

**Report to / Rapport au:**

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES BOARD  
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICES POLICIERS D'OTTAWA**

**26 July 2021 / 26 juillet 2021**

**Submitted by / Soumis par:**

**Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service / Chef de police, Service de police d'Ottawa**

**Contact Person / Personne ressource:**

**A/Deputy Chief Jamie Dunlop / Chef adjoint par intérim Jamie Dunlop  
*DunlopJ@ottawapolice.ca***

**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO INQUIRY I-21-14: SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS**

**OBJET: RÉPONSE À LA DEMANDE DE RENSEIGNEMENTS I-21-14: AGENTS  
EN MILIEU SCOLAIRE**

**REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Ottawa Police Services Board receive this report for information.**

**RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT**

**Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du présent rapport à titre d'information.**

**INQUIRY**

**School Resource Officers**

1. What are the key performance indicators for the SROs? Are there terms of reference available for the program?
2. What is the role of the SRO within the Neighbourhood Resource Teams? Are they solely assigned to school related duties and do they log information back to the NRT team?
3. Can the service please provide the Board with statistics about the SRO program – e.g. interactions, how many incidents requiring intervention, how many referrals to diversion programs, etc.?
4. How is the funding for the SRO program apportioned? Is there a cost sharing arrangement between school boards and the OPS or is it funded entirely by the OPS?

5. What specific training is provided to SROs that are not given to other members of the OPS?

6. School Resource Officers have been in Ottawa for 20 years and in the Human Rights Policy Report presented to the Board March 22 of this year and EDI update in September 2020 there was mention of a review of SROs. What is the status of this review, who will conduct it and when was the last time a review of the SRO program was completed?

## **RESPONSE**

The Ottawa Police Service's (OPS) School Resource Officer program operated within the city's four school districts and beyond for over 20 years. In June 2021, Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) trustees decided to end the program for their board, which represents roughly half of the schools in the city.

Each SRO was responsible for 20 to 24 schools within each district and worked with each school to deliver a tailored approach to augmenting the safety of each school. The goal was to build positive relationships with both students and staff and focus on proactive engagement measures, like identifying those in need or at risk, and connecting them with other city support services where required. The provincial Safe Schools Act outlined the how police partnered with educational staff and students alike.

Each SRO underwent specific training, including threat assessment (VTRA), diversion training (using screening tools and best-practices developed by academics and youth service providers), education on Safe School Protocols as well as networking with city youth agencies (Boys and Girls Club, JakuKonbit, Youth Services Bureau, etc). Additional ongoing training was implemented as recommended by subject experts, like coursework on childhood trauma, social media and youth trends, sexual assault interviewing techniques with children, and recognizing any hate-motivated incident within the schools, as well as gang intervention techniques.

SROs worked as part of the Neighbourhood Resource Team (NRT), meeting with the team weekly to ensure the communities around the schools were being served and to address any issue where the SRO needed additional assistance, including any traffic issues that may jeopardize the safety of students, or any incidents of vandalism that required further investigation.

Statistically, for example, from 2017 to 2019, SROs had 7,062 calls for service at city schools. This included 841 reports being filed, that resulted in 324 criminal investigations, with 63 of those reports cleared by charge, and 334 cases redirected to diversion programs. But beyond the calls and reports, most of the work completed by

SROs happened without incident, due to the proactive activities conducted by these officers. This could include sitting down with a family of a troubled teen and looking at what types of support services could be provided to avoid any acceleration of violent or criminal behaviour. In effect, SROs would often provide help to families in crisis before it became a criminal issue.

All of these services to city schools fell under the OPS budget, with no additional costs to these educational facilities or the district boards.

But the work SROs do goes beyond traditional policing. It would include outreach within classrooms with presentations on cyberbullying or for older children, on the dangers of texting and cybersex/exploitation. It could be an officer reading a book to kindergarten students or attending a school fair to explain the work they do. Connecting with students and building relationships to help us better serve the youth demographic and their families was the top priority of this section.

The last time the SRO program was fully reviewed was in 2013, and the OPS SRO program has now been cancelled. The OPS is shifting its focus to developing a new overall youth strategy.

We will be working closely with community youth-based agencies and leaders, subject matter experts, academics and school representatives to finalize the youth strategy. We are hoping the review will be completed by September 2021.