

Resolution 2526R-004

Resolution Establishing Protections and Accountability for the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program

By Director Missy Zombor

WHEREAS, Board Governance Policy 1.01 (b) states that schools will be safe, welcoming, well-maintained, and accessible community centers meeting the needs of all; and

WHEREAS, 2023 Wisconsin Act 12 mandates the implementation of a School Resource Officer (SRO) program requiring the presence of at least twenty-five (25) police officers in schools; and

WHEREAS, Schools must serve as safe havens that prioritize student learning, development, and well-being, rather than environments that criminalize normative child and adolescent behavior; and

WHEREAS, A 2021 Center for Public Integrity analysis of U.S. Department of Education data found that Black students and students with disabilities were referred to law enforcement at nearly twice their share of the overall student population; and

WHEREAS, A 2018 Program Evaluation of Milwaukee's School Resource Officer Program recommended that the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) clearly define SRO roles and expectations and that those roles be communicated through training with school administrators; and

WHEREAS, The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) and the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services recommend prohibiting SRO involvement in school discipline matters and conducting regular reviews of intergovernmental agreements between school districts and law enforcement agencies; and

WHEREAS, The District is committed to strengthening school safety and emergency response protocols through non-police methods that promote student and staff well-being without unnecessary reliance on law enforcement; and

RESOLVED, That the Administration shall create a comprehensive School Resource Officer policy, which is consistent with the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Milwaukee and applicable law, to and which strives to address the following items to the extent possible: include the following:

- That SROs have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, with the scope of their authority clearly and consistently outlined:
 - SROs shall be responsible for criminal law matters only and shall not participate in school discipline.

- SROs shall not ~~participate in classroom instruction or~~ interrupt instructional time except in cases of emergency.
 - The principal of each school, or their designee, shall serve as the designated liaison between the school and SROs.
- That schools ~~will still be~~ primarily responsible for managing student behavior.
 - SROs shall not intervene in or respond to the following non-criminal behaviors: ~~disorderly~~ behavior that does not pose a physical risk to others or otherwise rise to the level of disorderly conduct (e.g., rude or disruptive behavior ~~;~~ excessive noise ~~;~~ loitering in hallways or bathrooms); dress code violations; use of profane or lewd language; and/or possession or use of prohibited items under the Student Code of Conduct that do not violate criminal law and are not weapons.
 - School administrators shall address the above behaviors pursuant to the District's Student Code of Conduct.
- That principal or their designees shall retain final decision-making authority when it comes to school discipline of students enrolled in their schools.
 - The principal or their designee shall ~~serve as the designated liaison between the school and SROs and shall~~ make final determinations regarding school disciplinary responses to student behavior, considering among other factors: the student's age and maturity; the student's IEP or 504 Plan; the student's disciplinary history; and the nature, severity, frequency, and duration of the behavior ~~; and be it~~
- That SROs and school officials shall not interfere with the legal rights of students and their guardians.:
 - Student privacy rights shall be upheld at all times.
 - School officials shall not request SRO presence during student questioning ~~that could result in arrest or court involvement~~ initiated by the school.
- ~~That barring an immediate physical threat to others,~~ SROs shall not engage in the use of force unless consistent with state and federal law and Milwaukee Police Department rules, policies, and procedures.
 - Under no circumstances shall SROs or police officers use mechanical or chemical restraints or physical force for administrative convenience or, punishment, ~~or de escalation~~.

- Any use of seclusion or physical restraint by an SRO shall comply with the notification requirements of Wis. Stat. § 118.305(4).
- That a student's parent or guardian shall be notified by the principal or designee as soon as practicable following a student's arrest, search, or questioning by an SRO.
- That students be made aware of their rights; that students shall be informed annually of their rights when interacting with an SRO; and these rights shall be incorporated into the Student Bill of Rights; and be it
- That when conducting searches of students, SROs and police officers will follow all appropriate standards:
- That police officers or SROs may search a student or their belongings only when probable cause exists to believe the search will reveal evidence of a criminal offense, and the scope of the search is reasonably related to the objective and not excessively intrusive.
- That strip searches of students are strictly prohibited.
- That law enforcement access to student records shall be limitednarrow and only if necessary, with any such access and compliant with FERPA and consistent with the MPS Safe Haven Resolution 1617R-007; and be it
- ~~That when questioning students at school, that absent a clear and present danger of serious physical injury, SROs shall not question students about criminal or noncriminal activity unless all legal protections are met; that students shall have the right to remain silent; that SROs shall not ask school staff to question students on their behalf; and that principals or designees shall not compel or coerce students to submit to questioning by law enforcement; and be it~~
- That students shall not be arrested at school unless certain conditions exist:
 - ~~That the child poses a real and immediate threat to student, staff, or public safety; that the principal agrees a formal arrest is necessary to preserve student safety; and t~~The SRO or arresting officer has probable cause to believe that the student has committed a misdemeanor or felony that is not school managed behavior; or that a warrant specifically directs the arrest of the student in a school; in all other instances, the execution of an arrest warrant shall be undertaken at a location other than a school.
 - That in rare instances where a warrant directs that an arrest of a student be carried out at school, the execution of the warrant shall be planned in conjunction with the principal/designee.
 - Police Officers, SROs, and school officials shall make every effort to respect students' privacy rights when executing an arrest at school.

- Absent emergency circumstances, the warrant shall be executed in an administrator's office or other private location to minimize disruption and exposure to other students and to protect student privacy rights; and be it.
- That the process of having and maintaining SROs in Milwaukee Public Schools be marked by transparency and accountability:
 - That ~~there be a meaningful complaint resolution system for~~ any student, parent, teacher, principal, or other school administrator ~~so submit a who wishes to submit a~~ complaint, orally or in writing, of abuses or misconduct by SROs ~~be directed by the principal or their designee to the City of Milwaukee's Citizen Fire and Police Commission Complaint Form for purposes of filing a complaint with the City of Milwaukee (<https://city.milwaukee.gov/police/Information-Services/Citizen-Complaints>)~~. Additionally, annual notice shall be given to students and families of this complaint procedure.
 - ~~The system shall provide for an independent investigation into the allegations in the complaint.~~
 - ~~Additionally, annual notice shall be given to s~~Students and families shall be informed of the~~s~~is complaint procedure.
 - That there be public reporting when it comes to SROS, and that the District shall publish publicly available quarterly reports detailing:
 - The number of incidents resulting in juvenile arrest for conduct on school grounds broken down by school; offense; student's age, grade, race, sex, and disability status; and disposition/results;
 - The number of incidents resulting in other forms of law enforcement intervention – including searches and seizures by SROS; restraints by SRO; questioning by SROs; issuance of a criminal citation, ticket, or summons; filing of a delinquency petition; and referral to a probationary officer.
 - The budget information for the SRO program, including funding and expenditures.
 - The number of SROs deployed to each school.
 - The training materials for SROs.
 - The number and types of complaints filed against SROs; and be it

~~FURTHER RESOLVED, That the draft policy be presented to the Board for consideration in the February 2026 Board cycle; and be it~~

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Administration is directed to negotiate modifications to the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Milwaukee, to the fullest legal extent possible, ~~to ensure consistent with~~ the above terms and conditions, ~~and thereafter finalize relevant Board policy to reflect the terms of the IGA regardless of when a policy is ultimately adopted~~; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a draft policy be presented to the Board for consideration in the March 2026 Board cycle, understanding the policy will be subject to further revision and finalization after completion of the IGA negotiations; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That annually the Milwaukee Public Schools will invite the Milwaukee Police Department and the Fire and Police Commission to conduct a joint review and evaluation of the SRO Program ~~shall be evaluated annually through a joint review by Milwaukee Public Schools, the Milwaukee Police Department, and the Fire and Police Commission~~; and that evaluation criteria shall include progress toward established goals and objectives, frequency and nature of police-student interactions, and community, student, and family feedback.

Introduced December 18, 2025