is my understanding the board is trying to cancel the contract with the Worthington Schools SRO. I am in COMPLETE DISAGREEMENT with this. Not only are they important in protecting our children, but in building relationships with them as well. We have 5 children attending the Worthington Kilbourne side. This is vitally important to our entire family, as well as many others. Thank you for listening.

Julie Miller
1032 Clubview Blvd S

It is my expectation as a parent of Worthington School children that SRO's remain in schools. You are neglect in your duties if you remove them.

Respectfully,

Brian A. Steel
1570 Oakview Dr
Columbus Oh 43235
614-565-1429

Thank you for your positive actions so far with your anti-racism statement and the creation of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion program.

I want to share a brief story about the experiences of a close friend of mine who worked on staff at Thomas Worthington High School for many years before retiring a few years ago. She interacted with many students, staff and teachers at TWHS on a daily, as well as the school's resource officer. She observed a consistent pattern of the SRO "targeting" African-American students on a regular basis by focusing his attention on the conduct of black students rather than white students. She felt that the presence of the SRO was intimidating to black students – and these were the observations of a white female.

If the white staff of TWHS saw and felt the presence of the SRO was racist, it takes no imagination at all to know that the black students would feel the presence of the SRO even more deeply and more harmfully.

Please remove the SROs from our schools.

Thank you.

John S. Jones
867 High Street, Suite C
Worthington, OH 43085

(614) 885-8118

My name is Amy Giessler & I live @ 387 Highgate Ave in Worthington.

I have read through the discussions & posts online about the SRO's @ the school.

I respectfully request that you take more time when debating the next move forward, get through the start of school & through navigating covid before a decision like this is made.

It feels like too much is being done at once to make this kind of fast choice about the safety of our kids.

Thank you for your time & your consideration when handling these choices!
Amy Giessler