

I support having the school board examine and seriously consider the idea of terminating the contract with the La Crosse Police Department's School Resource Officers (SRO).

The intent of SRO is to promote positive relationship and provide a feeling of safety for the students. This may be true for white students but because of our country's history and the ongoing negative police interactions with people of color the presence of armed police officers in the school rather than fostering a feeling of safety for students of color results in anger and fear.

The long-standing racial disparities in our country is reflected in the established practices of the criminal justice and governmental system. Locally this is reflected in our schools by the unequal disciplinary treatment of students of color. The Juvenile Justice Arrest and Disproportionate Minority Contact Inter-Agency Task Force found that between 2008 and 2012 black youths were nine times more likely to be referred to the juvenile justice system than their white counterparts.

The System of Care Program was instituted because of this study. It has resulted in less ticketing of students within the schools. This is the type of program that would be more beneficial than using police and the juvenile justice system.

Our country and our community need to change the way the criminal justice system treats its citizens of color. Removing SROs from the school and re-investing this in social workers and cultural liaisons would be a positive step.

Thank you for raising the issue of SROs to the La Crosse School Board. I am writing to express my support of the School Board to form a subcommittee to gather information that will help inform the decision of whether to renew the \$250,000 contract with the La Crosse Police Department, funding the SROs. Exploration into alternatives for how that money could be reallocated is critical.

I appreciated the discussion the Board had on 6.15 about the effectiveness of La Crosse SROs, as related to their three priorities: (1) Establishing Trusting Relationships, (2) Safety and Enforcement, and (3) Systems Reform. I am particularly concerned about the racial disparities highlighted within the La Crosse School District and more broadly at a national level, pertaining to school discipline. The following information is deeply concerning to me:

- La Crosse has a very high juvenile arrest rate and students of color, while a numerical minority, make up the bulk of those arrests (most of which happen during the school day).
Furthermore, getting a ticket or arrest at school makes it up to 6 times more likely that a student will drop out, which is a significant predictor of future offending.
- 46% of suspensions in our district are for students of color, yet students of color make up only 36% of the student body.
- For black students, out of school suspension rate is 5 times higher than that of white students.

Based on the research that demonstrates the ineffectiveness of SROs (as you stated, there is no empirical evidence that having police officers in schools makes them safe) and the statistics above, it seems to me that SROs are failing all students, and students of color, in particular, on their 3 priorities.

I urge you to support the formation of a subcommittee and my hope is that the subcommittee will ultimately find viable alternatives for reallocation of the \$250,00 and that those alternatives can be used to address the racial disparities in discipline highlighted above. I really appreciated the question you posed to the board: "Why are we hiring police officers to do relationship building, as opposed to social workers or counselors?"

I want to be clear that I am specifically advocating for the removal of all police and SROs from schools.

The 6/15 discussion touched on the importance of engaging stakeholders on this issue, specifically students, families, the community, and teachers/administration. I hope the board will prioritize the concerns of students and families of color who are disproportionately impacted by school discipline.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin, I am writing to encourage your continued interest in pursuing a viable alternative to school resource officers, and supporting the discussion on July 6 to remove police from the high schools.

The ACLU has long advocated and litigated against the "School to Prison Pipeline" – a discriminatory, destructive system exacerbated by putting police into schools. The ACLU's 2019 report, "Cops and No Counselors," made clear that Black students in Wisconsin are much more likely than white students to be arrested in schools.

i More than 90% of Wisconsin schools do not meet recommended student to counselor ratios.

ii And we know that these disparities and lack of access to supportive resources exist within the school district.

We commend those young people and advocates who have advocated for shifting the paradigm from policing to supporting students, and concur with and support their long term vision for a supportive school district that isn't policing children while they are trying to learn. The money currently spent on police in schools is better invested in staff equipped to address trauma and social-emotional learning – especially counselors, social workers and school psychologists.

Again, we strongly urge you to end the contract with police and expand your work to ensure that historically marginalized students in the city can thrive.

I'm a recent graduate of Central High School. I was very involved at Central, including acting as President of the Student Senate and Vice President of the National Honor Society. I am writing to you today to thank you for your important work, to remind you of your duty to serve ALL students in the La Crosse School District, and to urge you to either move forward with the creation of a sub-committee to investigate the effectiveness of School Resource Officers (SRO) or to end the contract with the La Crosse Police Department and remove officers from public schools.

Firstly, thank you School Board members for working to improve our schools. I attended the meeting at Central High School last Spring and appreciate your willingness to listen to our student body and staff members. Students were met with respect and I believe that school board members were there to listen and plan, not just as a performative gesture. Because of this, I believe that you will listen to me now.

The School Board serves ALL students, including the 30% of students that are people of color. The presence of SRO in schools is actively harmful to these 30% of students. When hearing from the community and making decisions about this matter, I hope you will remember that many of those students have had their voices silenced through decades of systemic racism and the increasingly violent, oppressive nature of our country. As a whole, this country does not value the education of Black, Indigenous, People of Color. Education is power, and a remedy for oppression. The School District of La Crosse has an opportunity to prove its commitment to fair educational opportunities for all students.

Remove SROs to create a more prosperous learning environment for all students. Remove SROs to increase student safety. Remove SROs to combat racial disparities in discipline and suspension. This could be the beginning of a transformation in the La Crosse School District. I urge you to move to terminate the La Crosse School District's contract with the La Crosse Police Department, effectively removing police officers from our schools.

I support SROS being out of schools. The contract between the schools and the La crosse PD needs to be ended!! ASAP

I am writing to follow up on this recent news story; <https://www.news8000.com/la-crosse-police-respond-to-school-board-proposal-on-future-of-sros/> Next June I strongly urge you to take police out of La Crosse's schools. It is proven that police cannot help children and only push them towards the criminal justice system.

This letter is in support of the termination of the School Resource Officer contract with the School District of La Crosse. As a long time community member and parent within this district, I believe that it is time to take a look at this contract that has not proven to make youth any more safe, and in fact I would argue has made our students of color suffer long term consequences of being policed at higher rates and pushed into a criminal justice system that is hard to escape.

The simple fact is, police do not belong in schools. By having police there, simple infractions that used to be dealt with by school personnel have been taken over by the police. This ultimately leads to an escalation that could have been avoided and an unnecessary ticket that could have been solved in other, more meaningful ways. School is not a place where we need to be preserving law and order, but rather we should be investing in our young people by giving them much needed support instead of slapping a ticket on that. What we have seen in this community is high juvenile arrest rates and especially for students of color who have been ticketed at way higher rates than our white youth. This money should be invested in programs and personnel that help promote true community safety. This money should be invested in more Cultural Liaisons, more School Social Workers, Restorative Justice programs, a push

for more administrators and teachers of color, and more training in Racial Justice for our well intentioned white teachers who need to start looking into their own biases.

As a person who has also spent time in several schools within our district over the past 10 years, I have seen several instances where School Resource Officers have escalated situations, have spoken with an officer who commented how he would have used pepper spray on students in a situation if they would not comply, and I have seen the incredible data that students are policed and ticketed at extremely high levels in our community on school grounds.

When will we make changes to our schools, so that ALL children feel safe? When will we show as much love and care to our Black, Brown, Asian, and Native students? When will we make changes to a system that is rigged to only help certain populations of students? When will we rise above and actually help students and families? The time is now to be brave and eliminate the School Resource Officer contract and work to create a more equitable school system that works for all.

A retired school social worker at Central; worked there for 20 years. She called to share that they had one SRO in her time there that she really liked personally, but that she was not in favor of having police in schools. She said that police are not counselors and she was concerned about the impact on kids when they are walking around schools with guns, etc. She felt they often made the situation worse, not better.

I went to school with school counselors and school psychologists. If you couldn't get your problem solved by a school counselor then you were given appointment with the school psychologist that was on site. If they both thought the matter needed to then be reported to police then it was.

Now my kids go to school with A principal, Dean of Students, Counselors, and cops. My daughter had an incident where a girl was bullying her. A meeting was held without our permission even tho we contacted the school and told them not to include our daughter in the meeting with the cop, counselor, principal, and the girl that was bullying our daughter. My daughter was overwhelmed, frightened as her bully was seated next to her and humiliated because her requests for us to be there were denied, and she fears cops now even tho her grandfather was one.

I took my daughter out immediately and transferred her to the other middle school in the area. That school did not work for her so weeks later after begging to get back to the old school we were let back in. Kids assumed she was kicked out and suspended as she was labeled the one that was the bully and the bully was never punished.

The cop in all of this has an oath supposedly to keep things confidential and for the life of me I am not sure why he allowed the bully to sit in with the person that reported the bullying. Anyway it got back to the PD that this incident happened and my daughters grandparents knew about it before I even wanted to tell them because cops in this city think they dont have to abide by confidentiality.

My daughter was interrogated by the cop instead of being helped by counselors that are trained to help with the emotions of being bullied. This was wrong on so many levels. To this day my daughter is now

scared of police as they didn't even help her with the thing that was causing pain that she didn't start in the first place.

There has to be some limits in place if the cops are allowed to stay in the schools. They can't be allowed in situations where they just are not needed legally. A bully is not a cop matter unless it caused harm to the individual at a level of needing cops. There has to be counseling back in order to deal with the feelings involved with the victim. A cop is not a counselor.

I want to express my support and encouragement for the La Crosse Board of Education to vote against the renewal of the La Crosse Police Department contract. To be clear, I am advocating for the removal of all police and student resource officers (SROs) from schools.

As you likely know, the origins of policing alone are a reason in and of themselves to abandon the practice of having law enforcement in an educational environment. The longstanding presence of police in schools is not an indicator that it is a practice that should be sustained, in fact, it is harmful. As mentioned in previous Board meetings, the rate of juvenile arrests in La Crosse is disproportionately high and the bulk of those arrests involve students of color, even though students of color make up a small percentage of the entire student population.

We see repeatedly that reforms, training, and 'diversity initiatives' incorporated into police departments as a way to address racial disparities and racism, does not work. It will not work!

Budgets and resource allocation serve as a clear statement of values, and as members of the Board, I encourage you to show the community, specifically our Black and Brown youth, that you value their lives and experiences by removing SRO's and by NOT renewing the contract with the La Crosse Police Department. There are many other effective ways to utilize the massive amount of financial resources currently allocated to policing in our schools including hiring counselors, uplifting and creating programs that ensure the basic needs of students are being met on a daily basis, establishing widespread restorative justice practices, etc.

Please show our community and our youth that their lives and experiences matter and are deeply valued. Taking this small step toward disruption and eventual dismantling of the well-documented presence of the school to prison pipeline is what our community and students need. Please use your position of power to vote against contract renewal for the La Crosse Police Department, for the students, for our community, and as a small step toward justice.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read.

I know this is late. If you voted tonight to remove police from our schools, bravo. That move was long overdue.

If the decision hasn't yet been made, I am emailing to urge you to remove the police from our schools.

Next year will be the 50th anniversary of my graduation from Central High School. That was the height of anti-war and civil rights activism, drug and relationship experimentation, and a "counter culture" message in everything we did, saw, read, and heard. There were no police in our schools and we actually survived and thrived.

I'm retired now, but when I worked for the Upward Bound program at UWL, I was in area high schools a

few times a year, and the difference from year to year was disappointing and, frankly, frightening. Honestly, at the end, it felt like I was visiting a prison instead of a high school. It made me uncomfortable being watched over by the police on those few days. I can only imagine how that must have felt every day for students.

The statistics are clear that having police in our schools is not working for many students. I have heard, over the decades, many stories of bullying and racist behavior going unaddressed or left for students to sort out on their own. Was that because administrators and teachers left things for police to deal with or were resources stretched so thin that they didn't feel they could intervene? I don't know, but having police there didn't seem to help. If adults don't work to model an inclusive, compassionate society and guide and help students to find their strong and positive place in it, what is school really for?

I hope you will (or have decided to) remove the police and use the funds to offer better training and support for staff, smaller class sizes, more opportunities for positive student leadership development, and more resources for every student to find success.

I'm a student of the lacrosse school district and I just wanted to put my opinion on the School Resource Officer program. I have an understanding that the school board is trying to get different perspectives on whether or not police officers are making schools safer. In my opinion the officers do not make a difference in the safety of students or staff. In all honesty they're just there. I'm a freshman at Logan high school, and I'm also a young woman of color. I feel as if when police officers are at school it makes some students feel uncomfortable (students of color). I had a situation in middle school where the officer involved went way overboard in the situation and I'm not going to go into detail but he put me in handcuffs, which was not needed at all. Then the dean of students and the officer tried to manipulate the situation to my mother. They did not feel as if it was important to tell her I was in handcuffs for no reason at all. I feel as if the officers in schools intimidate students of color and find pleasure in that. Overall I don't think police officers are needed at all. If anything they just make it harder for certain students to find comfort at school.

I am writing to express my support for the La Crosse Board of Education to vote against the renewal of the La Crosse Police Department contract. I do not believe it is appropriate to have a regular policing presence in our schools.

When students arrive in a school building they should feel empowered and supported, not watched. Police presence in schools builds distrust between school staff and students. The funds currently used for school resource officers would be better spent on mental health workers and restorative justice practitioners.

I am sure you have been bombarded with emails in regards to the SRO program, but I would like to voice my input (at the last second, of course).

I firmly believe the funding for this program needs to be invested in other ways to support the at risk youth in our schools. I KNOW the teens who may be seen as burdens or problems have more potential than they (and even us) allow themselves to believe, but when there are police officers involved in their life in multiple ways, it has to be challenging for them to get out of that cycle and into a positive mindset. I believe that, even if the statistics of our SRO program at La Crosse are not stacked against black and brown kids, the statistics over the country are. We cannot allow ourselves to be anywhere near that pattern.

I genuinely hope that we can fight harder towards an equitable experience for all students.

Thank you for your time and efforts!!

I want to express my support and encouragement for the La Crosse Board of Education to vote against the renewal of the La Crosse Police Department contract. To be clear, I am advocating for the removal of all police and student resource officers (SROs) from schools.

As you likely know, the origins of policing alone are a reason in and of themselves to abandon the practice of having law enforcement in an educational environment. The longstanding presence of police in schools is not an indicator that it is a practice that should be sustained, in fact, it is harmful. As mentioned in previous Board meetings, the rate of juvenile arrests in La Crosse is disproportionately high and the bulk of those arrests involve students of color, even though students of color make up a small percentage of the entire student population.

We see repeatedly that reforms, training, and 'diversity initiatives' incorporated into police departments as a way to address racial disparities and racism, does not work. It will not work!

Budgets and resource allocation serve as a clear statement of values, and as members of the Board, I encourage you to show the community, specifically our Black and Brown youth, that you value their lives and experiences by removing SRO's and by NOT renewing the contract with the La Crosse Police Department. There are many other effective ways to utilize the massive amount of financial resources currently allocated to policing in our schools including hiring counselors, uplifting and creating programs that ensure the basic needs of students are being met on a daily basis, establishing widespread restorative justice practices, etc.

Please show our community and our youth that their lives and experiences matter and are deeply valued. Taking this small step toward disruption and eventual dismantling of the well-documented presence of the school to prison pipeline is what our community and students need. Please use your position of power to vote against contract renewal for the La Crosse Police Department, for the students, for our community, and as a small step toward justice.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read.

Today, a friend of mine re-posted a tweet from the assistant chief of police in La Crosse (it was his personal twitter account). The tweet insinuated that students would not be safe in schools without school resource officers and that all of us should write to the school board.

I am appalled at the fear driven divisiveness. I am thankful that you all are there to assist in these conversations and decisions and I want to honor that I know this is difficult.

I am a white, European American mom who has grown up in this system that is based on so many components of power and racism. I have been fortunate in that I have the privilege of calling a principal or a teacher or the superintendent when something might be happening with my kids in school that I do not agree with. And, I have been listened to. I have the privilege of knowing that I can call the police and ask for help.

With this personal history, I am also going to admit that I have no idea what it would be like to be a student in a system where we have disproportionate arrests of black, indigenous, people of color (BIPOC). I do not know what it is like to be a parent who is black and being afraid to question the school because I have a traumatic history with schools and have something on my child's record that will follow them throughout. I do not know what it would be like to stand up for my child and have administration explain it away and tell me to calm down or that I am too angry. And I do not know what it is like to have an officer be the person who might be in charge of my mental health, my discipline, my relationship with school when historically this system has never kept me, or anyone who looks like me, safe.

Like with our teachers, we have asked officers in the last number of years to be more than officers. We have asked them to be counselors, and social workers, and parents, and the last stop for when we are tired or scared to help a student.

This is our opportunity, all of ours, to listen to people's truths. I know you are all going to hear a lot of anger. You will hear many threats. You will hear from people afraid that their kids will not be safe as they have always had the privilege of police support.

This has to be a time for change and a time for action. The tweet from the assistant chief shows that attempts at better training, current training, and words have not made our schools safer for all of the students.

Thank you. Thank you for listening to the voices that have been powerless for so many years. Thank you for hearing the truth. Thank you for being the representatives of all of the students, parents, and community for our schools. And most of all, thank you for having dialogues that will be uncomfortable and that will, eventually make our schools better, and hopefully, where all of our students feel like they belong.

I am writing in support to terminate the School District of La Crosse' contract with the La Crosse Police Department. School districts across the country have terminated their contacts, what are we waiting for?

I support the actions listed below and ask that you do too:

1. terminate your contract with the La Crosse Police Department;

2. invest in leadership, wellness, arts, and growth opportunities for youth of color;
3. invest in giving power back to youth of color, their families, and communities in the decision making process on policies, programs, and initiatives that impact their livelihood; and
4. invest in counselors and restorative justice coordinators, trained in culturally responsive trauma-informed care for youth of color.

Thank you for your leadership in this effort.

I'm going to tell you about my experience with having an officer in school. a student and i were arguing and the officer was in the middle of us he was holding her back at one point then he let her go and she attacked me once we were on the floor he was kneeling me in my back holding me down letting the other student physically hurt me, I couldn't defend myself because he was hold me down. when my mom wanted to know the full story the officer lied to her face, that story will stay with me forever because the officer that is put in my school to protect me was holding me down and hurting me.

I want to express my support and encouragement for the La Crosse Board of Education to vote against the renewal of the La Crosse Police Department contract. To be clear, I am advocating for the removal of all police and student resource officers (SROs) from schools.

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Thank you so much for taking the time to read.

I am writing to lend my support to the cancellation of the School Districts SRO Contract with the La Crosse Police Department. I have been a resident of La Crosse for most of my life and attended Emerson Elementary, Lincoln Middle, and Central High School. My three children are graduates of Logan High School and I have two grandchildren currently attending schools in the La Crosse District. I appreciate that these are complicated issues and that the school board is willing to have this complex conversation.

While you may hear a great deal from white, middle-class parents who feel safer with police in schools, I hope that you will prioritize the comments of the marginalized and those who feel less safe with police. I hope that you will ask yourself why there are students who feel unsafe with police and listen to their voices. They are the people who are impacted the most by the law enforcement presence in schools, and they deserve to be heard.

I believe that, overall, the school board is handling this situation very well. By reaching out to the community to have conversations, studying available data, listening to experts, and making a clear effort to listen to the voices that are too often silenced, you are responding in a thoughtful and critical manner. I support the formation of a Subcommittee to review the current contract and explore what the future of the relationship between La Crosse Schools and the La Crosse Police department might look like.

I hope that as a community we can come together to find positive ways to support our students and learn to not criminalize behaviors that it seems would be more effectively understood as ways of communicating needs. I truly believe that we can find better ways to make our schools safe than with the constant presence of armed police officers.

I strongly urge you to remove SROs from your schools. Linking students, especially black and brown students to the criminal justice system is wrong and unfair to the children. Alternatives to SROs, like crisis management specialists and social workers should be used to address issues.

Use your limited budget to help children solve problems not criminalize them.

Thank you for your attention.

As a long time grassroots community organizer in La Crosse, I have had numerous conversations with Black, Brown, Indigenous, Youth of color/community members about school resource officers (SROs). Many of them have expressed how these SROs do not make them feel safe, in fact, they feel targeted. With this being said, **I support the formation of a subcommittee to explore the current and potential future relationship between La Crosse Schools and the La Crosse Police Department.**

I hope you will seriously consider going forward with the removal of SROs from your school. Providing children with the resources they need to thrive and succeed though troubling times is a great challenge, but exposing children to increased risk of being absorbed into the abusive cycle of the school-to-prison pipeline is not the answer. I truly hope you ponder seriously the psychological and social ramifications this can have on children, and particularly on children of color, and make the decision to move forward

with removing SROS and discussing what better ways you might find to invest in the well-being of the children in your care.

Thank you very much for your time.

I am writing in support of forming a subcommittee to evaluate the pros and cons of maintaining the contracts schools in the area have with our local police department. I am deeply concerned for the future of BIPOC children in the area and how they are feeling. A lot of what I am hearing is that they feel criminalized and unsafe. This can create a hostile environment and makes it very difficult for all of our children to learn. I encourage you to consider forming a committee to look further into this and have very important discussions involving this matter. As always, I appreciate your time and consideration. I hope you and your families stay safe and healthy.

I write to you as a concerned resident who has heard first hand the pain coming from students within your school systems. I have attended multiple peaceful protests in La Crosse as an ally to listen and stand with those hurting within our community; especially students. I may not have a fancy job title after my name, however it doesn't take a genius to understand when someone is in pain. A fancy job title such as assistant police chief released a bold statement into the public June 18th. He claimed that eliminating the SRO program within the school district was a "personal agenda" because he "knows how the government and politics and such work". A thought just as empty as their motivation to implement Campaign Zero, but that's a different email. This is a reminder of humanity and a call for solidarity. BIPOC Students within your school system have walked out of your halls with blood dripping out of their hearts. Begging you to see their wounds and help them heal. Wounds created by people they're supposed grow with, teachers and fellow students. BIPOC students do not feel safe. They cannot make that more clear. They have had direct and indirect racist confrontations with no help from staff or SROs. No justice for their pain. Daily tolerance of dehumanization; that is the lesson being taught within your schools. PTSD does not discriminate, trauma does not discriminate, and racism is the fuel to that fire. To clench your entire body when you're the only BIPOC in the room, that is a weight others will never carry. To never speak too loudly or make sudden movements, to never disagree or stand up for yourself for worry you might be seen as a threat, that is a war others will never fight. This emotional battle takes a toll. Opening the front door to a public building is a different feeling when you know the people with fancy job titles are not looking out for you. This is a weight BIPOC students carry every single day. These situations make it nearly impossible to learn and feel safe applying the knowledge being studied. PTSD episodes can be engulfing, keeping your body in constant fight or flight mode. Chronic fight or flight mode has been clinically proven to have negative physical and mental side effects, the main one being constant aggravation of the amygdala. This is the part of your brain responsible for fear and anger. When stimulated, it inhibits areas of the brain involved in short-term memory and concentration. These traumatic environments BIPOC students are being forced to learn in are detrimental to their health and future. Supporting a child's fears does not help them learn or grow. The SROs are a constant trigger of Fight or Flight, interrupting their learning and ability to thrive in our school system. These students deserve solidarity, compassion, love, kindness, and your support. They have tried to tell you they cannot keep carrying on this way, change needs to happen. So this is your reminder of why you became a fancy job title. To make necessary changes for ALL the students within the La Crosse school system to ensure a safe, encouraging, and supportive learning

environment for them. I ask you to act on that promise now and remove the SROs from the school district. Your students are hurting and this change should be priority number one.

It is not a personal agenda when BIPOC take to the streets to scream for their justice. That is the announcement of change, and we will not be silenced until we feel safe.

We are all human, we all feel pain, we all bleed the same. Protect one another. Love one another. Speak to one another, connect.

If this vital change does not happen, save my email. This will not be the last you hear from me.

I have heard that you will be discussing the role of police in La Crosse schools. I do not think that police officers belong in our schools. I hope that you will chose to remove them.

I am writing to ask you to vote to cancel the La Crosse School District contract with the La Crosse Police Department.

Police in schools do not help students, or prevent violence and aggression. We know that deescalating conflict is more effective than police involvement. Money could be better spent on innovative early intervention programs that not only prevent violence, but keep students in school, learning and engaged. Fear of police should not be a part of students' school environment.

Please improve the environment for our students and move forward with ending the police presence in La Crosse schools.

In these trying financial times, school districts have many areas that need additional support. The district is appears to currently be paying \$250,000 to the La Crosse PD in order to have officers patrol the school, occasionally give children legally binding citations, administer D.A.R.E., and conduct sit-down interviews with the Principal and Administrator.

I believe the money would be better spent on training or attracting councilors who would be more suited to handle student disciplinary issues and fact-based drug intervention. Please strongly consider ending the contract entirely.

I am Lac Courte Oreille Ojibwe. I also have a bachelors and a master's degree in Education, have taught students from age two-adult and have worked for years in education. I know you are all considering the budget for the SRO program and from my experience they need to be removed from our schools. As someone who has been a parent in the school district for 12 years and as someone who worked as a contracted cultural liaison for eight (Home School Coordinator with the Ho-Chunk Nation) I have yet to see the SROs contribute in a positive way. I even provided two hour cultural training for the La Crosse Police Department and the High School SROs were the worst participants as they were argumentative

and rude. They later complained about the training. This spoke volumes towards the reason La Crosse has a huge school to prison pipeline. They do not understand their diverse students.

For the board members who are unaware as to the data and the research already done by the school in regards to the disproportionate data with our students of color and the SROs, I kind of have to wonder where have you been? This has been public knowledge for quite awhile? When Dr. Cooper Stoll spoke about this a few of you were unaware, I truly hope you spend time educating yourselves. (I also apologize for calling you out about this but this is a time for action and not a time for white fragility.)

I also think it is super important to listen to the diverse voices on this issue. If we want to reform healthcare for women, do we poll men to see how a woman's visit to the gynecologist affects them? Ask them/men if they have ever had a bad encounter with the gynecologist? (Sorry to be gender specific, I acknowledge that there is more than male/female.) So why would we poll white families about this issue? The issue is police brutality towards minorities and how this happens at school. The issue isn't do the white kids like the police? Do white parents like the police?

I was also very disappointed how white voices pushed to the front of the conversation at last weeks meeting. Please let others speak first, especially when it is an issue on racial equity unless you have spent years doing equity work.

As a parent, I have yet to see the SRO be positive. I was once sitting in on a meeting with another parent who's daughter was sexually assaulted. The SRO came into the meeting, saw how upset the young lady was but continued to stand throughout the meeting. No attempt to be warm, understanding or even human. Just stood there. It was horrible.

I spent time at Central once a week and the SRO (who knew who I was as I had provided training) would walk past me numerous times and would never make eye contact or acknowledge I was there. How was this building relationships with parents/community members/minorities? One time I heard noise in the hallway and could tell a student was in distress. I stepped into the hallway to see 4 adult white men (SRO included) following a student of color down the hallway. Once they saw me, they backed off. I have always wondered what would have happened had I not stepped out?

It was incredibly sad that neither high school principal bothered to send an email in support of BLM but as soon as you question the SROs they send an very biased letter. I guess we know where they side. Blue Lives Matter not Black Lives. There are severe racial issues at both high schools and it isn't just the SROs. We need significant leadership change. There should be an investigation into this as well.

I have many stories I could share but as you can tell I do not wish for there to be SROs in our school. Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Winona are some of the schools have already decided to remove. We need to fix the disproportionate minority contact with our SROs. Please be brave and do what is best for our diverse students. Other districts are understanding this issue, I can only hope La Crosse does as well.

Thank you for your time!

I want to express my support and encouragement for the La Crosse Board of Education to vote against renewal of the La Crosse Police Department contract. To be clear, I am advocating for the removal of all police and student resource officers (SROs) from schools.

As you likely know, the origins of policing alone are a reason in and of themselves to abandon the practice of having law enforcement in an educational environment. The longstanding presence of police in schools is not an indicator that it is a practice that should be sustained, in fact it is harmful. As mentioned in previous Board meetings, the rate of juvenile arrests in La Crosse is disproportionately high and the bulk of those arrests involve students of color, even though students of color make up a small percentage of the entire student population.

We see repeatedly that reforms, training, and 'diversity initiatives' incorporated into police departments as a way to address racial disparities and racism, does not work. It will not work.

Budgets and resource allocation serve as a clear statement of values, and as members of the Board I encourage you to show the community, specifically our Black and brown youth, that you value their lives and experiences by removing SRO's and by NOT renewing the contract with the La Crosse Police Department. There are many other effective ways to utilize the massive amount of financial resources currently allocated to policing in our schools including: hiring counselors, uplifting and creating programs that ensure the basic needs of students are being met on a daily basis, establishing widespread restorative justice practices, etc.

Please show our community and our youth that their lives and experiences matter and are deeply valued. Taking this small step toward disruption and eventual dismantling of the well documented presence of the school to prison pipeline is what our community and students need. Please use your position of power to vote against contract renewal for the La Crosse Police Department, for the students, for our community, and as a small step toward justice.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read.

Hi there! I've sent an email previously but seeing that so many are so pro-cop in schools I felt the need to email again. Having police officers in schools handling problems they aren't qualified to handle is wrong. I am in support of the termination of relationship between La Crosse schools and the police. Police in schools disproportionally target black, brown, lgbt, etc students and harass them/don't take their issues seriously. It's racist and it's in your best interest for students to terminate this relationship. Thank you!

I am a Wisconsin Council Teachers of English teacher of the year, scholar of education, and published author on works tackling equity and white supremacy in education. I write to you today expressing my sincere wish that the La Crosse School District cut its ties with the local police force, including but not limited to, the use of a school resource officer.

I am impressed and encouraged as a teacher and community member that the school board is considering utilizing its budget in ways that are proven to reduce school violence, increase student engagement and achievement, and respond to student need. The presence of school resource officers or any type of police force diminishes each of these goals, which I know are core pillars of any educator at heart.

We know that the systematic and systemic racism inherent to both our police force AND our system of education causes deep scars of trauma in our kids, particularly our students of color. The La Crosse

School District can acknowledge and begin to heal those wounds by non-renewing their contract with the police and instead, utilizing those funds toward initiatives which uplift, celebrate, but most of all, sustain the dignity and humanity of our students of color.

I urge you to seek out the words of Christopher Emdin, Gloria Ladson-Billings, and April Baker-Bell for more information on culturally sustaining pedagogy. Moreover, I urge you to vote AGAINST renewing the district contract with La Crosse PD.

Thank you for your time and service to this district. The history books are watching our every movement in this deeply important moment. I know you will rise to it.

Hello. I've become aware of a plan to renew the school resource officers. From what I've seen, the district pays 250k dollars in order to have officers patrol the school, occasionally give children legally binding citations, administer the laughingstock known as D.A.R.E., and conduct sit-down interviews with the Principal and Administrator (a service which should be free, in my humble opinion).

I believe the money would be better spent on training or attracting councilors who would be more suited to handle student disciplinary issues and fact-based drug intervention. It's better to interrupt problems without the help of law enforcement because not all problems need to end in the justice system because the justice system casually grinds up the lives of young people. Better to talk problems out if possible. Police should be a last resort. Stationing them at the school makes them a first resort.

Help keep our children's criminal records clear. Let kids be kids. Let them have their childhood. Police in schools only serve as a pipeline to prison. End the contract. If police need to be called, then call them. Don't station them at schools.

I am writing on behalf of Central's Indigenous Peoples Club about the use of School Resource Officers. As a group of color, we personally do not think that they should be used in our schools. I hope you all are aware of the rates of police brutality against not only Black People but also Indigenous People in the United States. If you are not aware I highly recommend educating yourself on this issue as it is a big one that affects many students in your district. It is also important to understand how having police officers in the La Crosse Schools creates a hostile environment for Indigenous students and other students of color. The constant fear and oppression that the SROs create in the schools goes against the environment needed for us to learn. The feeling of being targeted and watched is a feeling that many Indigenous students and people feel around the officers.

School should be a safe place for everyone and by having an officer in your schools you create an unsafe space for your Indigenous students and all your students especially your students of color. I personally know that many others have had some horrible experiences with these La Crosse School Resource Officers from a young age; from being accused of lying, having random backpack searches, being eyed up because of your skin color, and having your every move watched. Using the School Resource Officers from elementary to high school instills fear in your students. The fact that they carry a gun and could shoot a student for no reason or because of their racist discriminatory beliefs it is unbelievable. What

environment are you trying to set for your students? When you see a cop car in front of the school every day it is intimidating and scary. Imagine when you see a cop car in front of your house. Do you think something good is going on or do you think something is happening I should lock my door? You can not lock your door when you are at school, you are supposed to trust someone to keep you safe. Officers who wear police badges have shot or harmed Marcus Lee, Lance McIntire, Daniel Covarrubias, Raymond Eacret, Jessie Lee Rose, Jacqueline Salyers, Mah-hi-vist Goodblanket, Richard Estrada, Jeanetta Riley, Larry Kobuk, Jamie lee Braveheart and many many other Indigenous people, Black people, and other minorities.

I personally am a student with white-passing privilege and have had some encounters with these SROs. In the 3rd grade, I was accused of stealing, which I did not do. To be sitting across the table with an armed officer at the age of 9 and be accused of stealing was terrifying. We were there as I, and some other students, were being bullied. The officer didn't help at all and instead tried to accuse me of a crime. That same officer was stationed at my middle school, he is the same officer that groomed a young lady not that much older than I am and is now engaged to her. How can I ever trust the SROs to do the right thing? I can only imagine what it is like for the students who get handcuffed and dragged out of the school. We have a school to prison pipeline in La Crosse, please look at the documented statistics.

I have never had a relationship with any other SRO, I didn't even know a few of them that were in my schools. I DO NOT SEE THEM ANYWHERE. WHERE ARE THEY HIDING? WHAT DO THEY DO ALL DAY? They aren't at lunch trying to build relationships or get to know students. I've never seen them in the halls.

Last year when I started Indigenous Peoples Club, I never got any support from the SRO, he never tried to introduce himself to our club, show his support or even reach out. I have never had a conversation with this officer despite being a leader of a school club. I thought they were supposed to get to know us and build relationships. On behalf of IPC and my personal opinion, we believe that the resource officers should no longer be used in our schools and we find a new way to connect with students and provide support. Thank you for looking into this issue.

I would like to express my joy and concern in the thought provoking conversation around SROs in the La Crosse school district. My concern is I believe SROs are needed, but my concern is if it truly is the responsibility of a police officer. As someone who grew up somewhere else (Central Texas), we had a closed campus and non police SROs. The resource officer had similar duties as the ones in La Crosse, but instead of intimidation, the person listened and tried to get a full understanding of the situation.

I am joyful we are taking a serious look at this. 2 years ago while my daughter was in 5th grade, she was threatened by a kindergartner that he would bring a gun to school and shoot her. It was reported and a talk was had with a parent of the child. I asked if the police were contacted and the answer was no. My wife then called the police herself and she was transferred to Officer Secord at Lincoln. He deemed it wasn't worth a write up since he was a kindergartner, his dad was a friend, and he did not own a gun. Yay, I guess (sarcasm).

At the start of this past school year, my daughter was physically assaulted in the school just after the final bell of the day. When reported, the punishment was for the 2 girls to find a way to get along.

Why is there no punishment for threatening to shoot someone or physically assaulting them?

I am not advocating to do away with the SROs, but wonder if that SRO needs to be a police officer. Maybe a social worker, or an extra counselor with specialized training.

I am writing to express my support for the La Crosse Board of Education to end its contract with the La Crosse Police Department. Enclosed you will find my letter with more details of my point of support.

I work directly with Hmong youth and the Hmong community in the La Crosse area, and I am deeply concerned about the possibility of

the La Crosse Board of Education renewing its contract with the La Crosse Police Department. I am writing to express my support for the La Crosse Board of Education to end its contract with the La Crosse Police Department. I strongly encourage the board to remove police officers and school resource officers from schools.

As a Hmong daughter, I know firsthand the fear and feelings of unsafeness that the community has when it comes to police. Growing up, I was always told to stay away from police officers and make sure not to draw attention to myself or else face the violence that police were sure to inflict on me and my family. When I was young, if I was crying I would be told, "Txhob quaj tsam pov liv tuaj txhom koj nawb!" ("Don't cry or the police will come take you away!") Whenever we were driving and passing by a police car, I would be told, "Zaum twb ywm tsam pov liv txhom peb!" ("Sit still or the police will arrest us!") The fear that was instilled in me, my family, and my community was and is real and valid, because we know that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color are disproportionately more affected by police brutality. The integration of police officers in our schools is a disservice to us, because while it may make white families feel safe, in reality it perpetuates white supremacy while making Black, Indigenous, and People of Color unsafe, targeted, and criminalized.

I believe there are better ways to support students than to use police. Having said this, I strongly encourage and support the reallocation of money given to other resources that will much better benefit our students and schools, including culturally responsive counselors, mental health crisis responders, school nurses, and more. These professionals are much better suited to help students with the daily struggles and stresses of school, and they can do this while maintaining a high level of excellence and sense of humanity.

I hope that you will take this time to consider the voices of the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in this community. Schools do not need police officers and school resource officers to prosper. Students need the right kind of support to help them succeed, and that is not through police involvement in their schools. Thank you for your time in reading this letter. I expect you will all make the right decision.

-Our family would love to see the money spent on police officers in the schools put towards social workers in the schools.

-we feel it would be beneficial for our schools to move towards a more inclusive curriculum as well-with the current white washed to one that includes facts. Showing documentaries such as 13th or having textbooks that give the actual message that Dr King or Malcolm X were actually promoting.

-seniors that will be 18 by the time they graduate also need to be registered to vote. Such an easy process. The League of Women voters is always happy to give a little talk without promoting any political party over the other.

Thank you for all that you do and for starting the conversation.

Hello, I am reaching out to Wisconsin from Kentucky. I am a white individual and have been shown great restraint when it comes to police interaction multiple times; a restraint I would have never believed if I was not white. Imagine 5 white teens in a car in a county not registered to it offering donuts to cops in the black of night; it seems my license plate light was out and we were let off with a simple warning. I once got pulled over for doing XX in a 55 and also got off with a warning as a minor. I also got pulled over for being in**icated and also got off with a warning. All as a minor. I 100% believe if I was not white during those times, I would have gone to jail on all these accounts or been killed.

There is no place in school for police. It has been shown time and time again that depending on who you look like, you will either pass or fail the test of being a nuisance or a life-and-death threat.

Might I just add, there is no reason for police academies to reject individuals who score high on IQ exams. It only goes to show that their only interest are officers who obey orders instead of thinking of their communities' best interests, assuming they actually live there.

I beg you, please fund school councilors and other such resources who can help children in need before they become part of the cyclical system of abuse, such as juvy and youth adult prisons. A lot of times, art and literature without restrictions are the best outlets. Let them paint murals and write obscene essays without repercussions. And most of all.... talk to them about what they're saying, and just f***ing listen.

Hello! I am writing to express my support for ending the contract with La Crosse PD. As the data shows, SROs do not prevent incidents from happening in our schools, but only ensure that when they do, the juvenile participants are treated as inherently criminal and severely punished for behavior that's normal from hormonal teenagers. I do not feel that my children have been made any safer by the SROs, and I see no reason for them to be in the school.

Thank you for your time!

I've taken a minute to compose this email as I believe it's important and necessary for the future of our students. Currently the La Crosse School District is weighing on whether or not they would like to terminate their contract with the La Crosse Police Department. I think this is an EXCELLENT idea and truly keeps our students safer, and I am able to illustrate this via statistical evidence gathered throughout the United States.

Firstly, the main concern these days seems to be SRO's (school resource officers) preventing mass shootings. This has never once occurred in the United States even with the hundreds we experience every year. Tom Mowen a criminal justice researcher at Bowling Green State University is quoted saying "For someone to suggest that SROs prevent school shootings is absolutely unfounded in terms of science. There's no support for that statement at all."

Secondly, in a study conducted by Emily K. Weisburst in the state of Texas in 2018, using data collected from 2.5 million students it was found that SRO's increase school discipline rates by 6% with Black and Hispanic students experiencing the largest increase in discipline.

Thirdly, in the same study conducted by Emily K. Weisburst it was found that when Federal grants for SRO's were approved and implemented, the same schools saw on average a 2.5% decrease in graduation rates, and a 4% decrease in college enrollment rates from those graduating seniors.

In conclusion, the evidence points to the opposite of our collective knee jerk reaction as a society. The safest thing for La Crosse students would be to remove Law Enforcement Officers from school premise, and use that contract money to instead invest more in our counselors and teachers.

Thank you for your time.

Here are the links to the studies that I quoted in case any body would like to look further into it.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XbO7qyNWB4Fz54nGXJuej-yRhvTa5kMF/view?usp=drivesdk>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11256-017-0423-z>

I'm writing to you as a lifelong La Crosse resident who attended La Crosse School District schools from Kindergarten through graduation. I also worked as a substitute teacher several times over the past year.

As a student, there was not a single time that the police in schools didn't make me extremely nervous, even though I was doing nothing wrong. I saw them routinely harass and intimidate students, usually over made-up drug possession accusations. They were extremely disruptive to the learning environment. While substitute teaching, not only did I never call upon the police for assistance, there were moments when it might have been appropriate to do so- but I rejected that option, because I saw the few disruptive students as people who needed help, not criminalization.

In situations where there's violence, police react too slowly to make a difference. In other situations, all they do is start students along the school-to-prison pipeline. It's not surprising that black students in particular feel targeted by SROs, given the massive disparity in punishment and criminalization inflicted on black students in the district. The several black students I interacted with had zero trust of the teachers or the system, and I can't blame them. We're failing them, and SROs are a big part of the problem. While our schools are understaffed, overcrowded, in disrepair, and in desperate need of counselors, SROs are a counterproductive use of money.

I'm sure that the pro-SRO messages you're receiving are numerous but they are almost certainly providing no actual information. They are stating their gut feeling, not first-hand experiences or data. Please listen to the people impacted and the data. There's only one serious conclusion possible, and it's that the SROs must go.

The La Crosse School District has the very important opportunity now to stop the school to prison pipeline that has plagued our communities for decades and your decisive action is needed to save our children from being thrown into the meatgrinder of america's incarceration industry. Please be brave

and fight for the future of our children by severing all ties between your school district and the blue mafia that threatens all low income communities and people of color across america.

I am writing this email in regards to the meeting taking place tomorrow, 06/22. I am asking that my family's opinion is considered when making the decision. I am the mother of 5 children in this school district. Two children attend Hamilton Elementary, one at Logan High, one at Central High, and one child at Lincoln Middle.

From my family's perspective, police officers are not necessary in a child's learning environment. No matter how respected the officer may be, police officers in general are extremely intimidating to anyone; Let alone a child. With the current state of the country regarding law enforcement, children should not feel threatened by the law at school. Schools should be focusing on using disciplinary actions for children not criminals. Handcuffs, tickets, and guns solve nothing. Every story I have heard, the police only end up escalating the situation and create unnecessary biases. Would you rather have your child handcuffed to a chair when they are aggravated or have someone they can trust there to listen to their frustrations?

Example: My daughter was handcuffed to a chair at Lincoln Middle School for intervening in an argument between the Vice Principal and her bestfriend. The Vice Principal man handled her friend and my daughter was triggered due to her years of trauma from my abusive situation. So to handcuff her was excessive! Imagine getting a phone call and hear your child scream I'm handcuffed mom because the school didnt relay that information during the call to pick her up. Was she violent? No. Was she a threat to the officer? No. That event led her and her bestfriend to finish out their 8th grade year home online. That was not their first encounter with either adult that day. Had there been someone to listen to those girls to understand why being manhandled by a grown man may trigger them that situation would be different. To this day my daughter does not interact with liaison officers and that particular cop she avoids in public.

I sincerely hope that the school district takes into consideration the public's stance on this. Mothers, fathers, community leaders, of all ethnicities, backgrounds, and family dynamics should be able to actively work within the schools to improve situations like this. It would benefit not only the students but the community as a whole immensely. Please consider making schools a safer, stress free learning environment.

I understand you're considering what to do regarding SROs. I do not believe police belong in our schools. Police are trained to catch criminals, and our children deserve better than to have their presence normalized in their lives. Our children are not criminals after all, are they? They deserve appropriate support for developing their young minds. Perhaps you should consider budgeting for school counselors who are skilled in areas like conflict resolution to help those students who have disciplinary issues, rather than exposing them to the criminal justice system while they are still minors.

Please help our children to feel safe and secure in the place they must attend during their formative years. No other place they go will have a constant police presence, unless we allow the school to prison pipeline to become their future.

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen to voice my support for ending La Crosse School district's contract with the La Crosse Police Department next June, and removing the SROs from the schools. Not only is the cost of the contract, \$250,000, an enormous burden on the district's budget that could be better spent to provide a quality education to the students, but it has become painfully clear in the recent weeks that the police do not provide safety to residents of their neighborhoods. They are instead perpetrators of incredible violence to not just black Americans, but to anyone that opposes their brutality. We are given proof nightly of this brutality in their violent treatment of people at the George Floyd protests, and frankly speaking, such violence has no place in our schools. Please, do the right thing and show to the students and parents of not just the district, but to America at large, that violence does not belong in the schools, and end the contract with the La Crosse police.

I am writing to share my support related to cancelling the Lax SD SRO Contract with the La Crosse Police Department. I have one kiddo entering Lincoln Middle School this year, another who will be at Emerson Elementary again, and a third who is not yet school aged.

As well as being a district parent, I have also worked in our community and with Lax schools as a mental health crisis responder. Currently, I am an outpatient therapist. Through my work experience as well as a review of current literature, there is not any data that supports the effectiveness of SROs in schools.

I am hopeful that our community is working to shift paradigms and move away from practices that support systemic racism. Thank you for creating space for this conversation and being willing to thoughtfully consider what best practice will actually support ALL students in the district.

Such practices could include but are not limited to transformative justice, increasing support for student mental health, crisis intervention teams embedded in schools, and supporting community engagement.

As a recent graduate from La Crosse Central High School, I just want to thank you for speaking out against racism in La Crosse schools and for attempting to address it. I understand that the school board's sphere of influence is limited, but I commend you for the steps you are taking. I support the school board's move to reconsider the presence of police officers in schools.

I am writing to you to ask that you please cancel the School District's contract with the Police Department immediately. We should not be criminalizing children over disciplinary issues. The school resource has disproportionately affected people of color and has not been effective at combating crime. Please cancel the contract with the Police Department and spend the money on something to help children struggling instead of criminalizing them.

Please terminate the \$250,000 contract with the La Crosse Police Department for Student Resource Officers and spend the money on other programs to help at risk kids. For example, extra social workers or guidance counselors would be a better use of this resource to help these kids. This will be one way help to break the "pipeline-to-prisons" that traps many youth today, a sad trend documented in the peer-reviewed scientific literature.

I am writing to support the termination of the \$250,000 contract with the La Crosse Police Department for 5 SROs. I am a huge proponent of the Dignity in Schools movement and encourage the School Board to take swift action against school pushout. Anyone who is indicating that we don't know how to do schools without police or that we have to take our time, hasn't been paying attention. The data is all there for the viewing. And the solutions are to. No need to reinvent the wheel or table things in committee. We just need to get to work adopting known best practices.

I want to express my support and encouragement for the La Crosse Board of Education to vote against the renewal of the La Crosse Police Department contract. To be clear, I am advocating for the removal of all police and student resource officers (SROs) from schools.

As you likely know, the origins of policing alone are a reason in and of themselves to abandon the practice of having law enforcement in an educational environment. The longstanding presence of police in schools is **not** an indicator that it is a practice that should be sustained, in fact, it is harmful. As mentioned in previous Board meetings, the rate of juvenile arrests in La Crosse is disproportionately high and the bulk of those arrests involve students of color, even though students of color make up a small percentage of the entire student population.

We see repeatedly that reforms, training, and 'diversity initiatives' incorporated into police departments as a way to address racial disparities and racism, does not work. It will not work!

Budgets and resource allocation serve as a clear statement of values, and as members of the Board, I encourage you to show the community, specifically our Black and Brown youth, that you value their lives and experiences by removing SRO's and by NOT renewing the contract with the La Crosse Police Department. There are many other effective ways to utilize the massive amount of financial resources currently allocated to policing in our schools including hiring counselors, uplifting and creating programs that ensure the basic needs of students are being met on a daily basis, establishing widespread restorative justice practices, etc.

Please show our community and our youth that their lives and experiences matter and are deeply valued. Taking this small step toward disruption and eventual dismantling of the well-documented presence of the school to prison pipeline is what our community and students need. Please use your position of power to vote against contract renewal for the La Crosse Police Department, for the students, for our community, and as a small step toward justice.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read.

I have been a La Crosse resident for 10 years. Since I moved to La Crosse, I have been employed by Western Technical College, where I am honored to serve many students who grew up in the La Crosse School District. Two years ago, my family bought our first home on the Northside. As my partner and I think about the life we want to create for our child (who is not currently school age but will be before I know it-- he turns four in September!), his education is one of our top priorities. We are grateful to have chosen to build our life in a community like La Crosse, and we look forward to being a proud La Crosse School District family.

With that in mind, I wanted to reach out to you all today to voice my support for the school district to cancel the existing contract with the La Crosse Police Department. I would hope that the \$250,000 allocated to this contract could be reassigned to other services, such as addressing staffing needs, providing mental health services to children and their families, and continuing to provide ongoing professional development opportunities for all school staff related to trauma-informed care, creating racial equity, and support for LGBTQIA+ youth.

Thank you all for your time. I appreciate the hard work and care consideration you all put into serving our scholars and our community.

As an uncle of a biracial niece, I'm writing in support of the La Crosse School District's review of the contract with the police department. I'd like to share a few quotes from this article: <https://ips-dc.org/time-get-cops-schools/>

"Schools with embedded police officers — often euphemistically referred to as "School Resource Officers," or SROs — see five times the number of arrests for "disorderly conduct" than schools without them. According to the Justice Policy Institute, in schools where SROs are allowed to arrest or refer children to the juvenile justice system, kids are getting criminal records for low-level status offenses — that is, offenses that are only illegal because of their status as a juvenile, including wildly subjective charges like "disruptive behavior."

"While juvenile detention rates have steadily decreased in the last two decades, arrests of children of color — especially black and Latina girls at schools — have not followed that same pattern. Black girls are experiencing the fastest growth in juvenile incarceration and the highest levels of middle school suspensions. And, as the African American Policy Forum reports, black girls also experience harsher sentences once in the juvenile system than any other demographic of girls."

"These criminalizing, dehumanizing, and ineffective responses to childish behavior are the core the school-to-prison pipeline. And once a child has contact with the juvenile legal system, studies show it's very hard for them to get out. The recidivism rate for juveniles is reported to be as high as 70 percent, with the initial detention being the most significant factor affecting recidivism."

With the money saved on SROs "School administrators and counselors should be properly trained to treat trauma and address the complex stressors that more acutely affect children living in poverty. Policies should explicitly address the unique stressors and dangers to girls, particularly girls of color."

"More broadly, in their efforts to address behavior that breaks or challenges school rules, schools should shift to restorative justice models that focus on relationship building among students, teachers, and administrators. Out-of-school suspensions and expulsions should be off the table. Schools should be nurturing, safe, learning environments — especially for our most at-risk student populations."

Thank you for your consideration.

I have lived in La Crosse since my family resettled here as refugees in 1987. I went to Elementary, Middle and

High School in the La Crosse School District and currently have a child who attends Northwoods Elementary School. I wanted to write to express my full support of defunding the police budget and reallocating those funds to other areas that lack basic funding.

I also want to thank you for your leadership and bravery in taking this much needed step to make sure that ALL our students feel safe in schools. Thank you again for your time and dedication to our students. Please let me know if there is anything that we as parents or concern citizens can do to support this effort.

thank you.

I am writing today as a former student of the La Crosse School District (Coulee Montessori Elementary, Lincoln Middle, and Logan High '15) and a concerned community member. I read recently that the La Crosse School District is considering terminating their contract with the La Crosse Police Department, and I would like to voice my complete and enthusiastic support for that proposition.

In my personal experience, as a soft-spoken, white, honors student, SROs in school made me uneasy and never provided me with any tangible benefits. It lent the school an immensely institutional air, and made me feel like I was constantly being surveilled for any perceived wrongdoing, even as someone who wouldn't even dream of skipping class. If this was my experience, I can't imagine the experience of a young person of color, and in fact, I more than once witnessed our high school SRO paying close attention to the behavior and movements of Black students.

In addition, I would have benefited from the services that our district could invest in rather than police presence. I had challenges in physical and mental health during high school, and having greater access to school counselors or social workers could have helped me be proactive about maintaining my health in the years to come. High school is a time when many individuals struggle with the onset of depression, anxiety, and other chronic mental illnesses, and expanded mental health support in schools could create lasting benefits and improve outcomes for many students.

In addition to anecdotal evidence, the benefits of police in schools is not supported by wider research. These two studies show that increased police presence is linked with higher disciplinary rates especially among Black and Latinx students, and lower test scores, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates. (The first investigates the impact of a surge of policing in poor neighborhoods in NYC on education, the second investigates correlation between increased federal grants for SROs with educational outcomes in Texas schools.)

Based on my own experience and systemic evidence, I am unwilling to believe that keeping police in schools does anything for students' safety. The \$250,000 could surely be used toward evidence-based approaches to improve students' lives, rather than toward penalizing and criminalizing them. I implore you to remove police from our schools and invest in long-term solutions. I think that the La Crosse

School District has an opportunity to be visionary and take bold leadership in this moment, and I sincerely hope that you do.

Thank you for your time.

I'm writing to let you know that I support removing police officers from La Crosse schools.

I was very pleased to see yesterday that the School Board does not intend to renew its contract with the La Crosse Police Department ending in June 2021. I also saw that there was some talk of a committee vote to terminate this contract early. I wanted to reach out to you again to urge you to take this step. Waiting another year will only subject students of color to another year of unfair and traumatizing authoritarian supervision in their place of learning-- not to mention the further expense of this program. From many of the comments made, particularly those from Board member Keonte Turner, it seems to me that we are ready to part ways with this expensive and discriminatory Resource Officer program. I am sure that there are many more issues at play here than those that I am aware of and I understand that it may be a difficult move to make, but I do sincerely hope that there will be a vote to terminate this contract as soon as possible.

Thank you again for your time and your advocacy on this subject. I am hopeful that future La Crosse Schools students will have a safer and more equitable experience in our district-- hopefully sooner than next summer.

I am a La Crosse resident and mother. I support removing the School Resource Officers from our schools, reinvesting those funds in community based support for students, family, and school staff, and re-imagining how we respond to students when they are not at their best.

I have personally witnessed a deeply disturbing interaction between an SRO and a student where the SRO was yelling for an extended period of time at a middle schooler. I walked into this situation in the school office. What is most disturbing to me is that in the moment, and every moment a law enforcement officer is involved, they are the most powerful individual in the room. But the SRO seemed emotionally out of control. I remember looking around as the office staff continued their routines. I felt like I should speak up, offer to help. But I didn't know what to do. I didn't understand what was happening. I was afraid to make it worse. I said nothing. I observed. And then, I moved on. Which is what I assume most people do in such situations.

I used to work in children's mental health. We used to use physical restraints and "seclusion" rooms to control children whose behavior we deemed unsafe. When the shift in best practices moved away to less restrictive measures, we all worried what would happen. How would we control the kids? Well, I realized that we never really controlled anyone. Those rooms made things much more dangerous and when we made the shift, we were all safer. It wasn't easier, because it took more energy to respond to a child that was physically out of control, but it was safer and better for everyone. After a while, I was able to see how detrimental those physical restraint practices were.

If you only have a hammer, you treat every problem like a nail. In the end, no matter how many interventions you try, it's always in the back of your head to use the last resort.

As long as law enforcement is in our schools, we will always default to them. They must be removed.

I sincerely hope the La Crosse school board will not only entertain the idea of removing SROs but actually do so.

I'm pleased to see that the board is asking important questions about the use of school resource officers in the La Crosse schools. Many times, people continue doing something because it's been done in the past without interrogating the process and the results.

I think we need to consider who is truly feeling safer and who may be feeling less safe when police are in schools. Some people have grown up being taught that police are helpers and little in their experience would contradict that. There are also young people who have been shown over and over again that because of their skin color, their gender identity, or other aspects of who they are, police may be a distinct danger to them. I think it would be beneficial to get feedback from students and also to look at the data about the disciplinary interactions that are happening. Are Black and Brown students being referred more often than white students in this district? What do the numbers say?

I'm a teacher and I've worked in schools with and without school resource officers. Not all schools have them or think they are necessary. We need to look at what they are providing and think about whether they are the best possible source to meet the particular needs of our students.

I'd be interested to know more about the programs that were mentioned such as System of Care and the YWCA's restorative justice work. What has been the result of implementing these programs and could they be expanded? Are there educators or other professionals who may be trained more specifically for working with young people than police officers? \$250,000 is a significant amount of money and I would encourage the board to look into the options for alternative uses for the money.

As you go forward, I would ask you to create the subcommittee so an informed decision can be made and to have options in the event that the contract is not renewed.

Our schools are an important part of our community and we need to keep students at the center of all decisions. I believe that there are many ways to help our students feel safe, cared for, and respected, but armed police aren't needed to accomplish this.

I am writing to voice my concerns about keeping police officers in our schools. I grew up and attended school in Raleigh, North Carolina. When I moved to La Crosse in the middle of my senior year, I was extremely shocked to see an officer within Logan High School. Even with heavy gang activity back home, we did not have the need to be searched or have a police liaison. We knew the officers were there if we needed them, but fortunately we had amazing teachers who were, for many of us, more supportive than our own families. Besides the relentless bullies, school was my safe-haven.

Now I am grown, and I have a child of my own growing up in this community. I am extremely concerned about the message we are sending our children by having police presence in the school halls. I find it highly unnecessary as officers are supposed to be there for community support, not for means of punishment or as a weapon. We should not be fearing those who wear a badge and we need to stop instilling that fear into our children because it will only create more problems. On top of that, it is

expensive and inefficient. There is so much more we can be investing in to support our kids and keep them safe; extensive research has even shown this. Invest in teachers. Invest in social workers. Invest in community driven initiatives that bring people together.

Please listen to the voices of our young people and take this proposal seriously. The potential to change and save lives is overwhelming.

I'm writing to voice my support for your creation of the subcommittee to discuss alternatives to renewing the school district's contract with LCPD. Let's **end the contract** and re-allocate funds:

Rather than spending on a police presence in the schools, we should put that money toward counselors, cultural liaisons, and other resources that more directly/proactively foster safety and create positive learning environments for our students.

Thank you for pushing for a better future for La Crosse schools!

Hi there! I wanted to send an email as I saw an article about the La Crosse School Board looking to terminate it's relationship with the local police. I wanted to say that i am in FAVOR of this move and think it would be an amazing and essential step in the right direction. Police in schools often do more harm than good and make more kids afraid than safe. I think that the school board should move forward with this decision, and I hope it does!

I just wanted to say thank you for taking the time to listen and act on what's happening in the community! We all deserve an equal future!

I'm a parent of a student in the public schools here and wanted to let you know that I support your proposal to not renew the contract with the La Crosse Police Dept. and instead spend that money on more counselors/social workers or other resources that can benefit vulnerable students.

Thanks for your work!

Hello all! I'm a mother of a child in the la crosse area school district, and I SUPPORT THE REMOVAL OF POLICE FROM LA CROSSE SCHOOLS.

I would like to take a moment to express my support for phasing out the use of police officers in our schools. I don't believe it is necessary to have a police presence in our schools and I think it adds a barrier to community building and connection between educators and families--particularly in already over policed neighborhoods.

Thank you for your consideration,

As I read today's news about the proposal to reallocate funding currently spent on School Resource Officers, I started thinking about a day last Spring, when I got three anxious texts from other parents at Hamilton Elementary, a school that I attended and that my 9 year old son now attends.

“Why are there so many cops at school?” “Did you see all the police this morning?” “Heads up: cops everywhere”

Later that day, we got an email from the principal, stating that there had been some unusual activity at the school, so they had requested more officers on the scene, on case of trouble.

For poor people and people of color, the presence of more police doesn't decrease anxiety... it increases it. Those texts are proof, as are the testimonials of so many people of color that are coming to light in the wake of the police killing of George Floyd. And we don't even need to be creative thinkers to know why certain very predictable demographics of people feel more anxious and less safe in the presence of police. Police carry guns and can shoot you with impunity. Police are people who arrest you, or your parents, or your neighbors. Police are people who took you to foster care. Police are people who can deport your dad. Police didn't help you when you were sexually assaulted. Police will arrest you for the way you support your family. Police are often present on the worst day of a young person's life, which they've just been abruptly reminded of... in the middle of their school day.

From the very origins of American police departments, Black and Indigenous people and other people of color have been under extreme scrutiny by the police. It's no surprise that they are killed and arrested at much higher rates than their white peers, and it shouldn't come as any surprise that they interact with police more in the schools, too. They are routinely arrested and surveilled by police as part of their school experience, as evidenced by the 2014 Carey Group report about our schools.

Having police in schools often makes white teachers, white administrators, and some white families feel better, and they give the broader community the false impression that schools are safer. I am sure you will hear from a lot of those folks in the coming days and weeks. They're wrong.

IF our schools are safer, it's because of the work done by social workers, counselors, mental health crisis providers, school nurses and others.... people who in many cases have been highly trained, who adhere to national standards of excellence, and who are often licensed and carry their own liability insurance as proof of their dedication to doing things the right way. I would like to see our community reinvest dollars currently allocated for SROs to employ people with the same level of education and knowledge as the rest of the school staff.

The Systems of Care and community school models that are currently being employed are examples of effective alternatives — notice they're not being run by police but by trained social workers and other caring adults. These folks build relationships with kids and families to achieve shared goals... they don't have the power to arrest somebody who's uncompliant, and they don't show up armed to school. Reinvesting the money we currently spend on SROs into restorative justice and other research-based practices is the only way forward, in my opinion.

Thank you for your leadership in this effort, which is being undertaken in school districts across the country. Let's not be among the last schools to abandon the failed experiment of school police.

I am writing to lend my support to the cancellation of the School Districts SRO Contract with the La Crosse Police Department, as an alumni of State Road Elementary, Lincoln Middle, and Central High Schools and as a parent to two elementary school aged children making their way through the La Crosse Public School System. My support is further informed by my three years of service on the La Crosse County Criminal Justice Management Council and over a decade of educating myself on systemic racism, particularly as it impacts our educational and criminal justice systems.

I appreciate that the school board is taking up this complex and challenging, but necessary conversation. If what I see on the local news social media is any indication, I imagine you will receive an onslaught of emails from white, middle to upper class parents whose experiences with law enforcement have largely been positive. I encourage you to prioritize the marginalized voices you hear from, though there may be fewer of them for a variety of reasons, as they stand to be the most impacted by decisions made regarding the presence of law enforcement in our schools.

It's important to consider which students and parents (typically white, affluent, nondisabled ones, though I know this doesn't apply in every situation) feel safer, and which feel less safe with police in schools. I have an autistic child who does not respond well (or sometimes at all) to verbal commands. Is she safe with an officer who doesn't know by looking at her that she is autistic and not just "naughty"? (I can't imagine how my fears would be multiplied if she were a big Black boy instead of a petite white girl.)

We know that white teachers (and our local teaching staff is overwhelmingly white) are more likely to involve SROs in disciplinary matters with Black and Brown students than with white ones, for the same behaviors, due to implicit bias (meaning, they don't even realize they are doing it), contributing to the "school to prison pipeline."

I hope that as a community, we will learn more about the perspective from those involved in the La Crosse County System of Care, which was born of the local 2014 study that showed atrociously disproportionate minority contact with law enforcement in our schools. I'm also eager to hear from those involved with the YWCA's restorative justice work in the middle schools, both YWCA staff and the students who have participated. The funds currently paying for SROs could go a long way in expanding restorative justice programming into all of our schools and hiring some unarmed crisis intervention workers, additional cultural liaisons, parent liaisons, etc to reduce the perceived need for law enforcement presence in the first place. Combined with initiatives to ensure that all in our community have access to housing, food, health care, public transportation; it's not hard to imagine La Crosse as a community that takes care of each other and looks out for one another.

I envision a better future for our students where behaviors are understood as communication and not crimes to be punished. It won't be an easy or fast transition, but I have to believe that we can do better to make schools safer for all of our students without the presence of armed officers. The La Crosse School District is well positioned to take on the opportunity for a groundbreaking transformation in what safe schools can look like to ensure that everyone, especially those most marginalized, can feel safe, included, and celebrated at school.

I want to voice my enthusiastic support of cancelling the contract with school officers. The \$250k saved can be reinvested in resources like the Systems of Care restorative justice program that supports students to work through conflict with their peers.

My child is white and not yet old enough for school. Even so, I am confident we will feel much safer if she attends school with teachers and social workers, not armed officers.

I'm sure we all agree we want our schools to be spaces where our children are safe and free to flourish. Police threaten this right for marginalized children. Many students, predominantly but not exclusively students of color and poor students, have already had traumatic experiences with law enforcement by the time they are in school. Police presence triggers these reminders. This creates a high stress environment that limits learning and social development. It is a disservice to our students' wellbeing.

I am deeply grateful that the board is taking on this important issue before we cause more harm to students. Please cancel the contract and invest in restorative models of conflict resolution for all our children.

I am writing in support of the proposal to end the police contract with local schools.

The concerns raised are all incredibly valid. I am 27 years old, and I have experience with what it is like to experience the schools become more and more policed, from around 2001 to 2011 when I graduated.

Over time at the schools I went to, there were more and more police officers in the schools, more and more cameras and locks and guarded entrances, even though we had no violence or crime whatsoever. It led to the building feeling like it was a prison, and was highly distracting and scary. I can only imagine what it felt like for my black and brown friends, who were watched constantly by the SROs (whether consciously or not, implicit bias still affected how surveillance and punishment were handed out). These "security measures" became more and more advanced even when our textbooks were wildly out of date, and school lunches were cheap and unhealthy.

It would be incredibly sad if public schools here followed the same path. This is why I am strongly encouraging you to end the contract with the La Crosse PD and put the funds where they will better support the educational outcomes and health of students.

I am writing you all to strongly encourage that you move forward with the cancellation of the contract with the La Crosse police department. Police officers are not trained educators and do not have the skillset to deal with children safely and compassionately. We need to use our funds better. I am sure that this quarter of a million dollars can be better spent to care for our community and help children learn and grow. We must prevent the criminalization of children who act out, and invest in social services that can help get to the bottom of the complex issues and trauma that lead to childhood outbursts. I hope that you all move forward with removing police from La Crosse schools as soon as is possible without significant disruption to operations. Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

As a La Crosse SD graduate and parent of a graduate, and as a district taxpayer and resident of the community that results from the assumptions and ideas brought by district students and graduates, I oppose SROs and hope the district removes them.

Free autonomous people do not need wardens patrolling our schools, workplaces, and streets to make sure we "stay in line." Accepting this in our schools makes it more likely that we will accept this in our community.

Doctors serve a valuable purpose helping us when we are ill, but we would not accept doctors in every kitchen and recreation area monitoring whether we are eating healthy food or wearing safety gear while playing sports. So we do not need police officers patrolling schools to monitor students' behavior and intervene, possibly inappropriately and, as we've heard, unequally, to escalate and, possibly, criminalize normal boundary-pushing teenage behavior.

I object to this "training" of people to be policed in their everyday lives as it will surely leak from schools into our general society. Already, this is reality in too many Black and Brown communities where police may take someone's life for crossing a street or having an expired license plate. We must stop that in every community. Allowing it in schools is the opposite of what we need.

I am happy to call upon police when there's a crime or emergency, but I don't expect them to monitor my every move to ensure I am complying with some law or ordinance.

If they want to be teachers, counselors, or school psychologists, then let them receive specific training, education, and certification for those purposes and be hired as teachers, counselors, or psychologists.

That's my opinion. I hope it can be passed to the School Board and everyone considering the future of SROs in La Crosse public schools.

I just want to acknowledge that we all occupy Ho-Chunk Land. I came here today to approve the decision to remove SROS officers.

I speak on behalf of what I have seen throughout my years in the La Crosse School district and the experiences of one of my relatives who also attended La Crosse high school for two years and is now enrolled in Central.

First of all, it would be dismissive to discuss the roles of Student Resource Officers without the culture of our schools. From my experience, I have witnessed the ways in which many teachers, principals, and staff have treated students of color. I will always remember one example forever. My English class and I were doing work, and an English teacher from another class came over to talk to my English teacher. That teacher that came over was explaining to my teacher how troublesome students of color were and whether or not it would be a good idea to bunch all of these students together in one class. My teacher whispered, "That is racist." My classmate can recall and attest to this incident.

Now what does that tell about who teachers value and are more willing to invest in. Is it white students and all “others” who are obedient? What statement does this tell us about the value our teachers place in students of colors? If this is how teachers treat students of color what about

Student Resource Officers. What about that time, all of my friends were talking about an incident where a Student Resource Officer pinned down a Black Student, and I don't know why. However, Black students and students of color deserve better. This is setting students up for the school to prison pipeline. Black students and students of color deserve to be treated like human beings, and they deserve the same level of investments. When you are complicit to discrimination and racism you contribute to the social inequities in the criminal justice system, health care system, education system, all all other systems. Remove SROs and invest in mentors, social workers, mental health workers, unarmed employees who can de escalate physical fights, who can invest in all students and invest not just in white students but also our students of color, students with disabilities, and low income students. More importantly, these new employed workers will be specialized in their roles and benefit all students.

SROs are first foremost police. How can we implement police in the schools when you have seen the damage they have caused to Black communities and communities of color?

There are many effective ways to protect students, employing police officers in schools are not one of them. Police is not the only answer. We are not limited to having police officers in schools. We know data showing SROs have not been effective. Plz remove Student Resource Officers and let us all go back to the drawing board together to address how to appropriately protect all students, not just a selected group of people.

This isn't just about SROs, this about reconstructing how the education system is treating our students, especially students with marginalized identities. Let's start with SRO."

I would first like to begin by expressing my disappointment in ensuring that the SRO public form was truly a public forum. This event was poorly advertised to the public. If you want community impact and feedback, it is critical that you give opportunities for the public to respond with ample time, not four days notice.

As a former La Crosse School District student and parent of future students, I would have loved the opportunity to speak at last night's board meeting, but am unable to as I was just informed on Friday. Thus, my frustration and this email. I would be more than happy to discuss my thoughts on this matter at any time.

As a former student of color within the LaCrosse schools, my schools' SROs were imperative to my own development as a person, sister, daughter, and now, a mother. It is only my hope that my own daughters would experience the true positive impact the La Crosse Schools SRO's had on my life.

Systemic racism has taunted our country for far too long. However, I would encourage you to look at schools as a system of collective individuals working together. That being said, within your SRO forum,

you should also include teachers, social workers, and administrators. Inequitable practices that continue to perpetuate systemic racism are built within this system, often beginning in the classrooms. Although the number of anti-racist teachers and administrators within the La Crosse schools far outweighs the rest, it is important to note that some of those teachers still work within the walls of your schools. I question how you will work to end the latter? Will you hold a public forum to ultimately remove these positions or will you seek out more professional development to build community and change the narrative? Seems to me that professional development is more effective in creating change. This same standard and support we offer our teachers, is the same support we must offer our SROs. Education is doing a disservice to students if we continue to remain uneducated. Please read the below story from a friend who shared an experience with a La Crosse School District NEW teacher:

"A mom and her daughter, a newly hired teacher in La Crosse, scheduled a viewing at a rental that's close to the school the daughter was hired at. While I'm waiting for them to get out of their car (mom was on the phone and didn't want to come out yet) a black man walks out of his apartment and gets in his car and leaves.

They look at the apartment and without letting the daughter talk, the mom says "I'm going to be really honest, we're not going to rent an apartment in this neighborhood" I asked what she meant and she responded "I saw a lot of neighbors walking around and that's not the people I want my daughter near."

Perplexed, I said "M'am I've been here waiting outside for you to finish your call for 5 minutes. The only neighbor that I saw was a black man down the street who got in his car and left." She firmly said "well, that's the people I don't want my daughter living by."

I can't say I've ever seen outright racism like that in person, but it's alive in La Crosse. I had a lot of thoughts going through my head and was feeling fairly emotional (I'm quick to anger in these situations and wear my emotions on my sleeve) but I simply asked her to leave and not call us for any other rentals.

I felt a little empathy for the daughter in the moment, but at the same time she's 22 years old and didn't say a word. It's going to be a wake up call for her daughter when she gets to school on the first day and notices that her school has one of, if not the highest population of black students in La Crosse."

How do you intend to change THIS narrative? How do you intend to follow up and ensure that anti-racist teachers are working within your schools?

Communities are collective systems that need to work together. Having been deeply impacted by the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and the recent attempted murder of Jacob Blake, the narrative of community members and SROs must change. However, change does not occur if we completely eliminate those who would greatly benefit from further education and bridging together our communities.

As mentioned earlier I am more than happy to have this conversation with any board members and thank you for allowing me to express my concern.

The rule of being a good citizen or a positive part of the community is if you have more (more privilege, money, community influence) you advocate for anyone who has less, you listen to and help raise their voices. No matter how aware the white middle or upper middle class is we can not possibly understand what it is like to live in our community as a black or brown person.

My child has only been at Lincoln for a few virtual weeks and my understanding is that the majority of the kids like our current SRO(s), but the point of this discussion or review is not to discuss the merits of our current officers it's to discuss the merits of a system. A system that has been shown to create an uncomfortable environment for kids of color, from what I've read the data supporting that is pretty clear.

My hopes are that the dollars behind the SRO program can be put towards non-police based resources like specially trained aids in the school that can be there to support teachers, deescalate situations that arise and interact with or support the students while they are at the school. I don't think anyone can argue with the thought that kids do better when they have as many people as possible in their corner. I believe it is important to have a dedicated person in this role and I think it would be tragic if the extra person at school was lost.

I wasn't able to make it to the forum yesterday, but I just finished watching it on YouTube. I wanted to write and say that I am in favor of suspending the SRO program in the La Crosse School District, and would prefer to replace the position with trained social workers.

If it matters, I have a 2nd grader at SOTA1/CRVA.

Thank you so much for your time.

I have lived in La Crosse for over forty years, both my daughters attended public school in La Crosse, graduating from Central High School. I'm writing to share my views on the contract for school resource officers in La Crosse Schools. Conceptually, taking a step like ending the contract might seem controversial, even though the District's own data indicate that having the SROs does not reduce the harassment received by students of color. The unbalanced out-of-school suspension records definitely suggest that racism is at play. Many will insist that the SROs help protect our students from terrors like in-school shootings. Yet if protection of children was a priority with adults, and particularly our elected officials, firearms would be more closely regulated to assure that they are not so available to any troubled or disgruntled individual.

I live near Longfellow, walking the neighborhood regularly with our dog, and my perception as I observe the school with its constantly present squad car and highly controlled access is that our misdirected efforts to "protect" our children are turning our schools into prisons. I'm not sure how any student, regardless of color, can feel safe, comfortable, and productive in an environment structured around fear.

I also had an experience with one of my daughters and the SRO at Central many years ago. The police like to say that their resource officers are building positive relationships, and trust, with the students. But that wasn't how my daughter and her friends, all white by the way, felt about the treatment they received. When I took issue with the actions of the police officer, before a hearing of the court, the information I received from an assistant district attorney made it appear that the action and the charge were totally arbitrary. By the time I was done with the interview all had been dropped, making the purpose and seriousness of the matter seem nothing more than a way for police to bully children. That's not a good method for building trust.

All these observations and experiences lead me to recommend that the District end the SRO contract, and redevelop a learning environment where our children can develop some badly needed critical thinking skills. All indications, given the presidential administration we are now saddled with, suggest that our schools haven't done a stellar job of preparing U.S. citizens to manage a democracy. We truly need to find a different course for this nation, from our schools and families, to our governments and courts. Ending the SRO contract could be one step in a positive direction.

Thank you for considering maintaining or eliminating SROs in schools and asking for the community's input. I had the opportunity to listen to the community discussion last night and wanted to share information with you.

For background, I am a father of two middle schoolers enrolled in the public system. I also work in the community as a mental health therapist and substance use counselor. Part of my work has involved police officers, at least one of which had been an SRO. Without a doubt I am seeing a skewed sample, but among the current and former police officers I have seen in this capacity, I have very serious concerns regarding this population working with children. As often reported (although the data from these studies is quite old), rates of domestic violence among police is very high, much higher than in the general population (The Atlantic, 2014). Rates of substance abuse, often alcohol, is also very high (Butler Center, 2015).

An additional consideration is the source of the officers. La Crosse City Police Department has been involved in 2 public lawsuits as former officers, Poke and Clark, both of whom are African American, have sued regarding racial discrimination (La Crosse Tribune, 2020). Each of those cases was settled out of court. The Department raised hew and cry when an area instructor, who was a former officer in the department, told students at Western Technical College that the department had issues with race relations. This led to a public feud where the Chief of Police demanded the instructor be terminated, which is a violation of academic freedom (Reason, 2019). The following interim police chief found himself in ongoing social media battles via Facebook and Twitter, including using official websites as well as his personal sites, over decisions by area judges (La Crosse Tribune, 2018), which include judges who are female and people of color. If the department that furnishes officers has such a checkered recent past with seemingly immature leadership, can we assume the future behavior of leadership and employees will be any better?

Instead of SROs, who have training that lasts only weeks and who may have only a GED or high school diploma, I would echo the suggestions of others that trained school counselors and social workers would

be very helpful. I was in grad school during the passage of Act 10 and saw my program, community mental health, flooded with school counseling students and recent graduates who were struggling to find positions. It is time to bring these well trained, competent, and compassionate professional back into the schools to do the very important work of providing realistic, helpful, and trauma informed resources to these students.

I'm writing to register my full support for the discontinuation of the School Resource Officer (SRO) program in the School District of La Crosse, and the creative reallocation of funding to meet evolving student needs. The SRO program, as it is currently structured, is damaging in impact, if not by design and the decision to discontinue it doesn't need unanimous (or even majority) support to be right.

After listening to the stories of other community members, particularly those from marginalized and minoritized communities, it is abundantly clear that SROs do not have a universally positive impact on the youth and families with whom they come into contact. I implore you to remember that it shouldn't take a typical half-plus-one majority of students experiencing mistreatment and discrimination for you to decide that the program should end. In a predominantly white community like La Crosse, it's likely that most students will never be victims of discrimination based on race or ethnicity, or feel they've been profiled by the police. When Black and Indigenous students and other students of color describe their experiences to us, it provides an opportunity to make sure that our policies and our budget reflect the ideals and values of inclusivity and equity that we claim to hold. For this reason alone, the program is and should be doomed.

But in case this moral argument isn't convincing enough, let me offer another one: any positive impact made by an SRO on the culture and community of a school is incidental, *not* intentional, and therefore *not* guaranteed. In the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) establishing the SRO program, it is made very clear that these are police officers, under exclusive supervision by the police department, and not school employees. If they act as educators or counselors—as some testimonials seem to indicate—it is in direct violation of the MOU. Their duties are clearly laid out: enforce criminal code and coordinate investigations between the police department and the schools. Any rapport they establish with students and their families is in service of this goal.

On a practical level, since the standards for conduct are not established by the school, SROs are not accountable to school officials if those standards are not upheld. Investigations into misconduct are carried out by the police department, which may not be very motivated to admit any officer wrongdoing, especially in the current political climate. In situations where students or family members feel that they have been mistreated, they must presumably lodge complaints with the SRO supervisor, a police officer they have never met and whose name and contact information is [unavailable on the police department's SRO website](#), rather than with a school official they know and trust.

This reporting structure has also required the school district to continue the uninterrupted funding of the SRO program since the abrupt closure of schools last March. Have SROs been assisting with the difficult transition to virtual learning? Have they been creatively meeting students' tangible and intangible needs, like everyone else affiliated with the school? No. They have not. It is my understanding that they have been out in the community, on patrol. Why shouldn't we reinvest this quarter of a million dollars in staff who will stick with us through thick and thin?

As a parent of a Hamilton Elementary School student, I've participated in multiple focus groups where I've been asked what we can do to make our community school a place where everyone feels safe,

welcome, and valued. "Think big!" we're told, "Tell us what you need." In most cases, the barrier to meeting our needs *as we define them* is (you guessed it) money. Well, here is our chance to reimagine and redefine what safety and community really mean, and to send a strong message to students and families who feel disconnected from our schools that we have been heard and that our ideas are worth investing in.

My daughter was in 5th grade 2 years ago when a younger student came up to her and said he was going to have his dad come to school and shoot her.

This was immediately taken to the school principal and it was turned over to the SRO. After some investigation it was determined by the SRO that the matter was not important and that he personally knew the child's parents and they don't own guns and the matter was closed immediately.

It was further found out that the child in question is our neighbor and their front door, garage, and where they play lines up with my daughters window. Now not only was my daughter afraid of the child, she was now afraid to sleep in her room or leave the house because someone could shoot her. This went on for many months and it was very hard to convince her she was fine even tho we all know in the world we live in these days people don't always know people.

The punishment for the child was nothing because the officer felt there was no danger. There was not any therapy offered for my daughter and I had to beg for it. There was not a single thing done to the child to teach them that this was wrong. The child in question to this day is defiant to their parents on a daily basis as they are our neighbors and they have been reported to CPS on multiple occasions. Any involvement by the SRO would have put the fear of God in the child and perhaps today they would be better behaved and my daughter would not fear cops for doing nothing to help her.

This fear of cops followed her to Middle School where last night's letter talked about how the same officer put my daughter and the bully she reported in the same meeting room which was definitely against school rules.

SROs are not needed because they are not trained and are not sticking up for the victims which these two examples have shown. They do not follow school rules such as a bully should not know their accuser let alone put them in the same room. To this day my white, granddaughter of a cop, daughter, is afraid of cops because they did not care for her when she needed them the most.
