LogicalOutcomes

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Review of police presence and programs at the GECDSB

Prepared the for the Greater-Essex County District School Board

By LogicalOutcomes

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Report Contents

Land acknowledgement

Research for this review was conducted by individuals residing on the land that is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississauga's of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. This land is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississauga's of the Credit.

The findings of this review were collected from community members residing on land originally inhabited by Indigenous Peoples who have travelled this land since time immemorial. This territory is within the lands honoured by the Wampum Treaties; agreements between the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lenni Lenape and allied Nations, to peacefully share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Specifically, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the Three Fires Confederacy (Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomi) and Huron/Wendat Peoples. We are dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture while remaining committed to moving forward respectfully with all First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

The voices and stories of Indigenous community members were sought out to inform this review. These participants took on the difficult task of recounting the hardship imposed upon them and their ancestors through systemic forces of oppression. It is only by listening to and reflecting upon these truths that we can make progress towards reconciliation.

Adapted from the City of Toronto and GECDSB's Land Acknowledgement Statements

Review team acknowledgement

This review was conducted by LogicalOutcomes, a non-profit consultancy specializing in program evaluation, strategic planning and stakeholder consultation. LogicalOutcomes is a recognized international evaluation and DHIS2 firm (open source data platform), supporting organizations to create monitoring and evaluation systems, design metadata registries, and evaluate their policies and programs. We consult with Canadian and international non-profits and charities on evidence-informed programs that lead to social change, incorporating monitoring and evaluation as an integral part of the program.

The review team for this project included N.Price, Team Lead and Subject Matter Expert; S.Gaudon, Project Manager and Research Lead and T.McKoy, Researcher and Youth Engagement Lead. C. Carey provided qualitative analysis of individual interviews and K. Panayotov contributed to student survey analysis.

Individuals from the Students Commission of Canada facilitated student focus groups – thank you to Chantelle and Kadane for your wonderful energy.

In no particular order, appreciation is shared to over a hundred individuals who shaped the review design, and shared their experiences:

- Student research team, to the ten students across schools who took part in design and review; thank you for your insights and we hope you enjoyed the experience
- Student Senate, for pilot testing the student survey and general engagement
- Teacher Equity Consultant A.Abdulle for providing an extensive list of community partners and parents.
- Teachers, counsellors and administrators who shared their experiences and arranged time and space for secondary students to share, especially the Create Your Future and First Nation, Métis, Inuit counsellor team for support with focus groups, and review activities in general
- GSA staff leads for encouraging 2SLGBTQIA+ student response in the survey
- Members of the Disabling Anti-Black Racism Implementation Committee, and other engaged parents and community members who met online for an interview
- Human Rights and Equity System Advisor R.Salvador for grounding this review, sharing research and best practices
- GECDSB administration and communications team, for support with survey distribution, public and school information release, and general logistics for this virtual review
- Police Officers from OPP, WPS and LaSalle for interviews and information sharing
- Operations Manager for the Youth Hub in Windsor, and Windsor-Essex County Health Unit for providing local youth support organizations to inform the 'support handout'

And thank you to the thousands of community members, and hundreds of students who took the time to respond to the surveys. Thank you for your honesty and courage to share.

We hope this review will inform change that is meaningful for everyone involved.

-LogicalOutcomes Review Team

Definitions and acronyms

2SLGBTQIA+: Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual, and additional sexual orientations and gender identities under the queer/gender queer umbrella. Note that this acronym is not used by all communities as it does not capture the full spectrum and fluidity of diverse gender identities, gender expressions and sexual orientations or the ways individuals express their gender and sexuality.

Anti-oppression: an approach that recognizes the power imbalance within society that attributes benefits and privileges to some groups and excludes others. This approach seeks to develop strategies to create an environment free from oppression, racism and other forms of discrimination. It acknowledges the intersections of identity and aims to promote equity between various identities.

Bias: a predisposition, opinion, prejudice or generalization about a group of persons based on personal characteristics or stereotypes. Biases limit the ability to make fair, objective, or accurate judgements.

IBPOC: Indigenous, Black, People of Colour

Board: the corporate entity of the Greater-Essex County District School Board.

B-RAD: Bullying, Relationships, Alcohol and Drugs; a collection of presentations given to grade nine GECDSB students early in the school year. Each topic gets its own presentation.

Colonialism: attitudes and beliefs that affirm, support, and uphold colonization and the validity and sovereignty of the colonizing power, including downplaying or denying acts of historical and ongoing colonization.

CYF: the Create Your Future program at GECDSB schools helps racialized students set goals, achieve personal growth, realize their full potential, identify appropriate career options, achieve academic growth, and develop job search and interview skills.

DABR: Dismantling Anti-Black Racism; a set of priorities and guiding principles established by the GECDSB to address the systemic racism that Black students and staff experience within the school system.

Equity: A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

FNMI: First Nation, Métis, and Inuit; also an advisory team and student group across the Board

GSA: Gender and Sexuality Alliance

HSRO/SRO: High School Resource Officer/School Resource Officer; an officer who visits the school community to give presentations, speak to classrooms, socialize with students in the hallways, assist administrators and teachers with incidents or advice, attend school events, and more. Every few years, each school is assigned a new SRO.

IEP: an individual education plan, which is a written plan that describes special education programs, accommodations, and services that a school board will provide for a student.

Intersectionality: the study of overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination.

Ontario Human Rights Code: prohibits actions that discriminate against people on a protected ground (e.g. age, race, gender identity) in a protected social area (e.g. accommodation, employment)

OPP: Ontario Provincial Police

Oppression: the systemic social inequity reinforced by social institutions that is also embedded within individual consciousness. It results from institutional and systemic discrimination and personal bias and prejudice, producing barriers, and limiting and restricting opportunities and resources. Oppression works to benefit dominant or privileged groups and disempowers or subordinates' others.

Privilege: unearned power, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities that exist for members of dominant group(s) in society.

Marginalization: a long-term, structural process of systemic oppression that produces a group of individuals who experience bias, prejudice, barriers, oppression, discrimination, and exclusion in society, institutions, organizations, services, and the workplace.

Racialization: the process of categorizing, marginalizing, or regarding people according to race; the process by which societies construct races as real, different, and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political, and social life.

Trauma-informed research: a framework that involves acknowledging the trauma experienced by individuals and groups and treating them with respect, patience, and dignity during the research process

UDL: Universal Design for Learning; a teaching approach that focuses on using teaching strategies or pedagogical materials designed to meet individual needs to enhance learning for all students.

VIP: Values, Influences, and Peers; a program offered by police officers to teach grade six students about: values and rules, decision making, peer pressure, healthy friendships, authority figures, youth and the law, alcohol, tobacco and drugs, responsible citizenship, bullying and cyberbullying.

WPS: Windsor Police Service

Sources:

Addressing Anti-Asian Racism: A Resource for Educators [Elementary Teacher's Federation of Ontario (ETFO) and Toronto Board School Board]
Anti-Racism Directorate's Anti-Racism Policy and Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism
Champine et al., 2022. What Does it Mean to be Trauma-Informed?
Durham District School Board Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy [insert hyperlink when available] and Indigenous Education Policy
GECDSB Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Background Report
GECDSB Create Your Future information page
Merriam-Webster
The National Collaborating Centre for Social Determinants of Health
Ontario Human Rights Commission's Policies and Guidelines
Ontario Human Rights Commission's Racial Discrimination, Race, and Racism Fact Sheet
Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation
The 519's Glossary of Terms
Toronto District School Board Human Rights Policy and Equity Policy

Executive summary

About Police Presence and Programs

School-based police programs involve the use of select police officers who visit schools and lead presentations regarding various social issues such as bullying, drug and alcohol use, and safety. School Resource Officers (SROs) typically enter schools to speak with students, answer questions, and build relationships. The VIP (Values, Influences, and Peers) program is offered to Grade 6 students and includes multiple police-led presentations throughout the school year focused on values and character building. The B-RAD (Bullying, Relationships, Alcohol and Drugs) program is offered in Grade 9 and includes 3 presentations throughout the year. It is important to note that within the Greater-Essex County District School Board (GECDSB), police programs have not been previously subject to review. Additionally, students, staff and community members have not been consulted regarding their opinions of and experiences with school-based police programs prior to this review.

As the Ontario Human Rights Commission highlights, *"the SRO/VIP program has existed since the early 1990s. Since then, equity initiatives have shifted in an effort to keep pace with the changing demographics in our communities and ongoing efforts to dismantle systemic racism."*[1]

In light of GECDSB's recent initiatives to provide equitable learning environments for all students, an external consultant was engaged to conduct a review.

The experiences and opinions of students from racialized and marginalized identities were prioritized for the review, as these voices have been absent within literature on SROs in Canada. A student research team was formed to ensure that youth perspectives were brought into the review's design and methodology. The review team set out to explore the questions below through a combination of literature review, individual interviews, focus groups, and surveys distributed to students and community members (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents, former students).

Review questions:

1. How is the current community police programming perceived by GECDSB stakeholders? What are its intended outcomes?
2. Are community police program outcomes being achieved? Are the programs having their desired impact on students?
3. Do students of all identities recognize and support the intended outcomes of community policing?
4. Do students of all identities feel safe at school in the presence of uniformed police officers?

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[1] https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/letter-york-catholic-district-school-Board-review-srovip-programs

Findings

Many in the GECDSB community acknowledge that police are a part of the community and their job is to enforce the law. Police have many strategies and programs to become involved in the community. Encounters with police outside of the school community often impact perceptions of police within the school community. Various respondents acknowledge that *SROs are part of the larger system of policing, which has a history of violence, persecution, and racial discrimination*. As a result, many racialized and marginalized groups do not have a positive perception of, or relationships with, police. Participants also note that newcomers may be fearful of police due to traumatic experiences with police in their home countries. Others explain that Black community members may be distrustful of police because of instances of police brutality.

> *I know that many newcomers are fearful of government and police based on their own lived experiences from their homelands AND this is furthered by legitimate over-policing of marginalized and racialized groups in Canada – GECDSB educator*

1. Safety and Presence

Secondary students do not agree that the presence of police in their school leads to enhanced safety. Some students believe that police response may help with issues of violence and bullying, while others defer to school staff, such as teachers and counsellors, who often play a role in de-escalation and making the school environment safer.

When asked "*How does seeing a police officer at school make you feel: Very Safe, Somewhat Safe, Somewhat Unsafe, Very unsafe,*" students of all identities shared mixed feelings:

- South Asian and 2SLGBTQIA+ students expressed 'very unsafe' feelings around police officers in their school, 31% and 19% respectively.
- Combining the categories of 'somewhat unsafe and very unsafe,' *86% of 2SLGBTQIA+, 69% of Black/African, and 75% of South Asian students do not feel safe around police in their school.* The majority of students with disabilities and Indigenous students (over 50%) do not express feelings of safety around police in their school.

When asked "*When you see an officer at school do you avoid them: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always,*"

- A quarter of all students would avoid an officer *often or always.* Student groups most likely to *avoid often or always:* South Asian (50%), 2SLGBTQIA+ (45%), Black/African (44%).
- When combined with *sometimes, 94% of Black students and 82% of 2SLGBTQIA+ students would Sometimes, Often or Always avoid police in their school.*

Some students are comforted by the presence of uniformed officers at school, while others feel distracted, anxious, and worried. Parents, educators, and other community members also shared their concerns about the presence of police in schools. Police officers are considered by some to be intimidating, particularly when they are in uniform, in a group, or carrying weapons. Some staff members explicitly state they do not feel safe with police presence at school.

Participants asked if officers can visit schools without their uniforms. This question was posed to a number of officers, who generally expressed discomfort with being on duty in plain clothes, mainly citing safety reasons. Some officers also stated it is important for people to get comfortable with the uniform.

2. Program Perceptions and Outcomes

The majority of adult stakeholders who have experience with community police presence and programs agree the following activities are at its core: (1) relationship building and mentorship (2) education (3) presenting a positive image of police (4) maintaining order in the school and (5) keeping students out of the criminal justice system.

Looking at individual programs, it was acknowledged by the police and Police Education Liaison Committee members that the Grade 9 B-RAD content required an update. However, it is not clear if B-RAD has specific learning outcomes. The Grade 6 VIP program is more detailed, with a number of outcomes, including self-esteem and confidence building, developing respect for others, recognizing peer pressure, law awareness, saying 'no' when appropriate, and making good choices. Students have never been asked for their feedback, which would be useful to assess if the desired outcomes are being achieved (i.e. changes in student behavior, or better decision making).

Several interview participants note the lack of a clear mandate for SRO programs in general. Staff, parents and students explain that the purpose of police officers in schools was not clearly articulated.

3. Achievement and Impact

While community members generally appear to be more supportive of school-based police programs, students have divergent views. Some secondary students expressed value and appreciation for the content of the VIP and B-RAD program while others had neutral or negative experiences.

Although feedback on some SRO presentations was positive, several respondents point out that SROs are not trained as educators. Police approaches to engaging and educating children and youth are not grounded in evidence or trauma-informed approaches. Respondents shared that education in the school environment should be led by educators in collaboration with subject matter experts (such as police officers, health practitioners, etc.), individuals with lived experiences, and students themselves. Respondents recognize that children and youth need honest, facilitated, two-way conversations with opportunities to prepare, process, and follow up on critical topics.

Some adult participants spoke highly of individual SROs and their ability to engage with students in a meaningful way. Some Administrators and teachers expressed that VIP officers and SROs can provide valuable support as mediators; when done well, students can be diverted from getting in trouble with the law as SROs can help de-escalate situations and provide alternative solutions to discipline.

Students from various identities had differing opinions about the value and impacts of school-based police programs. Not all students provided specific, positive experiences about the VIP and B-RAD programs, nor

were they enthusiastic about the presence of SROs in schools. Thus, this review cannot conclude that the desired impacts of school-based programs is applicable for all GECDSB students.

4. Outcomes for Students

Students representing diverse identities do not universally recognize and support the intended outcomes of community policing. It is not evident that the current approach to police-led content delivery is the best way to reach students of all identities.

The VIP program appears to make more of an impact among students, as it includes essential content at a critical time of development (12 years of age). Of 172 students surveyed who took VIP, just under half agree it was valuable.
- o White students are more likely to express value.
- o 2SLGBTQIA+ students are least likely to express value.
- o Some students expressed that by the time they reached high school, they did not recall the program, or simply remembered that "it was about not doing drugs."

B-RAD experience was limited, with mixed reviews. Of the 90 Grade 12's who identified themselves in the survey, only 29 were able to share experiences on the B-RAD program. When asked if the program was a valuable experience, responses are split: 34% Yes, 31% Maybe, and 34% No.

Students from the focus groups explain in order to foster a relationship with them, police must first build trust. Once that trust is established, they can extend the relationship by doing fun activities that are unrelated to work. Students need to know why police are in the school in the first place. They would also like for officers to be dressed more casually instead of in their "big, chunky" uniforms.

Summary: More or Less Involvement?

The one-size-fits-all approach to community policing and police presence is not in all students' best interests. When asked about future police involvement in schools, student survey responses revealed that 46.6% of students are open to 'More involvement', while 53.4% would like 'Less' and 'No Involvement'.
> *Overwhelmingly, the following groups want less or no police involvement in school: 2SLGBTQIA+ (91%), Black/African (79%), South Asian (75%).*

Community members from the various demographic groups supported the continuation of police programs. However, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community expressed concern about the impact of the programs on students who may be uncomfortable with police presence. Community members, GECDSB staff, and police are more aligned in their view of the programs, though there is clear dissent from individuals across identities, particularly community members of racialized and marginalized groups.

A significant number of stakeholders expressed openness to participate in a process of change, and shared ideas that may address some of the existing concerns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Referencing human rights and equity principles which the GECDSB must uphold, along with the findings from students and community members gathered in this review, the following recommendations are made:

1. **GECDSB should remove all classroom-based engagements with police services in response to the finding that a majority of racialized/marginalized students report feeling unsafe with police presence in school.**
The goal is to ensure that all non-emergency police presence in schools is facilitated through an equity-focused lens that prioritizes student safety, belonging, and well-being. This means that police officers no longer make informal visits to school communities. Delivery of important non-curriculum content should be led by the school board, with police as invited guest speakers. Police are part of a school-led, community-involved team that develops content and approaches to delivering material.

2. **All police-school curriculum activities should be optional, require consent and thoroughly communicated**
When using a trauma-informed approach, students of all ages should be empowered to make choices to engage with the police. It is not uncommon to give students the choice to opt out of conversations when the content is triggering, so it is not unreasonable to apply the same concept to police presence in schools.

3. **Grade 6 VIP and Grade 9 B-RAD content should be replaced with programming that engages community members in sharing their lived experiences**
A holistic, student-centred approach to the many issues currently raised in police programming (see the second bullet) cannot be led by police. Rather, there needs to be a focus on community-building, support, and creating content that meets youth where they are at. Police can be partners in delivering this content where and when appropriate (i.e. through off-site trips, video presentations, social media/information bulletins).

4. **GECDSB should provide training for officers who visit schools and engage with students**
When police officers enter schools, they enter an educative environment. As such, they need to be made aware of what their presence means, how it impacts students, and how it might be interpreted by staff and community. Accordingly, they should receive some training that seeks to provide an equity-focused lens on their encounters as guests within the school environment.

Background

About the review: Purpose

School-based police programs involve the use of select police officers who visit schools and lead presentations regarding various social issues such as bullying, drug and alcohol use, and safety. School Resource Officers (SROs) typically enter schools to speak with students, answer questions, and build relationships. The VIP (Values, Influences, and Peers) program is offered to Grade 6 students and includes multiple police-led presentations throughout the school year focused on values and character building. The B-RAD (Bullying, Relationships, Alcohol and Drugs) program is offered in Grade 9 and includes three presentations throughout the year. It is important to note that within the Greater-Essex County District School Board (GECDSB), police programs have not been previously subject to review. Additionally, students, staff and community members have not been consulted regarding their opinions of and experiences with school-based Police programs prior to this review.

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In light of GECDSB's recent initiatives to provide equitable learning environments for all students, an external consultant LogicalOutcomes was engaged to conduct a review.

For this review, the experiences and opinions of students from racialized and marginalized identities were prioritized, as these voices have been missing within literature on SROs in Canada. A student research team was formed to ensure youth perspectives were brought into the review's design and methodology. The review team set out to explore the questions below through a combination of literature review, individual interviews, focus groups, and surveys distributed to students and community members (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents, former students).

Mandatory human rights and equity principles governing the GECDSB

This section sets out, as terms of reference, the mandatory human rights and equity principles in which GECDSB decisions and actions must be rooted.

The Legal Obligation Not to Discriminate

As part of Canada's constitution, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (the "*Charter*") supersedes all other laws and governs institutions implementing government programs, including school boards. The *Charter* guarantees the right to equality without discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, disability, sexual orientation, and other enumerated and analogous protected grounds.

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* (the "*Code*") expands the obligation not to discriminate to all employers and service providers (including education services). The *Code* prohibits discrimination in relation to "protected human rights grounds[3]" including race, ancestry, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, etc. The *Code* supersedes all other Ontario legislation (unless the legislation itself states otherwise). The *Code* supersedes the *Education Act*, and school board policies, motions, rules, and practices.

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[2] https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/letter-york-catholic-district-school-Board-review-srovip-programs
[3] https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code

School boards are legally obligated to avoid all conduct that violates the *Charter* or *Code*, including avoiding implementing or following policies, rules, directions, motions, and laws that violate student or employee human rights.

Very importantly, prohibited discrimination includes "adverse effects discrimination" which *occurs when a well intentioned or seemingly neutral rule or practice inadvertently has a disproportionately negative effect* on a person or group of people in relation to a protected human rights ground. Adverse effects discrimination often occurs by simply doing things the way they have always been done, without taking into account the impact or barriers imposed on marginalized groups. For a fulsome discussion of adverse effects discrimination, see Supreme Court of Canada decision *Fraser v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2020 SCC 28[4].

In a letter to the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB)[5] regarding their review of their SRO/VIP programs, the Chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission said:

> ...As a duty holder, the YCDSB must ensure that the *Code*-protected interests of all students are acknowledged and that values espoused by the Ontario *Human Rights Code* shape the context of any student officer engagement.
>
> To this end, the review must be informed by the lived experiences of students, parents and educators who are members of *Code*-protected groups that have historically experienced systemic barriers in the education system and their dealings with the police....
>
> ...the Ministry of Education released the Equity Action Plan in 2017. It included a three-year plan that called for parents, educators, principals, Board staff, trustees and the community to identify and eliminate discriminatory practices, systemic barriers and bias from schools and classrooms. In 2021, the Ministry released the Board Improvement and Equity Planning Tool, which identified protecting human rights and removing systemic barriers as priorities. It is critical for the YCDSB's SRO/VIP programs to be reviewed with these objectives in mind.
>
> ...Even though there was support for continuing the program, the TDSB decided to end it in 2017, in response to the concerns raised primarily by *Code*-protected groups. This conclusion was reasonable, as the duty to protect the interests all students requires a careful balancing of rights and a commitment to ending programs that have a negative impact on student well-being.
> ...
>
> The YCDSB's decision to review the SRO program should carefully consider the research conducted to date, consultation with local voices, and all options including ending the program. Robust terms of reference, driven by human rights principles and equity-seeking strategies, must be employed to make sure all students can benefit from a welcoming school environment.

GECDSB Policy, Regulation, and Commitments

The GECDSB Equity and Inclusive Education Policy[6] and Regulation[7] state that the GECDSB affirms and upholds the principles of respect for human rights enshrined in the *Charter* and *Code*, that students and staff have the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination where the spirit of equity prevails, and that the Board:
- understands that equity is critical to the achievement of successful outcomes for all;

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[4] https://decisions.scc-csc.ca/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/18510/index.do Key quotations from the *Fraser* decision are included in Appendix 6.

[5] https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/letter-york-catholic-district-school-board-review-srovip-programs

[6] https://www.publicboard.ca/en/about-gecdsb/Policies-and-Regulations/Policies/Equity-and-Inclusive-Education-P-AD-38.pdf

[7] https://www.publicboard.ca/en/about-gecdsb/Policies-and-Regulations/Regulations/Equity-and-Inclusive-Education-R-AD-38.pdf

- is committed to equitable access, treatment, and outcomes for all and a culture where staff and students can work and learn in an environment free from discrimination;
- is committed to the values of fairness, equity, inclusion and respect for all and is committed to embedding Equity and Inclusive Education into all board policies, programs, guidelines and practices;
- will identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and barriers in its policies, programs, and practices to fulfill the requirements of existing regulations, Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy[8] (The "Equity Strategy"), Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119[9], and the *Code*;
- is committed to using comprehensive, valid, and reliable data to identify the root causes of barriers to student achievement and to removing identified discrimination and barriers;
- recognizes that the Equity Strategy requires boards to address discrimination by using an equity lens and *Code* principles to examine their policies and practices; and
- understands that equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

In GECDSB's Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy[10], launched in the Spring of 2022, the Director of Education apologized to the Black community and acknowledged systemic inequities and oppressive policies that have negatively affected Black communities. The Director made a commitment that the Board would do better, noting that the Board aspires to provide everyone with safe spaces to learn and work, and that doing so would require bold action and the acceptance of change. There is a commitment to redress previous failures, and increase the potential for an environment of equity and inclusive education wherein racial equity can be realized.

The Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy sets out eight Guiding Principles including:

4. Urgent change is needed: The strategy will be implemented with urgency, recognizing that generations of Black students in Windsor and Essex County have experienced anti-Black racism in education. While change is hard and takes time, it is more likely to be embraced by staff when it is treated as a priority and a sense of urgency is felt at all levels of the Board.

5. Ideology and culture need to change, not only behaviours: In order to change outcomes for Black students, the ideology and culture that sustain anti-Black racism need to change, not simply the behaviours of individuals.

The Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy includes five priorities including:

Priority 2: Foster Black-affirming and anti-racist learning and working environments.
GECDSB will foster belonging and dismantle oppressive systems that maintain marginalization...School leaders and managers throughout the organization will also foster anti-racist and inclusive learning and working environments...

This will also require that all staff are willing and able to competently, confidently, and courageously interrupt and address acts of interpersonal anti-Black racism when they do occur, and to advocate for changes to harmful school policies and practices.

Priority 4: Inspire and support Black student success.

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[8] https://files.ontario.ca/edu-equity-inclusive-education-strategy-2009-en-2022-01-13.pdf

[9] https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-119

[10] https://www.publicboard.ca/en/family-and-community-support/dismantling-anti-black-racism-strategy.aspx

GECDSB recognizes that Black students may be underperforming because they experience barriers to academic success. As such, GECDSB will identify and remove these barriers, close opportunity gaps, and foster welcoming learning environments that inspire Black student success.

These commitments align with the Board's Equity and Inclusive Education Policy and Procedure, as well as government directions.

Direction from the Government and the Ontario College of Teachers

The preamble to the *Safe and Accepting Schools Act, 2012*[11] states, in part, that the people of Ontario and the Legislative Assembly:

- Believe that all students should feel safe at school and deserve a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability;
- Believe that a healthy, safe and inclusive learning environment where all students feel accepted is a necessary condition for student success;
- Understand that students cannot be expected to reach their full potential in an environment where they feel insecure or intimidated; and
- Acknowledge that there is a need for stronger action to create a safe and inclusive environment in all schools, and to support all students.

The following year, the Ministry of Education issued *Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119* ("PPM 119")[12] which provides, in part:

On April 6, 2009, the Minister of Education released *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (hereafter referred to as "the strategy"). This document sets out a vision for an equitable and inclusive education system. The action plan contained in the document focuses on respecting diversity, promoting inclusive education, and identifying and eliminating discriminatory biases, systemic barriers, and power dynamics that limit students' learning, growth, and contribution to society. These barriers and biases, whether overt or subtle, intentional or unintentional, need to be identified and addressed.

In addition, it is now recognized that such factors as race, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, gender, and class can intersect to create additional barriers for some students....

... evidence indicates that some groups of students continue to encounter discriminatory barriers to learning.

The strategy is designed to promote fundamental human rights as described in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, with which school boards are already required to comply....

Through cyclical policy reviews, boards will embed the principles of equity and inclusive education in all their other policies, programs, guidelines, and practices, so that an equity and inclusive education focus is an integral part of every board's operations and permeates everything that happens in its schools.

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[11] https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-40/session-1/bill-13#:~:text=include%20the%20following%3A-,1.,on%20homophobia%2C%20transphobia%20or%20biphobia.
[12] https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-119

PPM 119 sets out requirements for boards to help ensure the principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in all aspects of board and school operations, and that discriminatory biases and systemic barriers are identified and eliminated. The goal is to support positive learning environments where all members of the school community feel safe, included, welcomed, and accepted.

In its Professional Advisory on Anti-Black Racism[13], the Ontario College of Teachers reiterates the above values and government direction, and says:

> A welcoming learning environment for Black students requires an understanding of the importance of dismantling oppressive, colonial attitudes and practices.
> …
> Moreover, change will not occur in the education system if one is not prepared to critically self-reflect on the ways in which positions of power and privilege perpetuate and contribute to systemic racism.

Review scope

In this review, 'Community Police Presence and Programs' includes:

1. Grade 6 Values Influences and Peers (VIP). Multiple presentations over the Grade 6 year, with a certificate and graduation ceremony.
2. Grade 9 B-RAD. One presentation for each topic: Bullying, Relationships, Alcohol, and Drugs, early in the Grade 9 school year.
3. 'High School Resource Officer' (SRO). The SRO occasionally visits the school community, gives presentations, speaks to classrooms, socializes with students in the hallways, assists administrators and teachers with incidents or advice, attends school events, and more. Every few years, each school is assigned a new SRO.
4. Other police-led presentations.

The GECDSB's VIP, B-RAD and community policing programs were largely paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these services were offered virtually during this time. In March 2022, this pause was extended to undergo a review and evaluate whether these programs continue to meet the needs of students, staff, and community members.

This review included a multi-method analysis of the role and responsibilities of School Resource Officers (SROs), their participation in the school environment, and the community's feelings about their presence in schools.

30 interviews with community members, including police, staff, administrators, parents, and those involved in school committees, were completed. Four virtual focus groups were held, three of which were conducted with students at GECDSB schools. The final focus group was held with members of the Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Implementation Committee. The optional community survey gathered thousands of responses from parents, staff (administrators, teachers, counsellors), former students and others. Hundreds of secondary school students provided their input on the optional student survey.

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[13] https://www.oct.ca/-/media/PDF/professional_advisory_ABR/Professional_Advisory_ABR_EN.pdf

Methods and approaches

Participant selection

The review consulted the following groups of stakeholders, using individual interviews, focus groups, and surveys:

Students	Options to participate
All secondary students across 13 schools (*Grade 12 were targeted for both VIP and BRAD experience)*	Student survey (posted on Edsby)
Student Senate (via staff invite)	Student research team, focus groups
CYF and FNMI Students (via staff invite)	Student research team, focus groups
GSA Students (via staff invite)	Focus groups
Students with an IEP (via staff invite)	Focus groups
Elementary students *(not targeted)*	Community survey

School Board
Who: 1 Director, 9 Superintendents, 1 Human Rights and Equity System Advisor
Role: Provide project guidance, survey review, and recommendations review

Police Services
6 officers were engaged for individual interviews and shared course content from VIP and Unite presentations.

GECDSB Community Members
-Individual interviews were conducted with administrators, teachers, parents, and non-parent committee and community members.
-Administrators, teachers, parents, and other community members were invited to respond to a community survey.
-The DABR Implementation Committee was invited to a focus group.

Review approaches

This review was informed by the lived experiences of students, parents and educators who are members of Ontario Human Rights Code-protected groups that have historically experienced systemic barriers in the education system and their interactions with the police[14].

Using a social equity lens, this review aimed to center the voices of those who are typically unheard, particularly those who do not have equal opportunities for success, and marginalized groups who are more likely to have negative experiences or feelings concerning the police. These groups are referenced as 'racialized and marginalized' in this report, also 'Code-Protected' groups, as you'll read in the section below on the GECDSB's responsibility to uphold the Ontario Human Rights Code. The review team intentionally

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[14] Statement influenced from the Chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission letter to the York District Catholic District School Board.

emphasized the voices of groups who are most likely to be negatively impacted by police services, including members of the school community who identify as Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQIA+, and/or people with disabilities. Students were also prioritized during this review, which acknowledges that students are often regarded as primary benefactors of community policing programs, but are seldom provided with opportunities to contribute to reviews and evaluations.

In addition to findings from the GECDSB community, the recommendations are influenced by the responsibilities of the GECDSB to provide safe, affirming, education spaces free from discrimination, guided by the following:

- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- GECDSB Equity and Inclusive Education Policy, Regulation, and commitments
- GECDSB Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy
- Ontario Government: Safe and Accepting Schools Act
- Ontario Ministry of Education: Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119
- Ontario College of Teachers Professional Advisory on Anti-Black Racism

Trauma-informed data collection

Due to the sensitive subject matter, and the intent to respectfully engage adults and youth from racialized and marginalized backgrounds, the review team considered aspects of trauma-informed research that could be included. Accordingly, trauma-informed approaches to data collection, as well as aspects of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), were combined into the following list that was revisited during the design and implementation of each method:

1. Acknowledge past and present injustices of research, police, and school environments
2. Clearly describe the project purpose and its intended outcomes
3. Create an accessible consent statement that assures confidentiality and anonymity
4. Provide access to trauma-informed support during and after the research process
5. Focus on qualitative data: stories, narratives, and lived experiences
6. Allow participants to stop, skip, or enable withdrawal at any time
7. All questions are optional
   Provide multi-modal options for outreach and response (i.e. posters, email, text, one-on-one interview, focus group).

Youth Engagement: Student Research Team
"Nothing about us, without us" [15]

Students are directly affected by school-based community policing programs. It was therefore important that students actively contributed to the review. To ensure that student voices were amplified, a student research team was formed. School staff with roles as student counsellors were invited to share the opportunity to participate in the review with students. Those who were interested in participating reached out to the review team.

The student research team consisted of 10 Students in Grades 11 and 12. These students represented diverse identities and came from a handful of GECDSB schools. After providing their consent (including a parent's signature), students engaged in various research-based tasks over the course of 6 weeks. They

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[15] Attributed to Michael Masutha and William Rowland, two leaders of Disabled People South Africa c.1993, separately invoked the

spent no more than 10 hours of their time. Students were offered volunteer hours or an honorarium for their efforts. Student involvement included:

- Self-study on research ethics, research methods, and the project purpose
- Participation in virtual project meetings
- Providing input on data collection methods
- Informing the outreach plan
- Reviewing data collection tools
- Supporting outreach at their school
- Debriefing with research consultant on student survey findings

Research methods

Literature scan

A literature scan was conducted to gain information about community policing and its role in educational settings, including the roles and responsibilities of School Resource Officers (SROs). Research studies in Canada and the United States were reviewed, including scholarly and peer-reviewed articles, and grey literature (common grey literature publication types include reports, working papers, government documents, white papers and evaluations). Canadian perspectives were prioritized in the scan. Various reports published for Canadian school boards regarding community policing programs were collected and analyzed. Themes were then identified about community policing and its role within schools. These themes were used to inform review questions asked in surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Experiences from racialized and marginalized students is a gap in existing literature. In this review, data collection efforts were intentional to reach GECDSB students of those identities.

See the Appendix for literature scan with references and summary.

Individual interviews

Data gathered from individual interviews helped to inform survey and focus group design. Some interviewees were suggested by the Board, while others were referred to the review team via interviewees. Participants were not asked to disclose their social identities (race, gender, disability etc.), although some participants voluntarily did so. Non-GECDSB and police employed participants were offered an honorarium for their time.

Thirty interviews were conducted:
- 6 Police Officers: 4 Windsor Police Service (WPS), 1 Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), 1 LaSalle Police Services
- 7 Administrators: 3 Elementary, 4 Secondary; 5 from WPS served schools, 2 from OPP
- 11 Staff: 8 Teachers (5 Secondary, 3 Elementary), 3 Counsellors (Secondary)
- 6 Community Members: Parent and/or individual engaged through school committee, other organizations.

Interviews and focus group notes were shared with a separate member of the review team, who compiled a summary of results. Summaries (never raw data) were shared with the GECDSB Senior Team for discussion.

See Appendix for interview protocol and findings summary.

Community survey

Over 3000 individuals responded to a community survey shared through a public link. People were encouraged to share the survey link with other community members. Participants were given the option of disclosing identities including race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and disability.

See Appendix for community survey questions and respondent summary.

Student survey

600 students participated in an optional student survey posted on an education data platform known as 'Edsby', although only approximately 250 students provided a response to every question. Students required a login to access the survey. Participants were given the option of disclosing identities including race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and disability. School administrators and teachers encouraged students to complete the optional survey.

See Appendix for student survey questions and respondent summary.

Focus groups

Four focus groups were held. Students were invited to participate in focus groups based on their identity, with a focus on Grade 12 students. Invitations were sent to all Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) lead teachers, Student Senate staff leads, Create Your Future (CYF) and First Nation, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) counsellors, the Superintendent of Special Education, and others. Staff were encouraged to share the invitation with other staff, and reach out directly to students to explain the opportunity. A curated list of Windsor-area mental health supports was provided to students. Participants were offered a gift card for 30-60 minutes of discussion time.

Three groups were held for secondary students, facilitated by youth engagement experts from the Students Commission of Canada[16]:

- Eight Grade 11 and 12 students with various identities from multiple secondary schools who participate in the Create your future program
- Six students of various identities who participate in School Within a College
- Twelve students with an IEP: Grade 10, 11, 12

The fourth focus group consisted of three adults from the Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Implementation Committee and was facilitated virtually by the review team. Participants were offered an honorarium for an hour of their time.

See Appendix for focus group protocol and student findings summary.

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[16] https://www.studentscommission.ca/en

Review limitations

The review team at LogicalOutcomes focused on engaging Grade 12 students through focus groups, a student research team, and a student survey. Elementary students were intentionally not engaged in this review, based on the following:

- Police presence and programming were delivered in GECDSB schools until late 2019 due to the onset of the pandemic. As a result, only Grade 12 students would have experienced Grade 9 B-RAD programming and the High School Resource Officer (or SRO). Grade 9 students and older experienced Grade 6 VIP programming.
- SROs are only present in high schools.
- The review was performed virtually, and relied on GECDSB staff to engage and be present with students for focus groups, and to encourage student survey participation.

The review team acknowledges that a lack of on-the-ground outreach in the Windsor area may have prevented the engagement of the hardest-to-reach youth. Although undocumented students may have participated in the survey, this review did not explicitly engage undocumented students. However, teachers, parents and community members shared experiences on their behalf.

The optional community survey also has limitations. Its distribution may not have been comprehensive (i.e., all teachers and all parents may not have received it) and participation may be limited to those who are already quite engaged in the school community. Once the survey was closed, it was reviewed for suspicious activity (i.e. very short responses, odd time of day, repetition of answer, selection of all positive or all negative etc.). No suspicious activity was detected.

Findings

Notes on survey analysis

See the appendix for details on the demographic make up of community members and students who responded to the surveys. In this report, attempts have been made to remove all personally identifying comments, and hide results where the number of people who responded is less than 10.

More identity categories were asked in the surveys than are shown here. Categories shown in this report are influenced by (1) the number of respondents, ensuring there were always more than 10 responses (2) analysis of Windsor area population by racial identity[17] (which aligns with the most responded to categories of after the dominant majority White: Black/African, South Asian, Middle Eastern). And (3) Influenced by the comprehensive report from the Ottawa Carleton District School Board 'Policy and Practice Review of Police Involvement in Schools ' in which three identity domains are used in analysis: Race, Gender, and Disability. Although religion and immigration status were asked in the survey, it was determined by the review team, after reflecting on numerous similar studies, these were not the appropriate categories to present in analysis.

1. Safety and presence

Do students of all identities feel safe at school in the presence of uniformed police officers?

Findings related to this research question were gathered from the responses to the student survey and the student focus groups. Student focus groups highlighted the perspectives of students who identified as racialized and/or marginalized and included a group of students with disabilities.

General perceptions on safety in school

To begin, secondary students were asked for general perceptions on safety in their school. This 'warm up' question set the stage for questions to follow on how police interactions and presence impacted their feelings of safety. Just over half of secondary students who responded to the survey feel "Very Safe" at their school. An identity analysis shows that *students who identify as Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+ and students having a Disability are less likely to feel safe in general* (higher response in the 'somewhat safe' and 'somewhat unsafe' categories).

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[17] Statistics Canada (2022), the Windsor population of 230,660 people includes 23% visible minorities, comprised of 30% Arab, 28% Black, 20% South Asian, and 25% Other Asian people

Chart. *"In general, do you feel safe at school?"*
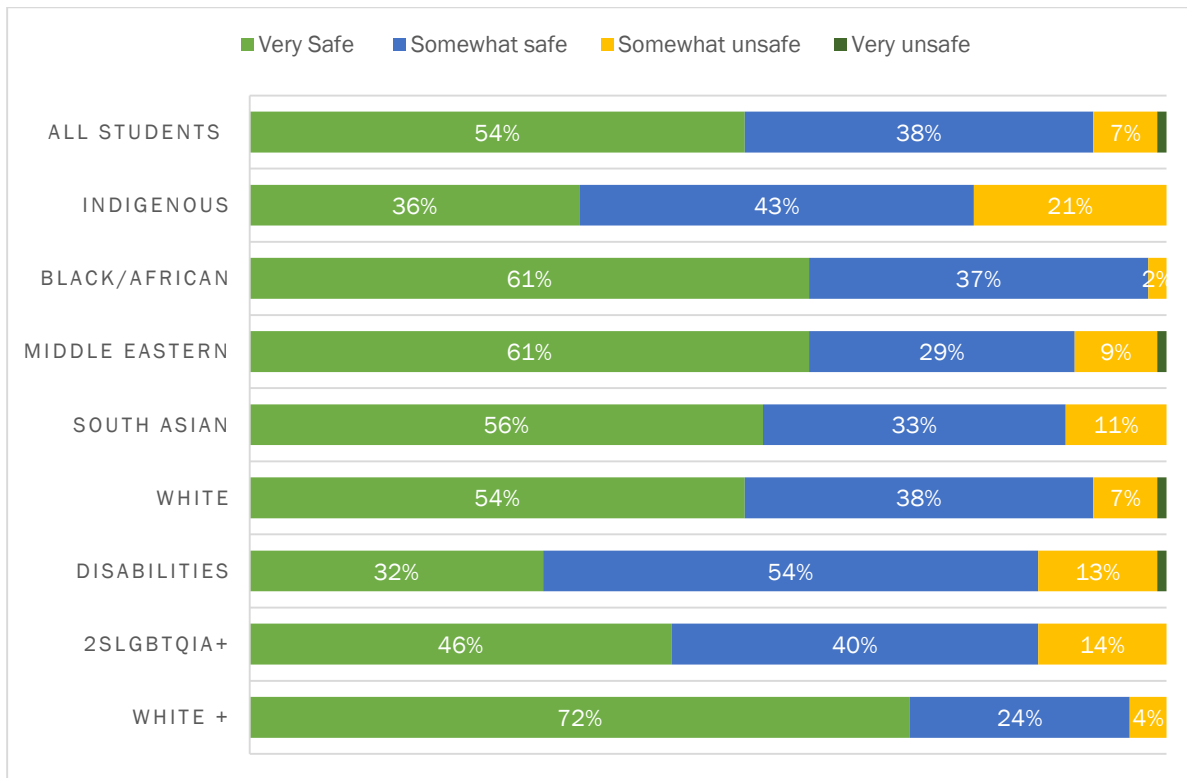
	Very Safe	Somewhat safe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe
ALL STUDENTS	54%	38%	7%	
INDIGENOUS	36%	43%	21%	
BLACK/AFRICAN	61%	37%	2%	
MIDDLE EASTERN	61%	29%	9%	
SOUTH ASIAN	56%	33%	11%	
WHITE	54%	38%	7%	
DISABILITIES	32%	54%	13%	
2SLGBTQIA+	46%	40%	14%	
WHITE +	72%	24%	4%	

The 'White +' category looks at the GECDSB secondary student 'dominant majority;' students who selected 'White' for race plus 'No' for disability plus 'straight/heterosexual' for sexuality.

For students who answered "Somewhat Safe", "Somewhat Unsafe", and "Very Unsafe", a follow-up question was asked: *What do you need to feel safe at school?* Students shared the following themes:

- Students rely on their friends to feel safe.
- Students expressed their concern with student violence, gossip/emotional abuse, bullying, and vaping/drug use. Students are asking for support from the school board, administrators, teachers, the police, and other students, to work together.
- Some students wanted more physical security in the school building: adult presence, more locked doors, cameras etc. Outside of the classroom, students need safer hallways and bathrooms.
- People who act with violence (physical, verbal) towards others should not be welcomed back.
- In general, students of different identities want a school that is free from discrimination of all forms; they recognize everybody in the school has a role to play and work to do.
- Students want a good, positive, calm environment to support their learning, and their mental health.

As one student in a focus group explained, someone's feeling of safety is dependent on their personal experience: some people have nothing to worry about while others may be affected by several external and/or internal factors. Teachers, Create Your Future and other student counsellors, administrators, child and youth workers, and secretaries were all cited as being people who helped students feel safe at school.

Focus group participants echoed similar safety concerns to the student body: some students felt unsafe at school because physical violence has occurred before. Students feel unsafe in the presence of weapons. One student felt unsafe because incidents may not be dealt with until it is too late. Some students explain that they are fearful of bullying, gang threats, and being jumped. Being in a small school environment where everyone knows each other can also make students feel unsafe because rumors can spread quickly and be far-reaching.

Secondary student feelings on police presence and their safety

When asked about their feelings when they see a police officer, students of all identities shared mixed feelings:

- South Asian and 2SLGBTQIA+ students expressed 'very unsafe' feelings around police officers in their school, 31% and 19% respectively.
- Combining the categories of 'somewhat unsafe and very unsafe,' 86% of 2SLGBTQIA+, 69% of Black/African, and 75% of South Asian students surveyed do not feel safe around police in their school. The majority of students with disabilities and Indigenous students do not express feelings of safety around police in their school.
- Students who are white and do not have a disability and do not identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ were unlikely to identify feeling unsafe (somewhat and very unsafe combined 20%).

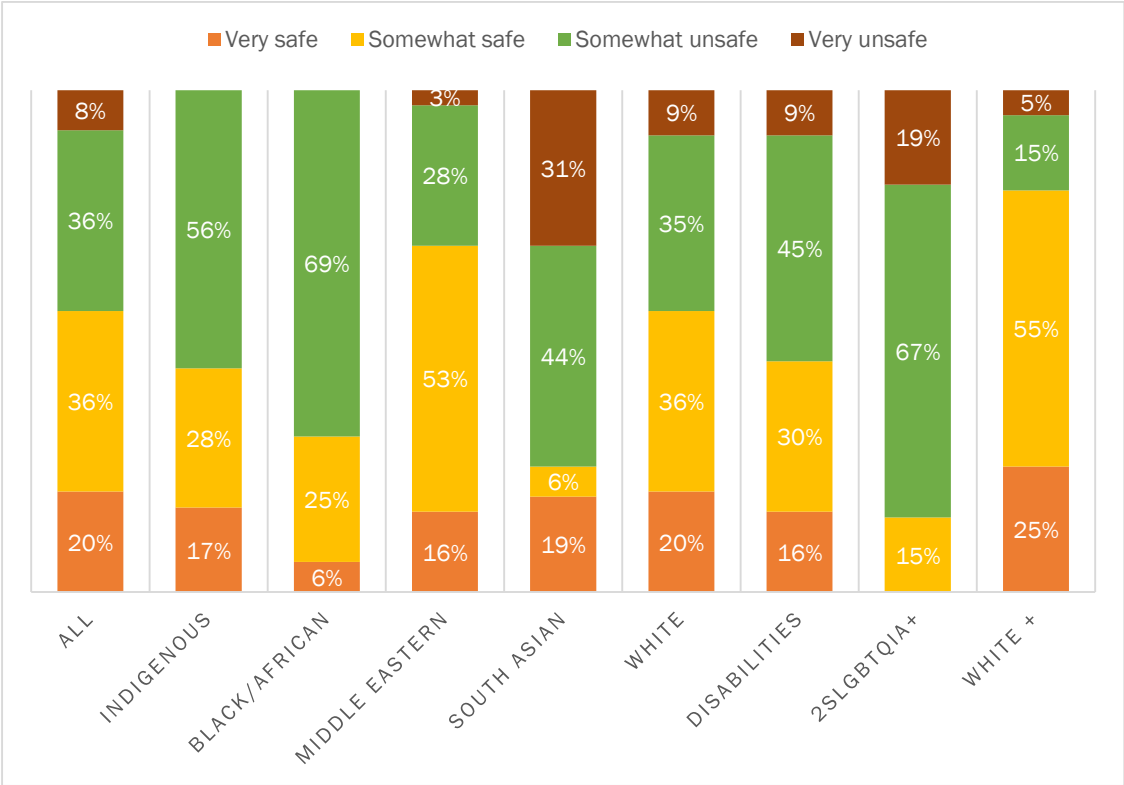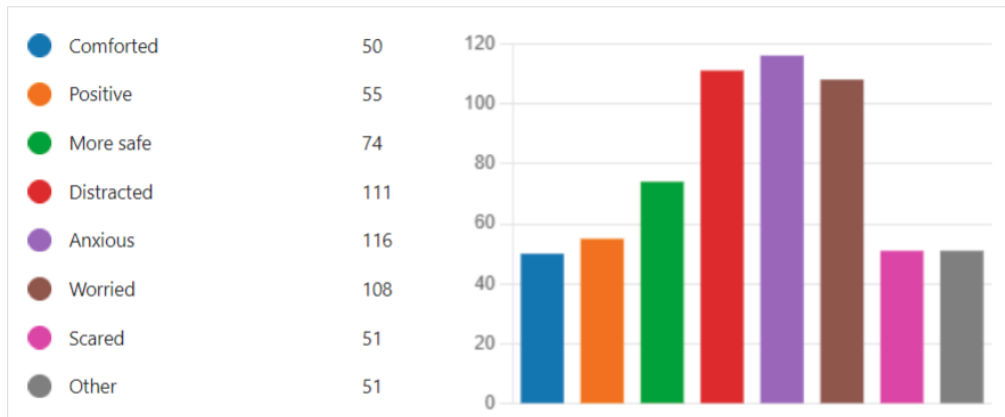Chart. 'How does seeing a police officer at school make you feel?'

Chart. 'If you see an officer at school, how do you feel?'

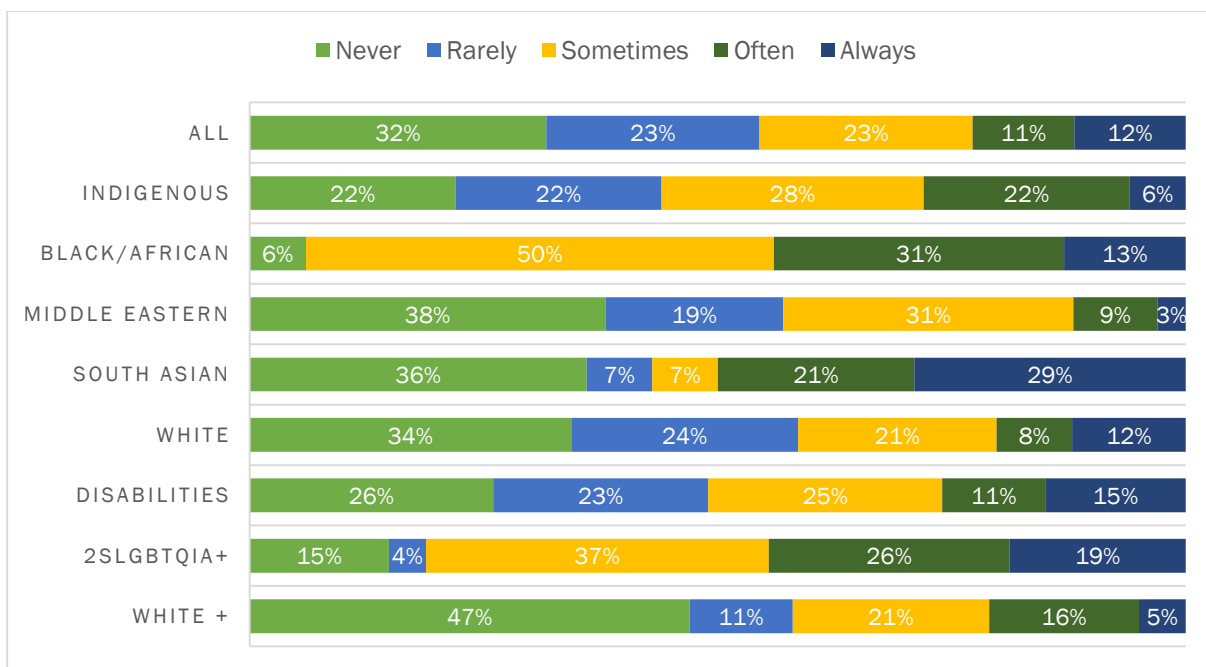|	
Comforted	50
Positive	55
More safe	74
Distracted	111
Anxious	116
Worried	108
Scared	51
Other	51

Students were asked to select as many options as they wished to express how they feel when they see an officer in their school. The most selected answers are distracted, anxious, and worried.

- Of the 29 indigenous students who responded, 38% feel anxious, and 21% feel worried.
- Of the 22 Black/African students who responded, 45% feel anxious, and 23% feel worried.
- Of the 48 2SLGBTQIA+ students, 40% feel anxious, and 31% feel worried.
- Of the 201 White students, 34% feel anxious and 33% feel worried.

While a quarter of all students would try to avoid an officer at school (combination of 'Often' and 'Always'), the following students are more likely to avoid: South Asian (50%), 2SLGBTQIA+ (45%), Black/African (44%). When combined with 'Sometimes', 94% of Black students and 82% of 2SLGBTQIA+ students would Sometimes, Often or Always avoid police in their school.

Chart. 'When you see an officer at school, do you avoid them?'

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
ALL	32%	23%	23%	11%	12%
INDIGENOUS	22%	22%	28%	22%	6%
BLACK/AFRICAN	6%		50%	31%	13%
MIDDLE EASTERN	38%	19%	31%	9%	3%
SOUTH ASIAN	36%	7%	7%	21%	29%
WHITE	34%	24%	21%	8%	12%
DISABILITIES	26%	23%	25%	11%	15%
2SLGBTQIA+	15%	4%	37%	26%	19%
WHITE +	47%	11%	21%	16%	5%

A selection of secondary student comments demonstrates the wide range of feelings around police presence in schools:

> I don't really understand why they come to the school unless there is a legitimate issue.

> I think that getting more involvement with the police in the school will help some students feel more safe.

> I believe that along with positive interactions with police in schools can be beneficial, but will not solve worries over police hostility by itself. I think that along with positive police engagements in schools, there should be more courses for police to educate them regarding the history of police and their negative impact on many races in the past, as well as training them in understanding how a person of a different race may feel when confronted by the police and how they can respond to this in a less harmful and thoughtful way.

> Please be mindful in just what type of officer is assigned to the school, we have a lot of diversity here and incidents like the George Floyd situation are always a worry with the police. The officer should be racially UNBIASED and correctly trained.

> As someone who didn't know that these officers were school resource officers, I felt scared that there was something going on in the school. It may be better if they wore a vest or something identifying them as someone to talk to and not be afraid of. I can also say that I have only ever seen white male police officers at our school and it could be helpful to have females and BIPOC people to make students feel more comfortable speaking to them.

> Both safe and secure and unsafe at the same time

> I see them as a safe person to be around, but it feels really weird to have an officer here.

> I usually wonder why they are there if I see them and if something happened in the school that is worrisome or potentially threatening to Students. It is usually a negative train of thoughts rather than positive.

> It was cool hearing the stories, but still will forever hate cops no matter who they are for what they've done to me and my family. I'm genuinely petrified of them and will very obviously try to leave the area they are in.

> I don't like to see police officers in our school, especially with all the gear they wear. If they wore less scary or demanding clothing it would be different

Community feelings regarding safety and presence

The community survey gathered a number of perspectives that are similarly mixed in their feelings regarding police presence in schools:

> I know that many newcomers are fearful of government and police based on their own lived experiences from their homelands AND this is furthered by legitimate over-policing of marginalized and racialized groups in Canada.

> Police are enforcement of the law. Children are in school for learning and to socialize with peers. I am actually outraged at the idea of paying a full-time officer to be in schools. I have worked in schools with crime rates far out exceeding anything of Windsor, and we did not have police in our schools. Police presence sets up no building relationships and is there to enforce law and order. It is a giant overstep that I am repulsed by.

A collaboration of WPS with a youth-friendly agency such as New Beginnings could alleviate anxiety of police presence.

Social workers and other counsellors have a role or are employed to support students to educate and discuss. It isn't the role of police officers who carry weapons to do this.

As an educator, I didn't feel safer with an SRO in schools ever. They aren't helping me on a day-to-day basis. They aren't protecting anyone more than they would, not preventing crimes. Sometimes the Principal/VP can handle the conflict without needing this authoritative force.

They don't have consistent expertise in dealing with trauma, or marginalized families, also understanding many of those families with negative experienced with police, they need a different approach. It would improve to know if they [SRO] had specialized training (1) working with students of the right age (2) equity and inclusion lenses (3) community-partnership building, with role in education.

Chart. Community members share mixed feelings 'When you think about or see Police Officers in school, how does this make you feel?'
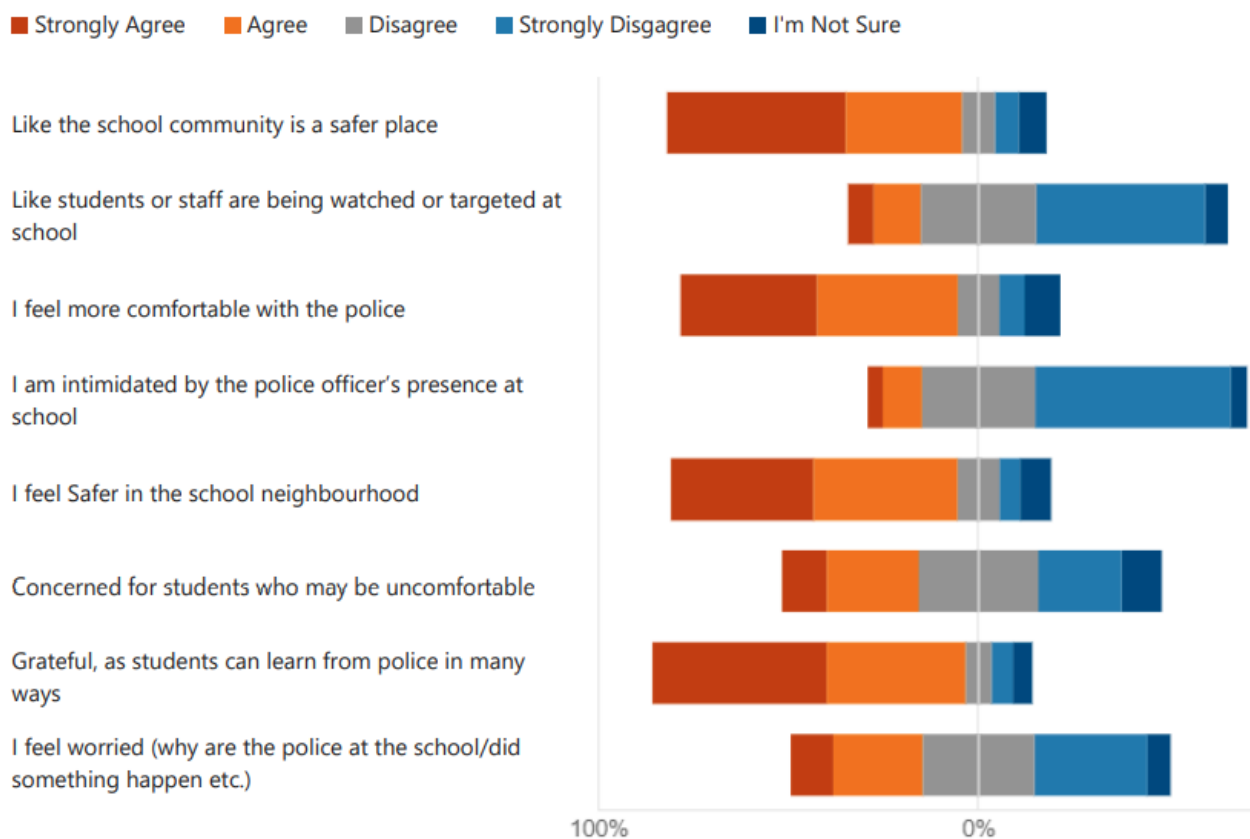
The police believe their presence is helpful to deter bad behavior and de-escalate incidents, and that uniforms are a necessary part of the role.

Presence helps to deter incidents, helps with teachers. If they are involved early, sometimes the presence can help to resolve something before it may escalate. - Police officer

We want them [public] to be comfortable with the uniform, to see the officer behind it. There are benefits to both [Uniform and not wearing one]. It's difficult to support this [wearing plain clothes in schools]. We do wear plain clothes for outside events, or in the community. Sometimes we could mix it up, but I don't want to discount the impact of the uniform. – Police officer

Summary: Safety and Presence

Secondary students do not agree that the presence of police in their school leads to enhanced safety. Some students believe police response may help with issues of violence and bullying, while others see school staff playing a key role in de-escalation and making the school environment safer. When secondary students see a police officer, they have mixed reactions including feeling distracted, anxious, and worried. Police uniforms and weapons contribute to increased negative feelings. Participants in this review ask, can SROs visit without their uniform? This question was posed to a handful of Police Officers, who expressed discomfort with being on duty in plain clothes.

2. Program perceptions and outcomes

PART 1. PERCEPTIONS
How is the current community police programming perceived by GECDSB stakeholders?

Perceptions and intended outcomes from police presence and programs were gathered from interviews with police officers, administrators, teachers, and student counsellors who had pre-pandemic experiences with the programs. For anonymity, sometimes an administrator, teacher, or other employee is referred to as 'staff.' Selections from the community survey are also included below. Due to their limited experiences with SROs and programs, student perceptions are not shared here.

According to the GECDSB'S Safe Schools Policy Protocol (2018)[18], some of the roles and responsibilities of police officers in GECDSB schools include:
- Assisting in the development of young people's understanding of good citizenship
- Promoting and fostering the prevention and reduction of crime, both against and committed by young people
- Providing information on community safety issues
- Diverting young people away from crime and antisocial behaviour
- Working in partnership with other government and community-based organizations to support positive youth development

Perceptions of community policing and its presence in GECDSB schools varied significantly. When asked to state the purpose of school police programs and the role of SROs, interview participants[19] shared the following:

1. Build connections with students, provide mentorship

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[18] Police–School Protocol for Windsor-Essex County. (2018). Greater-Essex County District School Board. (n.d.). https://cdn5-ss19.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_58369/File/Schools/Safe%20Schools/safe-schools-policy-protocol.pdf

[19] Police officers, administrators, teachers, counsellors, parents of GECDSB students

2. Educate students about social issues through formal information presentations and informal day-to-day interactions
3. Promote a positive image of police and break down barriers for people who are afraid of police
4. Maintain order in the school, "keep the school safe", provide mediation
5. Keep students out of the criminal justice system

Relationship building and education

Relationship building and educating students were the two most widely cited objectives of SRO programs. SROs build relationships with students by talking to them, delivering presentations, attending events, presenting awards, and sometimes becoming involved in extra-curricular activities. Officers aim to educate students on selected topics such as bullying, drugs, smoking/vaping, social media, and the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA). Three of the six police officers interviewed suggested that a key function of SRO programs is to serve as positive role models to students.

> *As community officers, we have to address whatever issue is coming down the pipe.*
> *Adults are behind the eight ball on issues… Having students dictate the topics would be great. What are their concerns? That is the whole point of this. - Police officer*

Positive image of police and breaking down barriers

Police shared that SRO programs can promote a positive image of police officers. One staff stated that having uniformed officers in schools can "demystify policing" and show that police officers can be approachable. An officer suggested that having SRO programs can allow students to have positive interactions with police, which can help to dispel negative stereotypes about police. These participants emphasized that SRO programs can ultimately promote a positive image of police, thereby fostering better relationships within the community

> *It's more important than ever for students to have good role models, have some faith in adults be restored. Kids have a valid reason to be disgusted with adults these days, they are so exposed to media. – Police officer*

One racialized staff highlighted the importance of seeing IBPOC (Indigenous, Black, People of Colour) officers in the school. The presence of diverse officers was seen as a way to promote policing as a viable career for marginalized students, demonstrating that police officers can be positive role models. A handful of participants who identified as racialized or marginalized, believe that inviting visibly diverse officers to school events is appreciated by staff and students of racialized and marginalized backgrounds.

One staff insists that the presence of diverse officers should be balanced by acknowledging the reality that the police (WPS for example[20]), do not reflect the diversity of the communities they serve:

> *Their best [Black] officer will speak to the [Black] students in school. On the street, officers won't be acting in the same way. They lull students into feeling a certain way. A false sense of security. It's kind of like a show, very performative. – Staff*

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[20] Over 80% of WPS officers are male, and over 90% of the entire force are white.
https://www.police.windsor.on.ca/about/wps/Documents/2018%20Windsor%20Police%20Service%20Workplace%20Census%20%20-%20Summary%20Report.pdf

WPS likes to put all the racialized and women police in pictures. But in reality, it's really white men, you expect diversity but don't see it on the streets. - Staff

Facilitate order and mediation; keeping students out of criminal justice system

Although participants stated that SROs are not there as disciplinarians, a few suggested that their presence can facilitate order. One officer stated that SROs can promote order by talking to students and reminding them of the rules and expectations. One staff shared this sentiment, stating: "Students are more on point when they [SROs] are here". Nonetheless, most participants emphasized that SROs are not there to discipline students; other officers are called in if an incident requires police intervention (as per the 'Police role in schools' protocol').

Two police officers also suggested that SROs can provide mediation. One police officer suggested that by talking to students after an incident or before something happens, SROs can help divert students away from the criminal justice system. A few officers expressed how important it was to keep youth "out of paperwork", and that they would do everything they could to avoid involving students in the court system.

Many community members, including teachers and parents, shared their positive perceptions of police presence and programs in schools through the community survey.

Bringing to students a variety of topics of safety knowledge, including school safety, out-of-school safety, laws and crimes in general, etc. Those are extremely important and influential knowledge that would benefit the young students their whole life and thus impact the society as a whole positively.

As an administrator, I have seen the value of police presentations and visits. Programs such as VIP are invaluable. Students also enjoyed the summer cop camp.

Community police officers have the ability to steer kids away from bad actions. They can be a positive influence on the school community. But it has to be the right police officer.

Police have so much information and training. Recently, the K-9 unit came in to tell us about their jobs. They brought dogs and students were very engaged. Last year the OPP was in teaching about what police do as community helpers. The kids were very excited for a chance to share knowledge, ask questions, and check out the police car. In the last one, officers from the drugs unit came in to make a presentation about fentanyl.

Overall, community perceptions align with how police and school staff perceive the program. In the survey, when asked *"What should police be doing in schools?"* the top 3 preferred activities are:

- Build relationships and support
- Respond to emergencies[21]
- Give presentations on school safety

Community members raised other ideas on how police may or may not be involved in schools:

Being present for safety during dances and other night time events.

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[21] police response falls under the 'Police-School Protocol for Windsor-Essex County 2018' and is outside of the scope for this review.

Hold round tables to educate students (and themselves) and respond to their questions and concerns in respectful inclusive way.

Provide at least a one-time, one-on-one meeting with every student in the school and interact with them in a positive way, to personally explain the benefits of police presence in school, and to answer any general questions the student may have. This is because most kids will never have the opportunity to discuss these things with actual officers, if not for opportunities like this. EACH student should feel a personal connection with an assigned officer.

In a limited, non-continuous, information and outreach capacity, make the services police provide available to students that may require their assistance.

Give back to students, put on a BBQ, or an event to interact with families and students.

Discuss careers in policing, dispatch, maintenance and administration. Letting students know this could be a career for them often helps them relate better to police officers and there's many more related careers to policing than just officers in uniform.

Collaborate with other school related disciplines like social work and behaviour to be more community and relationship driven as opposed to spending most of their time with administrators in the building.

Community feedback that aligns with 'no police involvement' is reflected upon in the 'Findings summary' section.

No evidence of increased disciplinary action

This review did not receive any information that suggests SRO involvement in GECDSB schools has resulted in an increase of suspensions, arrests, or criminal charges of students. Nonetheless, in the community survey concerns were shared about "too much police presence" and becoming "like the United States". Community members cautioned against SRO involvement in discipline; over-involvement of SROs in relation to discipline could potentially increase the number of suspensions or contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline:

As long as it doesn't turn into an American thing where they're there all the time, except here they don't need to be... it's fine.

I would not want to see police in schools like they are in the U.S. (Armed and looking for trouble).

The police do not belong in schools. Period. We are not America and should stop trying to be. Police in schools does not stop issues but only creates further problems.

In some Canadian jurisdictions (i.e. other School Boards who completed similar reviews) it was demonstrated that SRO involvement increased disciplinary-involvement (i.e. suspensions and arrests), and those activities unequally targeting racialized and marginalized students. However, this review did not receive any information that suggests SRO involvement in GECDSB schools has resulted in an increase of suspensions, arrests, or criminal charges of students.

PART 2. INTENDED OUTCOMES

What are the intended outcomes of police presence and programs?

Learning outcomes describe the knowledge or skills students should acquire by the end of a particular assignment, class, course, or program[22]. According to a review of the Grade 6 VIP program booklet, the program aims to help students to:

- Enhance their self-esteem and build their self-confidence.
- Create a positive impression
- Develop respect for self, others, and the environment
- Function independently and accept responsibility for their actions
- Know the consequences of anti-social behavior
- Recognize the effects of peer pressure
- Identify the effects of harmful substances
- Become aware of and respect the laws and values of our society
- Be able to say "no" when appropriate
- Make good choices
- Choose the right friends

After attending approximately 10 VIP sessions, each student receives a certificate for graduating the program. Other SRO presentations are not structured in the same way. For example, the newer 'Unite' is a one-time presentation, and B-RAD includes 3 presentations over the Grade 9 year.

The OPP, WPS, and LaSalle Police Services take a lead role in creating program content to ensure a consistency across schools in the GECDSB. Content is reviewed by the Board with involvement from a Police Education Liaison committee. Pre-pandemic, it was agreed that VIP content was "stale" and "needed a refresh". As one police officer noted and others agreed, the decade-old content was offensive.

Several interview participants noted the lack of clear mandate for SRO programs in general. One secondary teacher observed that the purpose of police officers in schools was not clearly articulated. Similarly, another participant stated that the mandate is unclear and that they have observed no tangible benefits from the programs. Other participants questioned whether chatting with students and delivering presentations provided enough of a benefit to warrant an SRO program, especially given concerns about their impact on marginalized students.

One administrator shared their perspective from a decade of involvement with the program:

> Kids and parents don't have a full understanding of the reason for the program. When possible, for Grade 9s, we would introduce the police liaison officer to each classroom. What's missing is a broader introduction, "what is the program, what is it for". It's not just "we have access to police in case something happens at school". Apparently, there is a broader goal of 'extra help, relationship building.' Like curriculum we need an overall goal, and ensure it benefits the student community.

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[22] https://teaching.utoronto.ca/resources/dlo/

Summary: Program Perceptions and Outcomes

The majority of adult stakeholders who have experienced community presence and programs, agree the following activities are at its core: (1) relationship building, mentorship (2) education (3) presenting a positive image of police (4) maintaining order in the school and (5) keeping students out of the criminal justice system.

The SRO program lack a clear articulation of intended outcomes for all students, and there is no measurement plan to assess if such outcomes are being achieved.

3. Achievement and impact

Are community police program outcomes being achieved?
Are the programs having their desired impact on students?

Research studies conducted in other Canadian jurisdictions are unable to prove that SRO programs lead to desired impacts on students (see the Appendix Literature scan).

To date, no assessment or evaluation of police program outcomes has been conducted by the GECDSB or police themselves. In addition, the pandemic program pause makes it challenging to assess the impact of recent program delivery. Thus, impact and achievement of these programs is examined by reviewing all stakeholder feedback on stated program purposes: (1) Relationship building and mentorship (2) Educate students about social issues through formal information presentations and informal day-to-day interactions (3) Presenting a positive image of police (4) Maintaining order in the school and (5) Keeping students out of the criminal justice system.

Stakeholder feedback in this section includes individual interviews with police and staff, parents, focus groups with students, and findings from the community and student surveys.

Program purpose (1) Relationship building and mentorship

Police officers were generally positive in their assessments of their ability to build relationships with students, while other participants (educators, parents) did not agree that this objective is adequately met. Staff participants who recall pre-pandemic experiences question the inclusiveness of this outcome recall seeing "the same students" engage with officers:

> *In 3 schools, I had different experiences with 4-5 different officers. They all approached the role differently. Relationship building was disproportionately with white students. At one school, there was a Black officer, but he wasn't very interactive with the students, it was like a chore to be there. I don't remember seeing a lot of racialized students interacting.*

> *I feel conflicted. Generally, there are good officers, but there are also arrogant police officers who want domineering control, and think everyone should just listen because they're in charge. The origins of police in schools is to survey, to keep tabs on the troublemakers. There are some disconnects with current statements to build relationships.*

Due to review limitations, there is a lack of recent data from students on relationship-building and mentorship aspects of SRO programs. Due to the program pause, a very small number of Grade 12 students recall seeing or meeting an SRO in their school (n=12).

When asked if students would talk to an officer at school, the majority of all student groups displayed with exception of students with disabilities, are 'somewhat unlikely' or 'very unlikely' to speak with an SRO if given the choice. The least likely student groups to speak with an SRO are 2SLGBTQIA+ (59% 'very unlikely') and South Asian students (56% 'very unlikely').

Table. Identity analysis of student response 'how likely are you to talk to your school's SRO if you saw them in the hallway?

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Very unlikely	*Somewhat unlikely + Very unlikely*
All	10%	14%	25%	17%	34%	51%
Indigenous	18%	12%	18%	24%	29%	53%
Black/African	19%	6%	25%	25%	25%	50%
Middle Eastern	9%	13%	25%	19%	34%	53%
South Asian	6%	13%	6%	19%	56%	75%
White	8%	13%	28%	17%	33%	50%
Disabilities	17%	13%	28%	23%	19%	42%
2SLGBTQIA+	4%	11%	11%	15%	59%	74%
White +	10%	15%	20%	15%	40%	55%

The 'White +' category looks at the GECDSB secondary student 'dominant majority;' students who selected 'White' for race plus 'No' for disability plus 'straight/heterosexual' for sexuality.

Program purpose (2) Education to inform decision making

To prove whether or not police-delivered content is influencing student decision-making would require a longitudinal, ongoing evaluation of the program that assesses the impact on students' lives beginning in Grade 6 until they complete high school. This has not been part of the program or implemented by the GECDSB.

Recalling pre-pandemic experiences, some teachers were able to use content from police presentations to reinforce issues that arose in the classroom. For example, a topic presented in B-RAD presentation was used as a reminder for students later in the school year. Some teachers expressed appreciation for the topics covered by police presentations, as they are directly relevant to the day-to-day experiences within the school community (e.g., vaping, nude photos on phones). VIP is the most widely known program, then B-RAD, and a new Unite program:

> *It's about being an ally in the fight against racism. It's important topic area. It covers bias, privilege, and they want to build allyship. Personal stories are shared from the police officers and community members. Students may come forward and share stories. – Police Officer*

Due to review limitations, student perspective on the Unite presentation is not available. However, student perspectives on VIP and B-RAD were shared in the survey. Due to the smaller sample sizes, an identity analysis will not be shown here.

Most students who the recall **Grade 6 VIP** program remember that "it was about drugs". Of 172 students surveyed who took VIP, just under half agree it was valuable. White students are more likely to express value (most 'Yes' responses when asked "Was VIP valuable for you?"), and 2SLGBTQIA+ students are least likely to express value (most 'No' responses).

When asked if the **Grade 9 B-RAD** program was a valuable experience, responses are split: 34% said Yes, 31% said Maybe and 34% said No.

The following comments highlight how the program material influenced some student's decision making:

> *The B-RAD impacted me because it showed me what real relationships are, and it made me realize all of the relationships that I had that were bad for me and not beneficial in the future.*

> *Mostly, VIP scared me in a good way. It deterred me from trying any drugs or falling under the peer pressure of my classmates.*

> *Social media has this idea that police are bad? Honestly VIP got me into wanting a law enforcement career, something I'm still seriously looking at right now. It was probably the most impactful school field trip for me.*

In addition, a number of "I don't remember," "It didn't help me," and neutral comments were shared. Student criticisms of the program are shared in the fourth findings section 'outcomes for students.'

Other perspectives on educational purpose

The GECDSB community policing programs cover a broad range of topics. In this review, stakeholders of all identities expressed concern that police officers were leading topics that may be better suited for others to lead.

> *We should not be teaching mental health. - Police Officer*

> *It's not the job of the police to do the presentations. It's the educator's job. Their role should be how can the police support the school. Their job is not education, it's to enforce colonial law. - Staff*

> *There are different ways that content could be delivered without involving the police. It can still be valuable to have a community police officer present. If there six presentations per year, for example, the police could just be one session, and other community leaders with passion need to be present. - Administrator*

Some participants acknowledged that some of the topics covered in the presentations can be "draining" for all those involved. When presentations get emotional and heavy, students need safe spaces to talk and debrief. Some educators offered these conversations after a police presentation with their class; it is not

clear if all teachers provided this space for students to debrief, and how students who needed more than a classroom chat may have been supported (or not).

Program Purpose (3) Promoting a positive image of police

'Changing negative perspectives' is an important aspect of the program according to police and program supporters. It is important for the police to demonstrate that 'police are here to help' and they can be called upon for support.

Although the majority of students surveyed had no experience with police in schools or didn't know how to answer, the following secondary student groups were more likely to agree that interactions with police in schools made a positive impact: Middle Eastern, South Asian, White, and Students with disabilities (by one person). Student groups who did not have their perceptions of police changed by previous interactions in schools include Black/African (tied with Yes), and 2SLGBTQIA+.

Program Purpose (4) Maintaining order in the school, mediation

Secondary school students have not had much interaction with SROs. Nonetheless, comments were shared in the student survey relating to their safety needs, and how police presence may or may not fulfil those needs:

> *I don't think we need police; I just think that we need to deal with issues in a more calm and comforting way.*

> *I think that having the police there will help stop students from doing things that they shouldn't and acting crazy and it would bring more strictness compared to teachers.*

> *[I'd like to see] Police presence to tackle the drug problem and the violence problem in my school and come do presentations on the effects of drugs and the consequences and presentations about violence and why it's bad and what are the consequences*

> *I feel a police presence at various times through the week would help create a better feeling of safety for both students and staff and build community partnerships by having access to an officer available for positive reinforcement as well. There is so much anger in our world right now and with the outcome of us all navigating a pandemic, there are a lot of students acting out in ways we have never seen before. We need to build better partnerships and allow schools to be a safe zone for students once again. On the flip side, I also learned a lot about what other ethnicities may encounter when police presence is around. It's a delicate rope, but one that I feel could help build trust and confidence for those families as well if presented properly.*

> *I'm not sure but an officer would help me feel safer.*

Administrators, including principals and vice principals, shared positive experiences about SROs and VIP officers, who, in their opinion, did an excellent job to mediate and support incident resolution. Participants also recalled instances of officers who did not make a very positive difference in their school. It is clear that having the right person who was dedicated to the role makes all the difference:

> *If there was a situation where the police should be called (e.g., smoking/vaping at school), sometimes it made sense to call the community officer to come and talk to the students. To ask*

their advice on a situation, which could lead to investigation on community/adults for example. If they weren't sure a call was a true 'police call' the VIP officer could help walk them through.

Some police do not have training in dealing with students. If the purpose is a restorative meeting, having the VIP officer at the table, that's different. Working with youth when they're struggling and allowing yourself to step outside of your role is important, and is not something the police have consistently done.

We really need social work support. Is the police officer, based on their current training, and dynamics around how they're perceived, the right person to be at the table? Unless there is a strong relationship between the police/child in an individual meeting, there may not be a place in the conversation to include the police.

If the officer needed to speak with a student (i.e., questioning about a danger), the principal would be in attendance. The one-on-one conversations were beneficial, but rare. One time a student brought something illegal to school, the SRO responded, and was able to offer a different approach because they knew the student. Parents would also be contacted when students would be talked to.

Our SRO knew the community and tailored their support; they brought a regional approach. Students may be transient to different schools in the city, and the SRO brought some stability. They knew about children before the schools did. If incidents happened with students from other schools, the SRO could make that connection; they were an asset to the administrators.

Program Purpose (5) Keeping students out of the criminal justice system

To date, there is no evidence that SROs contribute to keeping students out of the criminal justice system. However, some officers shared they are aware of situations where police officers have made decisions to not report school incidents in order to avoid students being charged or arrested.

> *In their role as an SRO, I don't want to have to charge people [students]. That's a blurring role. If there is an active incident, schools should call 9-1-1 or the main police number, and someone else should respond to the call. SROs should not respond to calls. [They] want to be seen as the advisor, discussion and education person, 'the good guy'. – Police Officer*

> *The officers [SROs] try not to do a report, they might mediate an incident, but they want to keep Students out of local records. – Police Officer*

> *In Toronto, there were reports of officers putting children's names in reports. We don't want to do that, it's our intent to get their names out of reports. – Police Officer*

This impact cannot be substantiated due to a lack of incident specific data.

Summary: Achievement and Impact

While community members appear to be more supportive of school-based police programs in general, students have divergent and inconclusive views. Some students expressed an appreciation for the program content and understood its value, while others had neutral or negative perspectives. The lack of any program evaluation data makes it challenging to assess how pre-pandemic education impacted a student's decision making and behaviors.

Some adult participants spoke highly of individual SROs and their ability to engage with students in a meaningful way. That SROs made meaningful pre-pandemic connections with students cannot be refuted. However, these anecdotal examples are not expressed in terms of identity or scale; we do not know how many meaningful relationships were made, which students missed out on making relationships, and if students of certain identities received more attention.

Administrators and some teachers expressed value in having VIP officer/SRO support as mediators. If done well, this could divert students from getting in trouble with the law (i.e. they dealt with a smaller incident before it escalated to something more, or the SRO chose not to write up the incident and instead discuss with their parent for example. The lack of incident specific data on student diversion makes it difficult for this review to draw conclusions.

4. Outcomes for students

Do students of all identities recognize and support the intended outcomes of community policing?

Findings were gathered directly from secondary students via focus groups and a student survey. Student focus groups welcomed the perspectives of students who identify as racialized and/or marginalized and included a group of students with disabilities.

Students from the focus groups explain in order to foster a relationship with them, police must first build trust. Once that trust is established, they can extend the relationship by doing fun activities that are unrelated to work. Students need to know why police are in the school in the first place. They would also like for officers to be dressed more casually instead of in their "big, chunky" uniforms.

Looking at programs (not presence), secondary students were asked to recall their Grade 6 VIP and Grade 9 B-RAD experiences. Students were not probed about building a relationship with an SRO, as this aspect was limited due to the pandemic.

Program outcomes: Values, Influences and Peers (VIP)

Of 172 students surveyed who took VIP, just under half agree it was valuable. White students are more likely to express value (most 'Yes' responses when asked "Was VIP valuable for you?"), and 2SLGBTQIA+ students are least likely to express value (most 'No' responses).

Student comments on VIP were heard, both in favour and not. Of all the activities, a field trip where students got to experience the day in the life of a police officer had the largest impact on students. Some students claim that they cannot recall what they learned in the program.

> *Took up time for common sense*
>
> *It didn't give much of an impact; I remember being uncomfortable with the officer though.*
>
> *The field trip was enlightening but I have forgotten everything.*
>
> *I can't remember much valuable information rather than staying away from drugs and what would happen if we did such drugs.*

I got to experience what it was like to do drugs firsthand, and how it affected people, got to go to the police station and do a tour. Greatly impacted how I felt.

VIP allowed me the opportunity to learn more about the rules and regulations of our society, as well as learn about my peers, values and how they influenced me, in addition to my own personal values and understanding of the world around me.

VIP showed me that the sexual assault I was put through my whole life wasn't normal and that I needed to speak up.

VIP was a very positive experience. It was a great way for kids to meet a police officer and realize how kind they are and not scary. Students also got comfortable around the topic of drugs and alcohol and learn how to deal with peer pressure situations which can be helpful in the future.

Program outcomes: Bullying Relationships Alcohol and Drugs (B-RAD)

Of the 90 Grade 12's who identified themselves in the survey, only 29 were able to share experiences on the B-RAD program. When asked if the program was a valuable experience, responses are split: 34% said Yes, 31% said Maybe, and 34% said No.

Similarly, for the VIP program, some students could not recall very much of the presentations.

Student comments on B-RAD include:

B-RAD impacted me by helping me stay safe against drug users and sellers.

Didn't really care much about it since everything they told us I already knew.

I don't really remember it.

I don't remember too much of it but I did like how it was a safe discussion focusing on keeping yourself safe, less so rules and "abstinence" from things like alcohol. I think it should be done more than just in grade 9.

I feel like many drug programs often shame drug addicts and I feel like more resources for drug addiction should be shared with us.

It was mostly unmemorable, but there was some interesting information conveyed about symptoms of certain addictions.

Students in the focus groups had contrasting views about the role of police presentations. Some students said that presentations were a "cool" way to learn about the job and the law. Some students even made suggestions for successful presentations: small group discussions that provide a deeper understanding of information, an opportunity for relationship-building, and the time for insightful question and answer periods. Real life discussions about what drugs and alcohol have done/can do were also seen as a useful presentation topic. On the other hand, some students said that the presentations are unnecessary unless the content directly relates to the curriculum. They stated there needs to be consideration about what is and is not useful and make the appropriate changes.

Summary: Outcomes for Students

Grade 6 VIP appears to make more of an impact for students as it includes essential content that can shape a child's development into adulthood, and is delivered at a time in their life where impressions can be lasting. However, by the time a student reaches high school, many do not recall the content of the VIP programs aside from the fact that it provided information about drugs. B-RAD experience was limited, with mixed reviews.

Findings summary

The lack of consensus among students about police presence in their schools is evident. The one-size-fits-all approach to community policing and police presence is not in students' best interest. Community members, GECDSB staff, and police are more aligned in their view of the programs, though there is clear dissent from individuals across identities. This is especially true for community members who are part of racialized and marginalized identity groups.

It should be noted that several stakeholders expressed openness to change and shared ideas that may address some existing concerns with police presence in schools. See the Recommendations section.

Centering Student Voice

Throughout this review, students continued to express mixed feelings concerning how they view the police in their community, and their level of trust in the police.

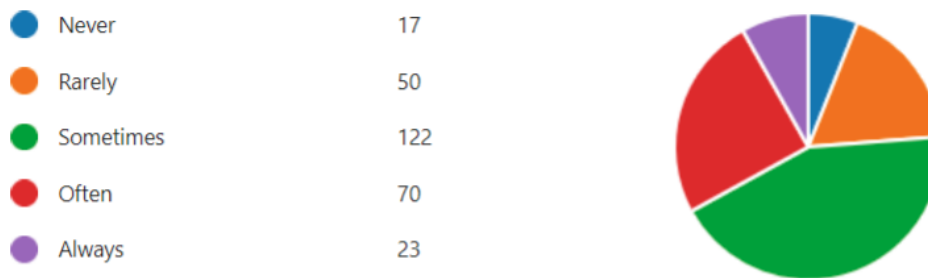Chart. Student response to 'How often do you feel positive about the Police in your community?'

Never	17	
Rarely	50	
Sometimes	122	
Often	70	
Always	23	

Chart. Student response to 'How often do you trust the Police in your community?

Never	15	
Rarely	50	
Sometimes	82	
Often	108	
Always	28	

In general, students trust that police will help if they are at risk of physical harm. Student focus group participants explained that if police are present, they can be trusted to act. However, issues that are not deemed to be important are not given priority. Issues impacting racialized people may not be considered as important. One student described waiting for hours for police assistance after an incident was reported. Some students stated that they do not trust police to de-escalate situations because they are not effective communicators. They emphasize that in order for police to be viewed as helpful or trustworthy, they must be

able to communicate effectively. An unfamiliar officer with a weapon may not be the best person to de-escalate certain situations. Additionally, a student expressed distrust in the cultural competence of police.

When asked about future police involvement in schools, all responses combined revealed that 46.6% of students are open to More involvement, while 53.4% would like Less and No Involvement.

Overwhelmingly, the following groups want less or no police involvement in school: 2SLGBTQIA+ (91%), Black/African (79%), South Asian (75%).

Table. Identity analysis of student response 'Would you like to see more involvement from Police in your school, less or no involvement'?

	More involvement	Less involvement	No involvement	*Less and No involvement*
All	47%	27%	27%	54%
Indigenous	50%	28%	22%	50%
Black/African	21%	43%	36%	79%
Middle Eastern	46%	32%	21%	53%
South Asian	25%	31%	44%	75%
White	49%	23%	28%	51%
Disabilities	43%	34%	23%	57%
2SLGBTQIA+	9%	61%	30%	91%
Woman or Girl	50%	21%	29%	50%
Boy or Man	51%	29%	20%	49%
White +	53%	21%	26%	47%

Student research team perspective

The student research team provided an analysis of student survey, noticing "conflicting" responses:

> *We were surprised to find that other students feel unsafe while police are around but want to see them more in and involved with our schools. The polls were pretty much evenly split between one or two answers every time which surprised me.*

> *Despite feeling safe in school and uncomfortable around police, why do students want more police involvement? It's really fascinating to me how different the two results of students are and why they're so conflicting.*

The student research team came up with a variety of recommendations for the future of school-based community policing at GECDSB schools:

- ○ Increased use of officers of colour
- ○ Limit police presence whenever possible
  - Incorporate more social workers to interact with students
 - Use other community members who can offer a gentler approach

- Provide students with more information about the program, especially about the officers: who they are, what they offer, etc.
- Focus on topics related to mental health and wellbeing
- Avoid the use of fear tactics. Police are not seen as a safe resource for those needing help
- B-RAD should focus more on cannabis and alcohol

Community members prefer some involvement

The majority of adults who participated in this review expressed a desire to see some form of police involvement in schools: of 3115 surveyed, 2558 said 'Yes' to more involvement, 272 said 'No' involvement, and 283 said 'Maybe.' Police officers unanimously wish to continue with the program. School administrators appreciate the support they received from their SROs, such as having someone to call on for advice and for non-emergency incident response. Teachers and counsellors do not have the same level of access to SRO support as administrators, so their feelings and opinions were more varied. Nonetheless, teachers who have experience with grade 6 VIP programs have mostly positive things to say about that program.

An identity analysis shows that members of the 2SLBGTQIA+ community are least likely to want police presence (33% No, 21% Maybe), followed by Black (22% No), then Indigenous (13% No) community members.

Chart. Community members by identity: 'Should the School Board continue to offer Community Police presence and programs in schools?'
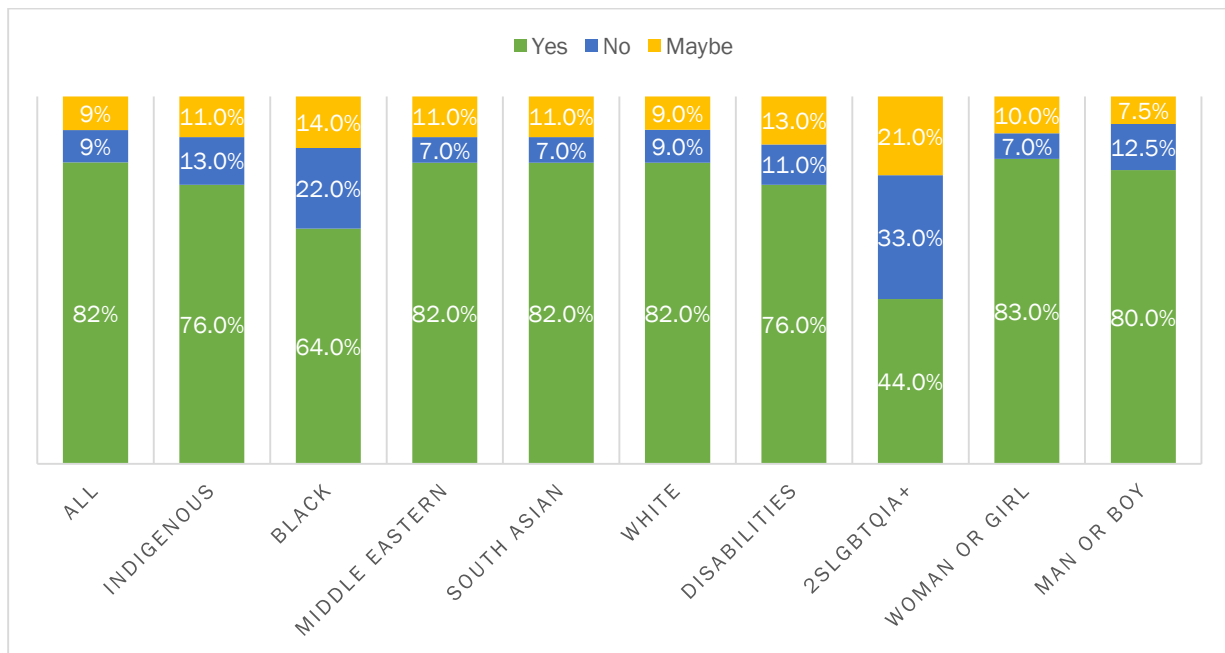
Comments from respondents who said 'No' or 'Maybe' reveal divergent views from those who want the programs to continue:

As an educator and a parent, I do not believe police should be interacting with students on campus for any reason other than in response to an emergency or crisis. They can build relationships and support students outside of school hours and off campus by participating in community activities.

They do not belong in schools. Normalizing police and police interactions with youth is not appropriate. Statistically, police do not prevent crime, they do not have appropriate de-escalating training, they operate within an institutionally racist & sexist framework. They shouldn't be recruiting at schools, or using schools & work at schools to rebrand the realities of policing, or allowed access to youth. Programs like these are used to justify endlessly increasing and bloated police funding with little to no actual evidence of good, and despite real evidence of harm.

They way police officers interact with racialized students inside and outside the school is totally different.

I think it's an occupying force. An SRO is just one person, when more police enter the school, say 6-7 police at one time, they are watching, doing surveillance; it's a complete occupied force.

Administrators on achieving better outcomes

Principals and vice principals occupy unique positions. They have more exposure to SROs than other staff and possess a holistic view of the impact of SROs in their respective schools. Many administrators acknowledge both the positive and negative impacts of the community policing program. When asked for ideas on how the programs might achieve better outcomes for students of all identities, the following was shared:

It's not the role of the police officer to deliver information about 12 years old, the criminal code, etc. Educators could do this in a restorative setting

Police presentations seem to be more fear-based presentation, the negative aspects. [We need] programs more geared to the development of leadership, as opposed to 'here's what's not to do'.

Like with the new Sex Ed curriculum, parents can opt out of it. I wonder about opt-out for VIP; we never had a kid say they want to opt out, but they were never given the option.

The individual can be a real asset, but the wrong individual can be harmful, and destroy the work that's being done. There have been mixed reviews on individuals. As a school board, we should have the right to select the officer.

What works: when the police brought in professionals to talk about their experiences: Youth Diversion, emergency services. Kids related more from someone with lived experience.

Plain clothes may not necessarily help, could lead to thoughts of 'undercover' and 'always being watched'. The middle ground is communicating with students that 'they are here, and they're in this role' so that students and parents in the community are well aware.

Recommendations

Referencing human rights and equity principles which the GECDSB must uphold, along with the findings from students and community members gathered in this review, the following recommendations are made:

1. **GECDSB should remove all classroom-based engagements with police services in response to the finding that a majority of racialized/marginalized students report feeling unsafe with police presence in school.**

   The goal is to ensure that all non-emergency police presence in schools is facilitated through an equity-focused lens that prioritizes student safety, belonging, and well-being. This means that police officers no longer make informal visits to school communities. Delivery of important non-curriculum content should be led by the school board, with police as invited guest speakers. Police are part of a school-led, community-involved team that develops content and approaches to delivering material.

   Recognizing that there is interest in maintaining positive relationships between school communities and police services, the following should be considered:

   - Encourage and facilitate other opportunities for students to engage with police outside of the school day (i.e. career fair, after school activities, weekend bike safety event) at times that would not impede students who feel unsafe with police being able to access existing extracurricular activities.
   - Off-site and after school engagement may be explored
   - Explore the use of social media and video presentations to initiate police contact, especially with elementary students. Through social media engagement, officers may build trust and relationships with students without a physical presence
   - School-based presentations may be provided to consenting students following the parameters below. For example, a career fair during lunch hours in the gym (or another space that would otherwise be vacant).
   - Ask the police to join community events in plain clothes; after trust/recognition has been established with students (through social media and video presentations for example).

2. **All police-school curriculum activities should be optional, require consent and thoroughly communicated**

   When using a trauma-informed approach, students of all ages should be empowered to make choices to engage with the police. It is not uncommon to give students the choice to opt out of conversations when the content is triggering, so it is not unreasonable to apply the same concept to police presence in schools.

   This requires that:

   - Any school visit from a non-responding police officer is planned in advance, often at the request of or involvement with a student group themselves.
     - Ample communication, such as reminders and announcements, are provided by school administration to the entire school community.

- Police presentations include a time and space for debriefing support. This will allow students and staff to talk together about what they have learned and request follow up information.

3. **Grade 6 VIP and Grade 9 B-RAD content should be replaced with programming that engages community members in sharing their lived experiences**

A holistic, student-centred approach to the many issues currently raised in police programming (see the second bullet) cannot be led by police. Rather, there needs to be a focus on community-building, support, and creating content that meets youth where they are at. Police can be partners in delivering this content where and when appropriate (i.e. through off-site trips, video presentations, social media/information bulletins). This is an opportunity for the GECDSB to invest in community partnerships with youth-focused organizations, harm-reduction experts, and youth workers, among others, to create a new information program for Grade 6 and Grade 9 students.

- Form a committee that includes student leaders to examine the current VIP and B-RAD programming, deciding what to keep, and what topics or gaps exist.
- Engage community experts to look at the social determinants of health with respect to student safety and well-being.
- Engage community members with lived experiences related to harm reduction, mental health, healthy relationships, anti-bullying, violence, consent, gender-based violence, drugs and alcohol, substance abuse, and addiction. Consider a multi-media approach to delivering this important content to students.
- Police are positioned to speak on their role in law enforcement, about the criminal code, youth rights, and working with other social systems, such as the healthcare and justice systems. To deliver content effectively, partnerships with youth diversion and other youth engagement experts should be maintained.

Students need honest, grounded discussions about issues of equity and police in their community. Where police are asked to contribute, they should be prepared to recount the history of policing as an institution and create safe spaces to talk about the issue with students. This includes addressing past and present inequalities that exist on a local and global scale. These conversations are difficult but necessary for all those involved. To help facilitate student understanding, other community members such as social workers and counsellors should be consulted.

4. **GECDSB should provide training for officers who visit schools and engage with students**

When police officers enter schools, they enter an educative environment. As such, they need to be made aware of what their presence means, how it impacts students, and how it might be interpreted by staff and community. Accordingly, they should receive some training that seeks to provide an equity-focused lens on their encounters as guests within the school environment. Training topics for invited police officers might include:

- Anti-racism practice
- Colonization
- The history of policing and education with respect to experiences of those who are Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQIA+, people with disabilities
- Gender inclusivity and disrupting cisnormativity

- Homophobia and disrupting heteronormativity
- Youth engagement
- Ableism and engaging with youth with disabilities
- Engaging in a trauma-informed manner
- Social determinants of health

Implementation of training policy that police officers must follow when entering schools can provide structure for school-based community policing programs. Such a policy may include a clear commitment to being part of the GECDSB community. The training should be supported by community members and youth engagement experts.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Build Evaluation into Future Programming
Give students and stakeholders the opportunity to shape programs for their benefit.

Education on the 'Police Role in Schools Protocol'
Experiences with responding officers that were not handled well came up repeatedly in this review from stakeholders of all identities. Police encounters inside the school community are often magnified, and if handled poorly, their impacts can be traumatic and everlasting. As a responding community partner, police have a responsibility to act within the school community in accordance with the GECDSB 'Police Role in Schools Protocol.' When police do not act in alignment with the protocol, the complaint process is initiated.

This is an opportunity for the school board to provide open communication to staff, parents, and students on the protocol. Posting the policy online is not enough. An overview webinar video, an FAQ, and opportunities to discuss programming might help to answer community questions such as:

- What authority do police officers have to act in the school environment?
- What are my rights as a victim, perpetrator, or bystander?
- How might I receive support after an incident should it be required?
- How can a complaint be made?

To make this policy effective, feedback should be solicited from the school community, and regular updates should be made to the policy based on this feedback. For example, participants in this review expressed a desire for announcements to be made during the school day to inform students and staff when and why an officer is present at the school. Other respondents requested for police cars to be parked at the back of the school instead of the front. Simple procedures such as these may reduce anxiety and worry.

Responding Officers Need Youth-Orientation Training
This suggestion is outside of the review scope, but must be considered because it has a direct impact on how school community members perceive police. Children and youth are at a critical time in their social, emotional, and mental development. The experiences they have at this point in their lives are unique and must be treated with patience, dignity, and respect. Accordingly, the school board should consider how they can work with police services to prioritize the use of youth-trained officers. It is of utmost importance that police who are called to respond to incidents within schools are trained to respectfully engage with children and youth.

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Appendices for GECDSB police presence and programs review

Appendix 1 - Literature Scan

Introduction

Community policing is a practice commonly adopted by police organizations in Canada and the US to create, improve, and maintain relationships between police and their communities. During the 1970s and 1980s, police organizations in Canada realized that the increasing demands for police presence could not be met without community support (Giwa, 2018). By working with the community, the police could gain valuable information that would allow them to maintain order and effectively respond to crime (Giwa, 2018). Additionally, there were community calls for police accountability, specifically regarding the treatment of marginalized groups. Black and Indigenous populations continue to be overrepresented in the Canadian justice system, and the criminalization and forced assimilation of these groups have resulted in distrust of the police and the formation of a contentious relationship (Giwa, 2018; Giwa, James, Anchua, & Schwartz, 2014; Jones, Ruddell, & Summerfield, 2019). As a result, community policing continues to be utilized to address the "unequal application of the law and treatment of racialized minorities within the system" (Giwa, 2018, p. 712). A multitude of community policing programs have been established in an effort to foster positive relationships between racialized communities and the police.

In Canada, "community policing today is seen by many (e.g., governments; police chiefs, associations and boards; and the public) as the preferred model [or approach of choice] for police organizations to manage the complexity of crime and neighbourhood disorder" (Giwa, 2018). Despite the commonality of community policing in Canada and elsewhere, there is no common definition for the term. The lack of a formal definition allows police organizations to adapt the community policing model to best meet the ever-changing needs of their community.

Fleras and Elliot (2002) theorized that community policing consists of four components: partnership, prevention, problem-solving, and power sharing.
- *Partnership* refers to the idea that police and their communities are equal partners in crime prevention.
- *Prevention* deals with the way that police and community members work together to prevent crime from occurring.
- *Problem-solving* is the proactive approach used to discuss and deal with community issues.
- *Power sharing* is the commitment made by police to share their resources with the community.

Community Policing in Schools

Since the integration of community policing, this practice has been frequently used in an educational context, with the creation of numerous programs that place police officers in elementary and high schools across the country. According to Public Safety Canada, the purpose of community policing programs is to "work in partnership with students, teachers, school administrators, school boards, parents, other police officers and the community to establish and maintain a healthy and safe school community" (Public Safety Canada, 2013).

Police officers who participate in these programs utilize various titles, including School Resource Officers (SROs), Youth Education Officers (YEOs), and High School Liaison Officers (HSLOs). For clarity's sake, these officers will be referred to as SROs for the remainder of this paper. Regardless of their title, the roles and responsibilities of these officers align with community policing models.

Roles and Responsibilities of SROs

The roles and responsibilities of SROs may vary depending on the school and their specific needs, but SRO activities typically follow a triad model that sees them as law enforcers, educators, and mentors (Broll and Howells, 2019; Rhodes, 2017).

1. As *law enforcers*, uniformed officers patrol school grounds, act as a deterrent for crime and misbehaviour, and respond to calls about incidents around the school. When incidents occur, SROs tend to work closely with teachers, principals, and school administration to propose alternative resolutions that avoid criminalizing students.
2. SROs perform the role of *educators* by leading lectures about crime and public safety issues, such as bullying, substance use, and internet safety. Students, staff, and community members can also reach out to SROs to ask questions related to policing and the criminal justice system.
3. For many SROs, their primary role at school is to act as *mentors* or *counsellors.* Officers build relationships with students, staff, and administrators and provide personal and legal guidance.

In accordance with community policing values, the primary goal for most SRO programs is to build trust and foster positive relationships between officers and the school community. SROs make themselves present in the community by participating in various school events, such as field trips, and taking on important roles, such as coaches for sports teams. Funding from police departments also gives SROs the opportunity to organize community-wide events outside of schools. Building positive relationships with officers gives students the opportunity to see SROs beyond their uniform. When students bond with their SROs, they may change their perception of police as a whole (Madan, 2019). Getting to know officers on an interpersonal level can help students become more trustful law enforcement.

In an evaluation of Edmonton Catholic School Division's SRO program, police officers (including 17 SROs), teachers, principals and administrators, parents, and students participated in a multi-method study, which included a survey and interviews (Wortley, Bucerius, & Samuels, 2022). During the interviews, participants were asked about the perceived role of school resource officers. Relationship-building was cited as being one of the main roles and advantages of the program. Law enforcement officers and principals explained that another benefit of the program was that it gave students and parents the opportunity to improve their perception of police.

The Peel District School Board also conducted a longitudinal, multi-method case study about the value of SROs employed by Peel Regional Police. Students, administrators, and SROs who participated expressed that the SRO program helped deter crime and increased feelings of safety on school property (Duxbury & Bennell, 2018).

A plethora of research reveals that there are mixed results regarding the perception of SRO programs. Many community members appreciate the programs and are grateful for the opportunity to establish positive relationships with local officers. The presence of an officer at school also leaves many students, staff, administrators, and parents with a heightened sense of safety at the school. The ability to reach out to a police officer and ask for information about policing and the law has also been cited as a benefit of SRO programs. However, SRO programs have also faced many criticisms and calls for the abolition of these programs.

Criticisms of SRO programs

SRO programs have frequently been criticized by the public for a number of reasons. Increased school safety is cited as being one of the primary reasons for the implementation of SRO programs, but there is a lack of research with solid evidence that these programs meet these goals (Bartlett et al., 2021; Broll & Howells, 2019; Duxbury & Bennell, 2018; Giwa, 2018; Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, 2020; Owens, 2017; Samuels-Wortley, 2020; Wortley, Bucerius, & Samuels, 2022). Although SRO programs are enacted with student safety in mind, the feelings and opinions of students are often left out of research in favour of research focusing on the perceptions of officers placed at schools (Samuels-Wortley, 2020). The overall efficiency of SRO programs has been questioned by critics. Variables related to community

impact are difficult to measure, resulting in a lack of research about the effectiveness of SRO programs (Broll & Howells, 2019; Duxbury & Bennell, 2018; OACP, 2020). Broll and Howells (2019) explain that "most evaluations of the relationships between SROs and members of the school community are quantitative" (p. 704), and these studies fail to accurately capture how SROs form relationships with community members and how these relationships influence how they perform their other duties.

Among the most prominent concerns is the impact that SRO programs have on youth who belong to groups that have historically been targeted by police. Research finds that these programs are more likely to be present in low-income, urban areas with a large population of racialized citizens, which gives police ample opportunity to monitor racialized youth (Madan, 2019). According to a report regarding SRO programs in the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, "communities impacted by poverty and those in urban city centres have increased exposure to police officers in schools" (Tanner, 2021, p. 7). These youth are constantly policed in their neighbourhoods, so the use of SRO programs in schools is often viewed as yet another way to normalize their constant surveillance.

Marginalized youth, including Black, Indigenous, differently abled, newcomer, and 2SLGBTQIA+ students are the most negatively affected by SRO programs (Bartlett et al., 2021; Da Costa, 2022; Duxbury & Bernell, 2018; Giwa, 2018; Madan, 2019; Merkwae, 2015; Samuels-Wortley, 2020, Tanner, 2021). These students report feeling watched and blamed by officers in their schools, which disrupts their ability to learn effectively and causes them to be fearful.

In 2017, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) conducted a review of their SRO programs. About 15,000 students were surveyed about their feelings toward the program. Of these students, 2000 of them reported feelings of intimidation, and 1055 expressed that they felt uncomfortable attending school when an officer was present (Foppiano, 2019). Survey research conducted by the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) regarding their SRO programs revealed that "62% of Black respondents and 68% of 2SLGBTQIA+ respondents disagreed with the idea that police presence makes school a safer place" (Deguire, 2022). Further interviews and consultations with marginalized students revealed that the presence of armed police officers in OCDSB schools made students feel "anxious", "unwelcome", "traumatized" and "terrified" (Tanner, 2021, p. 45).

Black and Indigenous youth are most likely to distrust and feel intimidated by SROs. Members of these groups are also more likely to advocate for the abolition or reformation of SRO programs in their schools (Worley, Bucerius, & Samuels, 2022). The presence of an officer in schools may be traumatic for groups that have historically been targeted by the police. Forber-Pratt et al. (2021) explain that "the effects of racial trauma can make Black and other students of color feel less safe in schools, and interactions with police may retraumatize them" (p. 348).

For Black students, research has consistently found that school-level policing can have significant negative effects on their mental health and educational outcomes (Legewie & Cricco, 2022). Confrontations with police both in and outside of school can be traumatizing for youth. Dealing with law enforcement in any context has the potential to trigger bouts of anxiety for youth with negative perceptions of the police. When students are distrustful of the police, they may avoid going to school in order to protect themselves from harm. Ultimately, this has a negative impact on their education, including their test scores, attendance rates, graduation rates (Legewie & Cricco, 2022).

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) conducted a report on racial profiling (2017). In this report, students were asked about their interactions with police both in and outside of schools. Some racialized students reported that they were "inappropriately stopped and questioned by police, either in school, or on university campus by campus security" (p. 62). Some respondents considered schools to be "complicit in racial profiling" (p. 62) and giving police the opportunity to monitor and over-scrutinize youth.

Research done on SRO programs in the United States and Canada finds that racialized and differently-abled youth are more likely to be placed under arrest for infractions that may not warrant these punitive measures (Bartlett et al., 2021; Merkwae, 2015; Samuels-Wortley, 2021). Samuels-Wortley (2021) explains that "Black and other racial minority

students are more likely to experience harsh disciplinary measures—including suspensions, expulsion and police intervention—than their White counterparts" (p. 920).

In 2020, the Upper Grand District School Board created a task force to "review and respond to the role of police presence in schools and their impact on all students, families and staff" ("Police presence", 2020), including the impact on racialized and marginalized students. Accordiing to the report created by this task force, "2SLGBTQIA+ students were 2.5 times more likely to feel discriminated against by SROs against than not-2SLGBTQIA+ students" (Upper Grand District School Board, 2021, p. 63). Black students were also more likely to have a negative interaction with SROs than students from any other racial group.

Despite the fact that marginalized groups are most likely to be negatively impacted by SRO programs, their voices are not given priority in the research done to assess and evaluate SRO programs. The literature regarding school policing programs often uses a *colourblind* approach that disregards the fraught relationship between police and racialized groups. Research about SRO programs does not identify race and ethnicity as important variables, so the impact of racism on racialized students fails to be explored (OACP, 2020; Samuels-Wortley, 2020). Documentation and literature about SRO programs also tend to use race-neutral language, and the use of words such as "cooperation", "respect", and "responsibility" helps shift focus away from the role these programs have in surveillance and security (Madan, 2019).

Although successful relationship-building is seen as a benefit of SRO programs, some critics argue that the relationships that are formed are not mutually beneficial (Madan, 2019). Even when students and SROs form positive relationships, there is always an unequal power dynamic between the two parties. Madan (2019) also explains that relationship-building is a very effective way for SRO programs to decontextualize themselves from their "social and historical reality" (p. 32). Da Costa (2022) emphasizes this point, claiming that de-linking SROs from policing as an institution is irresponsible. When SROs are seen as being separate from other forms of policing, they are excluded from the "larger colonial history of policing in Canada and the larger context of police violence toward Black, Indigenous, Immigrant, people with disabilities, 2SLGBTQIA+, and working class communities" (Da Costa, 2022, p. 7). Individual officers who participate in SRO programs are able to distance themselves from the institution of policing itself and potentially be seen as "good cops" (Madan, 2019, p. 33). Additionally, critics argue that there is no conversation about why there is distrust between police and marginalized communities. They explain that the police fail to acknowledge their role in perpetuating violence against marginalized communities. As noted in the OCDSB's report, "the systemic violence that is experienced in community settings is transferred into school spaces when police engage with Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQ+ and students living with disabilities' (Tanner, 2021, p. 10).

Community members have also expressed concern about the lack of appropriate training for SROs. Although SROs frequently act as mentors or counsellors, they often lack the training needed to deal with mental health issues, and critics question whether or not SROs are sufficiently trained to deal with youth and their unique challenges (Giwa, 2018; Samuels-Wortley, 2020; Stevens, Barnard-Brak, & Jackson, 2021). Disability advocates argue that the officers who participate in SRO programs are not sufficiently trained to deal with students who have behavioural issues (Samuels-Wortley, 2020). Giwa (2018) states that the training that officers receive for their law enforcement duties may cause officers to view the world and certain people in a specific way that might hinder positive police-community relationships.

Chappell (2008) explains that although community policing has become popular, police training has been slow to adapt to community values. As a result, the training that police officers receive is still reflective of more traditional policing. Traditional police training deals with the physical aspects of the job, such as "firearms training, physical training, defensive tactics, and driving" (Chapell, 2008, p. 38), while community-oriented training focuses on relationship-building, problem-solving, and community engagement techniques. Traditional and community training are both necessary for the job, but traditional training continues to be prioritized in police training. The majority (90-95%) of interview participants in the OCDSB's SRO study indicated the importance of specialized training for SROs, including effective youth training, and anti-racism and cultural awareness training (Tanner, 2021).

The divergent priorities between officers and school personnel are also a point of contention. While educators understand that a student's behavioural issues likely stem from "developmental, social and emotional, and/or mental health concerns" (Stevens, Barnard-Brak, & Jackson, 2021, p. 331), an SRO may view this behaviour from a lens of criminality. From this perspective, SRO programs are seen as contributing to the **school-to-prison pipeline**, where "students become formally involved with the criminal justice system as a result of school policies that use law enforcement, rather than discipline, to address behavioural problems" (Owens, 2016, p. 11). With the presence of law enforcement in schools, arrests are more likely to be made in order to deal with student misconduct, which has a negative impact on the overall well-being of students. A review of SRO data in Edmonton public schools reveals that SROs significantly contributed to the "suspensions, expulsions, and criminalization of Edmonton youth. Over a 10-year period, SROs made 2000 arrests and were involved in over 5000 suspensions and almost 700 expulsions" (Turner & Henry, 2022, p. 44).

Criticisms about SRO programs have led to the assessment and evaluation of various SRO programs in Canada. Following these assessments, multiple SRO programs have been terminated, including those in the Toronto District School Board, Waterloo Region School Board, Hamilton-Wentworth School Board, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, and the Peel District School Board (Madan, 2019).

Alternatives to SRO Programs

Critics argue that the community work done by SROs does not need to be done by law enforcement officers (Bartlett et al., 2021; Da Costa, 2022; Giwa, 2018; Mann et al., 2019). They explain that resources should be allocated to social service workers who are trained to work with youth and are more likely to use proactive, preventive measures that focus on the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of students. However, proponents express concern that schools are lacking individuals available to do this work (Mann et al., 2019). While police departments continue to be funded by the government, the social services that are better equipped to support students are not given sufficient resources to do so.

Those who oppose SRO programs maintain that priority should be given to **school-based mental health (SBMH) providers**, such as school counsellors, social workers, psychologists, and nurses, who have the skills necessary to work with struggling students (Mann et al., 2019). They also recommend alternatives to SRO programs, including youth development programs, trauma-informed training and practice, and mindfulness programs (Barlett et al., 2019). These endeavours acknowledge the unique individual needs of students and attempt to create safe and supportive environments that facilitate the development and healing of all youth. Some proponents also recommend police training that better equips officers to work with youth.

Conclusion

SRO programs were established for the purpose of increasing safety in schools and improving the relationship between police and school community members. However, continuous debates surround the existence of these programs. Proponents argue that SRO programs meet their intended goals of improving perceptions of police, while critics state that they contribute to the constant surveillance and mistreatment of marginalized and racialized youth. There remains a lack of conclusive evidence that SRO programs make schools safer. However, a plethora of research has found that these programs negatively impact Black, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, and differently-abled youth. SRO programs are also seen as contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline, which forces youth out of educational environments and into the criminal justice system. As a result of these concerns, multiple SRO programs in Canada have been terminated. Critics continue to advocate for the allocation of resources to social services that prioritize the holistic well-being of youth.

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Summary of Literature scan
Prepared for GECDSB Community Policing Review

Community policing in schools

School Resource Officer (SRO) programs align with practices of **community policing.** Community policing lacks a consistent definition, but four features are core to its structure: partnerships, prevention, problem-solving, and power sharing.

- **Partnerships:** police are inseparable from the community and vice versa; they are equal partners in crime prevention
- **Prevention:** crime-prevention programs that promote community participation
- **Problem Solving:** a proactive model where community and police work together to identify chronic problems and consider appropriate solutions
- **Power Sharing:** police organizations share their resources with the community and work with them to achieve a common purpose

Roles and Responsibilities of SROs

- Build relationships with the community, including students, staff, and parents
- Provide guidance on matters related to criminality and the law
- Lead workshops and presentations regarding various topics, such as cyberbullying, vaping, and internet safety
- De-escalate situations and find alternative punitive solutions to deal with student altercations
- Be involved in school events and activities, such as field trips and sports teams

The research finds that there are mixed reviews about SRO programs.

Benefits of SRO Programs

- Positive relationships established with community members
- Increased sense of safety in schools, especially for teachers, administrators, and parents
- Community members gain important information about policing, criminality, and the law

Critiques of SRO Programs and Community Policing

- Difficult to evaluate and measure community impact, so there is a lack of research about the effectiveness of SRO programs
- Does not acknowledge the contentious relationships between police and marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, differently abled, and 2SLGBTQIA+ groups
    - The use of these programs may backfire when used in communities that are distrustful of police
- Contributes to the **school-to-prison pipeline**, which unfairly targets marginalized people
- Normalizes the constant surveillance of youth
    - Marginalized youth feel constantly watched and blamed
    - Black and Indigenous youth are more likely to be intimidated by and distrustful of SROs
- SRO programs give individual officers the chance to distance themselves from the policing institutions they are part of
- Use of racial-neutral language to shift the focus away from their role in security and surveillance
- The duties performed by SROs do not necessarily have to be done by police officers specifically. Can instead be done by social workers, educators, and other trained community members.

Ontario SRO Programs
- Toronto District School Board (Cancelled, 2017)

Literature scan

- Hamilton Wentworth School Board (Cancelled, 2020)
- Peel District School Board (Cancelled, 2020)
- Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (Cancelled, 2021)
- Upper Grand District School Board (Cancelled, 2021)
- Waterloo Region District School Board (Cancelled, 2021)
- London District Catholic School Board (Suspended, with plans to redesign the program)

Recommendations for SRO programs

- Consider the historical and social relationship of police and marginalized communities
- Take a trauma-informed, anti-racist approach that centres the voices of students
- Provide officers with appropriate training to respectfully engage with youth and marginalized populations
- Ensure that SROs are a good fit for the school and employ quick turnover if they are not
  - Good qualities in SROs:
    - Humorous, friendly, open, trauma-informed, takes a neutral approach
- Increased diversity in the SROs selected to participate in the program
- SROs are unarmed and out of uniform when on-duty

Appendix 2 - Interview Summary

Scope

To gather perspectives on School Resource Officer (SRO) programs in the Greater Essex District County District School Board, LogicalOutcomes conducted **28 participant interviews** with a variety of stakeholders involved in the school system:

- 6 Police officers: 4 from Windsor Police Service (WPS), 1 Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), 1 LaSalle
- 7 Administrators: 3 from Elementary Schools, 4 from Secondary; 5 from WPS served schools, 2 from OPP
- 11 Staff: 8 Teachers (5 Secondary, 3 Elementary), 3 Counsellors (Secondary); 10 from WPS school, 1 from OPP
- 4 community members: parent and/or individual engaged through school committee, other organization.

Participants were not asked to identify although some voluntarily did: nine individuals identified as racialized and one who identified as 2SLGBTQ2IA+.

The participants shared valuable feedback about their experiences with SRO programs and their perceptions of program effectiveness. Interviews aimed to identify the objectives of community police programming and find out whether the current model is having the desired impact on students. Moreover, a chief intent was to glean insights on perceptions of safety in schools and find out if there are identity-related differences regarding support for SRO programs. In short, the interviews sought to identify whether students of all identities feel safe in the presence of uniformed police officers and support the intended outcomes of community policing.

Objectives of SRO Programs

The perceptions of SRO programs varied significantly among the 28 participants. Understandably, the six police officers interviewed were generally positive in their assessments of SRO programs. The other stakeholders had mixed reviews. Notably, the racialized participants were generally more negative in their perceptions of SRO programs, compared to non-racialized participants. This theme is addressed with more detail in a subsequent section.

The participants were queried about their understandings of SRO program objectives. When asked to state the purpose of SRO programs, the participants shared the following:

- Build connections with students
- Educate students and deliver presentations
- Mentorship
- Break barriers for marginalized students
- Promote a positive image of police
- Maintain order in the school
- Mediation
- Keep students out of the criminal justice system

A key objective of SRO programs is to build relationships with students, according to the participants. Although the participants did not all agree that this objective is adequately met, all participants referred to relationship building as a key component of SRO programs. The participants stated that SROs engage with students by talking to them, delivering presentations, attending events, presenting awards, and sometimes becoming involved in extra-curricular activities. The other most widely cited purpose of SRO programs was to educate students on selected topics. Most participants stated that SROs provide presentations on topics such as bullying, drugs, smoking/vaping, social media, and the Youth

Criminal Justice Act (YCJA). Relationship building and educating students were the two most widely cited objectives of SRO programs.

Several police officers and one counsellor also stated that SRO programs offer mentorship to students. Three of the six police officers interviewed suggested that a key function of SRO programs is to serve as positive role models to students. One staff who identified as racialized also suggested that SROs can help break barriers for marginalized students by mentoring them and supporting their pursuit of a policing career for those who are interested. This participant suggested that racialized SROs can serve as positive role models for racialized students.

The police officers that were interviewed cited some additional purposes of SRO programs. Several police participants suggested that SRO programs can promote a positive image of police officers. One participant stated that having uniformed officers in schools can demystify policing and demonstrate that police officers can be approachable. Another officer suggested that having SRO programs can allow students to have positive interactions with police, which can help dispel negative stereotypes about police. These participants emphasized that SRO programs can ultimately promote a positive image of police, thereby fostering better relationships within the community.

The police interviews also suggested that SRO programs can help maintain order in schools. Although the participants stated that SROs are not there as disciplinarians, a few suggested that their presence can facilitate order nonetheless. One officer stated that SROs can promote order by talking to students and reminding them of the rules and expectations. One staff shared this sentiment, stating: "Students are more on point when they're [SROs] here." Nonetheless, most participants emphasized that SROs are not there to discipline students and regular officers are called in if an incident requires police intervention.

Two police officers also suggested that SROs can provide mediation. One police officer suggested that by talking to students, SROs can help divert students away from the criminal justice system. This participant suggested that part of the SROs role is to mediate situations, thereby preventing criminal justice involvement whenever possible. Another officer suggested that SRO programs can "help broken families".

Perceived Outcomes

Presence and Uniforms

The participants varied considerably in their assessments of program outcomes. While some participants discussed the positive features of the program, such as relationship building, many voiced concerns that these benefits might not be equitably distributed. Moreover, participants noted that having uniformed officers in schools could be problematic for some segments of the school population. A third of the 28 participants stated that **the presence of police officers in schools could trigger fear among marginalized students, particularly for racialized students**. Notably, all nine racialized participants raised this concern.

Nearly half of participants specifically identified **police uniforms as a source of discomfort for some students**. These participants described how students marginalized by race, citizenship status, or socio-economic status may be negatively impacted by the presence of uniformed officers. For example, one elementary school teacher described an incident where immigrant students had become fearful when police came into the school for an event. Other participants suggested that racialized students and those with negative police experiences might be uncomfortable with officers in their schools. One participant stated that **having officers in schools could negatively affect the academic achievement of racialized students**. As this participant observed, a state of fear is not conducive to learning. Some participants also discussed the culture of police brutality, which, despite being less pronounced in Canada, is still a problem for racialized communities. Ultimately, these participants felt that the presence of uniformed, armed police officers in schools could be problematic for vulnerable segments of the student body.

Conversely, a few participants felt that the presence of uniformed officers could be beneficial in building connections with marginalized students. Three police officers, one teacher, and one administrator suggested that having officers in schools could help students gain a better understanding of policing, thereby dispelling some of their fears and negative

perceptions. As one participant put it, students can see that "they're [police] there to help." Notably, only one racialized staff suggested that unformed officers yield potential to improve perceptions of police among marginalized students, although this participant also observed that police presence can trigger fear among some.

Presentations

The participants also discussed the presentations delivered by SROs and general interactions with students. Several participants noted that presentations were engaging for students and helped educate them on important topics, such as drugs, bullying, and safety. One administrator noted that the presentations would create "buzz and excitement" among students. Other participants were more neutral in their assessments and/or did not focus as much on presentations as part of their discussion. A few participants held negative views of police presentations. Two teachers, an counsellor, and an administrator questioned the value of having police presentations. These participants suggested that police might not be the best option for delivering presentations, especially given the overall concerns about police presence in schools. The participants also stated that **many of the topics covered by police presentations could be taught in the classroom by teachers or guest speakers with lived experience**. As one participant stated: "Police are not educators." One sentiment shared by participants from all backgrounds was the B-RAD content should be updated. Although a few participants had positive assessments of B-RAD presentations, a quarter of participants stated that is outdated and largely ineffective.

Making connections

The participants also discussed student/police interactions more generally. Several participants stated that the SROs provide an effective way to bridge students and police, and that officers were able to create meaningful connections. SROs connected with students by chatting with them and sometimes by participating in school events and extra-curricular activities. Two participants described how their SROs became involved in extra-curricular activities in their school, which provided a way to connect with students. One participant stated that an SRO was involved with their school's basketball program and another described how an officer helped with their school's musical production. For these participants, the officers were a valuable asset for students. One teacher described seeing "beautiful connections" resulting from the SRO program.

While some participants described positive connections, others were more critical. Several participants questioned the value of having resources devoted SRO programs and **questioned whether the benefits were equitably distributed among all students**. One police officer observed that SRO interactions typically involved the same group of male students asking questions. Other participants merely observed that having SROs present simply to engage with students might not be the best use of resources. Several participants suggested that having other resources to engage students might be more helpful, such as social workers or counsellors. Several participants addressed negative incidents involving police officers in schools. For example, several participants discussed an incident where a student was tased, and another discussed a "tough talk" by an SRO that they observed. According to this participant, the officer involved used aggressive language and stated that the talk might be better suited for "intoxicated college students." One common theme raised by participants across all groups was that **the effectiveness of SRO programs depends heavily on the officers involved**. Several participants stated that the officers involved in their schools delivered engaging presentations and made sincere efforts to connect with students. While not all participants were in favor of SRO programs, a quarter of non-police participants had positive things to say about individual officers involved in their schools.

Lack of clarity

A final theme pertaining to outcomes centers on the lack of clear mandate for SRO programs. This was a concern raised by several participants. One secondary teacher observed that the purpose of police officers in schools was not articulated. Similarly, another participant stated that the mandate is unclear and that they observe no tangible benefits. Other participants questioned whether chatting with students and delivering presentations provided enough of a

benefit to warrant an SRO program, especially given concerns about the impacts on marginalized students. These participants suggested that other resources may be more effective.

Identity-Related Concerns

A key objective of the interviews was to determine if students of all identities recognize and support the intended outcomes of community policing. As evidenced by the interview data, there are identity-related concerns regarding SRO programs. Over half the interview participants raised concerns that students from marginalized backgrounds may be negatively impacted by the presence of armed, uniformed police officers in schools. Notably, all nine racialized participants addressed this concern compared to half of non-racialized participants. The racialized participants were clearly attuned to the potential problems associated with SRO programs, indicating that **perceptions of program success are not equally distributed**.

A few participants were particularly vocal about the problems that SRO programs can create for marginalized segments of the student body, especially racialized students. These participants raised concerns that **armed, uniformed officers generate fear among some students**, which can impact their academic performance and overall school experience. Students with negative experiences involving police may feel re-traumatized by the presence of armed police officers, according to these participants. One participant discussed how students who witnessed negative police interactions can experience vicarious trauma with police presence in their schools. Several participants described how colonial history, racism, and recent events involving police brutality have resulted in tensions between police and marginalized populations. Another participant observed that SRO programs tend to be implemented in schools with larger racialized populations. Finally, a participant raised concerns that SRO programs can contribute to the "school to prison pipeline." Interestingly, this participant's view of SRO objectives did not align with those identified by the police participants, who stated that a chief aim of SRO programs was to help keep students out of the criminal justice system. These discrepancies indicate that **there are identity-related differences in perceptions of SRO programs.**

Perceptions of Safety

The participants' perceptions of safety also varied. Broadly speaking, the interview data did not support the notion that SRO programs contribute to increased feelings of safety for all students. As mentioned, a third of participants raised concerns that police presence may trigger fear for marginalized students. Evidently, these participants did not feel that SRO programs make everyone feel safe. A few participants were particularly vocal about inequities pertaining to safety, emphasizing that police presence does not contribute to feelings of safety for marginalized students. One racialized teacher stated that as a Black person, they do not feel safe with police in general. A few participants, however, shared that SROs can contribute to feelings of safety. One teacher explicitly stated that they believe the program enhances safety. Three other participants also indicated that **SROs can promote feelings of safety; however, one teacher qualified their statement by acknowledging that greater feelings of safety might not be experienced equitably**. This participant stated that although they feel safer with police presence as a teacher, increased feelings of safety may not be experienced by everyone. This participant suggested that SROs might only make those who already feel safe feel safer, while excluding marginalized students.

Suggestions summary

The participants offered several suggestions on how to improve SRO programs or provide alternative programming. They listed the following suggestions.

1. **Provide better training for SROs**
   Several participants suggested that SROs can be an asset to schools; however, they need proper training to function effectively in a school environment. One teacher emphasized that SROs must tailor their approach to the school environment. As this participant stated, the officers must remember that the students "are just kids." Additionally, participants also stated that SROs would benefit from diversity training and mental health awareness. Moreover, participants stated that SROs must be aware of historical inequities in policing.

2. **Adopt a more inclusive/intersectional approach**
   Several participants emphasized that more efforts should be made to ensure that be benefits of SRO programs are more equitably distributed among the student body. These participants suggested that SRO programs must find ways to promote inclusivity and that the colonial history in policing must be overtly acknowledged. One participant noted that the program must adopt an intersectional approach. Ultimately, these participants stated that addressing the barriers experienced by marginalized students constitutes a critical step towards improving program outcomes. As one participant stated, the program must ensure that all students feel safe.

3. **Use plain-clothed officers**
   Several participants suggested that a more casual appearance might dispel some of the fear of police experienced by marginalized students. Having unarmed, plain-clothed officers in schools instead of uniformed officers may quell fears, according to some participants. However, several participants pointed out that this approach might be problematic. For example, one participant stated that the presence of plain-clothed officers could heighten feelings of surveillance among some students. Another participant suggested that the uniform is needed to make officers identifiable. In short, the use of plain-clothed officers was suggested as a possible solution to some of the problems identified by the current SRO model, although this solution has some drawbacks.

4. **Diversify SROs**
   Several participants suggested that increased diversity can improve SRO program outcomes. These participants suggested that a racialized SRO may have a better chance of connecting with racialized students and may be less apt to generate fear.

5. **Encourage officers to share their talents**
   One participant suggested that SROs should be encouraged to share their talents with students by becoming involved in extra-curricular programming. By becoming involved in school activities, such as sports or music, SROs can connect with students in a meaningful way. Moreover, it may provide an opportunity for SROs to engage with broader segments of the student body.

6. **Alternatives to SROs**
   Several participants suggested that other resources may be more effective than SROs. For example, several participants stated that social programs would more beneficial for students. Several participants suggested that social workers, counsellors, or community partners may be able to fill roles similar to those of SROs, but without generating fear among marginalized students. One participant suggested that officers could maintain involvement in a more peripheral fashion by participating in "career days." As such, students would still have an opportunity to interact with police and learn about potential career paths, without the drawbacks that accompany police presence in schools on a daily basis.

Interview Protocols

The LogicalOutcomes interviewer introduced themselves and explained the review purpose. They also shared the 'About the review' content from the GECDSB website in advance. Interview questions were shared in advance, and interviewees were encouraged to share on related topics/as they felt.

The following published information was shared with all stakeholders, to inform about the review before their conversation:
- About the Review: https://www.publicboard.ca/en/about-gecdsb/review-of-community-police-programs.aspx
- FAQ: https://www.publicboard.ca/en/about-gecdsb/faq-review-of-community-police-programs.aspx
- Youth-focused supports: https://www.publicboard.ca/en/about-gecdsb/supports-for-participants-of-gecdsb-community-policing-review.aspx

Consent Statement
Before we start, I'll describe the process. I won't record the call today, but will take notes. Then, I'll summarize the themes, and your comments will be shared anonymously with the review team. If you are concerned about the confidentiality of any particular point, we can discuss how to disguise the source. Can we proceed with the interview? Do you have any questions before I start the interview?

Police Interview Questions
- How is the current community police programming perceived by GECDSB stakeholders? What are its intended outcomes?
  - Are the program objectives articulated and shared?
- Are community police program outcomes being achieved? Are the programs having their desired impact on students?
- How can we learn more about the current program?
- How often is program content reviewed? How are youth involved? What does that process look like?
- How are students asked to evaluate the program/their experiences with police officers in their school?
- Can course content for B-RAD be shared with the review team?
- Overall, how does the program align with GECDSB strategic initiatives? Where is there room to grow?

Officers were also asked about their uniforms and whether or not they should continue to wear them when visiting schools.

Administrator Interview Questions
- Are community police program outcomes being achieved?
- Are the programs having their desired impact on students?

For Elementary school administrators:
- Experience with VIP Presentation
- Other interactions with community policing in elementary school
- Perceived/Observed impact on students
- Other reflections
- Thoughts on how to better understand how students are impacted? We are creating a secondary student survey (aim to reach Grade 9 students who participated in classroom VIP)
- Is there any one else we should speak to, who has direct experience with VIP presentation/seeing the impact on elementary students?

For Secondary school administrators:
- Experience with B-RAD Presentation

- Experience with community policing in school
- Communicating with students about police presence
- Perceived, observed impact on students
- Other reflections
- Thoughts on how to better understand how students are impacted? We are creating a secondary student survey (aim to reach Grade 9 students who participated in classroom VIP)
- Is there anyone else we should speak to, who has direct experience with VIP presentations/seeing the impact on elementary students?

Staff/Counsellor Interview Questions

Roles and Responsibilities
- What do you do at the school? What does a typical day look like?
- How long have you occupied this role?
- Do students come to you to discuss their concerns? If not, who do they go to?

Community Policing
- Are you familiar with GECDSB's community policing program (HSROs, VIP, B-RAD)? What do you know about them? What is their purpose/role?
- How are these programs received by students and the school community? How do you feel about the program?
- Would you say these programs are useful? What are the benefits of the program?
  - Do you think students build meaningful relationships with HSROs?
  - Do these programs and presentations contribute to overall school safety?
  - Can you recall a time when a student called their HSRO or utilized info they got from VIP/B-RAD?
- What are some drawbacks of the program?
- Is there anything that concerns you about the use of community policing?
- What would you recommend for the future of these programs? Improvement? Alternatives?

Closing Questions
- What the best ways we can engage with ___ (Black, Indigenous, etc.) students?
  - How can we do this safely/make them feel safe/comfortable?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share/think we should know?
- Is there anyone else we should talk to?

Community Member Interview Questions
1. What is your knowledge and understanding of the programs?
2. What is your opinion about their value?
3. What is your opinion about their impact on students and school environment?
4. What would you like to see happen with respect to police presence in GECDSB schools?
5. Anything else to share?

Appendix 3 - Student Research Team Scope of Work

Students are directly affected by school-based community policing programs. It was therefore important that Students actively contributed to the review. To ensure that Student voices were amplified, a Student research team was formed. Student counsellors were invited to share the opportunity to participate in the review with Students. Those who were interested in participating reached out to the review team.

The Student research team consisted of 10 Students in Grades 11 and 12. These Students represented diverse identities and came from a handful of GECDSB schools. After providing their consent (including a Parent's signature), Students engaged in various research-based tasks over the course of 6 weeks. They spent no more than 10 hours of their time. Students were offered volunteer hours or an honorarium for their efforts.

Student involvement included:

- Self-study on research ethics, methods, project purpose
- Virtual project meetings
- Provide input on data collection methods
- Inform the outreach plan
- Review data collection tools
- Support outreach at their school
- Debrief with consultant on student findings

Appendix 4 - Focus Group Summary

Note: the adult focus groups (members of the Disabling Anti-Black Racism Committee) is not included here, as the membership was small and responses may be identifying.

Student Focus Groups

1. **How would you describe your feelings around safety in your school?**

Most students expressed that they felt safe at school, with some of them stating that they have never felt unsafe. Some students said that their school is an inclusive environment that feels like a "family", where open communication occurs and people have room to make mistakes. Some students stated that the adults in the building have the best interests of students in mind. One student explained that someone's feeling of safety is dependent on their personal experience: some people have nothing to worry about while others may be affected by several external and/or internal factors.

Teachers, Create Your Future (CYF) counsellors, administrators, Child and Youth Workers (CYW), and secretaries were all cited as being people who helped students feel safe at school. CYWs were described by one student as being kind, fair, and easy to speak with. Another student explained that CYF counsellors help them feel very safe and makes the school seem more "bright" and less draining.

Knowing that the school is easily accessible to emergency services also helped students feel safe. Police presence was also cited by multiple students as contributing to their feelings of safety. Police can limit the amount of fighting, drugs, and bullying, and help calm things down if a situation occurs. The use of cameras in the school also helped students feel safe at school.

Some students felt unsafe at school because physical violence has occurred before. Students feel unsafe in the presence of weapons. One student felt unsafe because incidents may not be dealt with until it is too late. Some students explain that they are fearful of bullying, gang threats, and being jumped. Being in a small school environment where everyone knows each other can also make students feel unsafe because rumours can spread quickly and be far-reaching. Similarly, cliques and group drama were also something that made students feel unsafe.

2. **How does seeing uniformed officers at school make you feel?**

Many students explained that when they see police at the school, they automatically question why they are there, and they wonder if something happened and if they are in immediate danger. Students say that they must know what is going on, who is in the building and why. One student expressed a feeling of anxiety when they see an officer, and another reported that they would instantly get tense or stiff and wonder if there was anything about them that would lead to them being questioned. Other students explain that there is no reason to be concerned if the police are simply observing or checking in.

A small portion of students say that they feel safe having officers around and are not scared of them. Officers are seen by some students as being a deterrent to crime and a useful resource if a situation occurs. One student referred to their previous experience with police in the community, including participation in the VIP program. They explained that this experience helped them realize that the majority of police officers are good people who are trying to make Windsor and the world a safer, better place.

Students felt more comfortable with officers once they got to know them and saw them acting friendly with others. However, another student explained that it is hard to find opportunities to talk with police, and being unfamiliar with them discourages them from engaging in conversation. Another student stated that people may be seen as "snitches" for talking to police.

3. What might help foster relationship with police?

Students explain in order to foster a relationship with them, that police must first build trust. Once that trust is established, they can extend the relationship by doing fun activities that are unrelated to work. Additionally, students would like to know why police are in the school in the first place. They would also like for officers to be dressed more casually instead of in their "big, chunky" uniforms.

4. Please describe the extent of your trust for police in your community.

A small portion of students explain that they were raised to trust police and view them as a source of protection. Seeing police out in the community, including during the VIP program, helped some students build relationships. One student described Windsor police as "good" and "trustworthy", with many officers "demonstrating a caring nature". They did, however, acknowledge that like in any job, there are some people who are untrustworthy. Other students lacked personal experience with police and subsequently do not know much about them. One student described police as a "faceless group" and "dudes in blue". Police in the newspaper were cited as being portrayed in a positive light.

One student explained that their trust in police depends on the context and which officer is involved. They say their trust is "50/50" because in their experience, some officers handle the situations very well, while others handle them terribly. In general, students trust that police will help if they are at risk of physical harm. Student respondents explained that if police are present, they can be trusted to act. However, issues that are not deemed to be important are not given priority. Issues involving POC may not be considered as important. One student explained that an incident occurred and they had to wait hours for police assistance. Some students stated that they do not trust police to de-escalate situations because they are not effective communicators. They emphasize that in order to be viewed as helpful or trustworthy, they must be able to communicate effectively. An unfamiliar officer with a weapon may not be the best person to de-escalate certain situations. Additionally, a student expressed a distrust in the cultural competence of police. Another student stated that they had zero trust in the police, largely due to a recent incident that occurred between the police and a family member.

5. What do you think police involvement in your school should look like?

Students largely acknowledge that the police are needed in certain situations, such as incidents of physical violence. However, they also realize that students have contrasting views of the police: they can put some people at ease while causing distress for others. Some students explained that police involvement might depend on the needs of individual schools.

The presence of a police car outside of the school is an immediate cause of concern for multiple students. There is an automatic assumption that something bad has occurred; they do not assume that an officer is simply checking in.

Students had contrasting views about the role of police presentations. Some students said that presentations were a cool way to learn about the job and the law. Some students even made suggestions for successful presentations: small group discussions that provide a deeper understanding of information, an opportunity for relationship-building, and the time for insightful question and answer periods. Real life discussions about what drugs and alcohol has done/can do were also seen as a useful presentation topic. On the other hand, some students said that the presentations are unnecessary unless the content directly

relates to the curriculum. They stated there needs to be consideration about what is and is not useful and make the appropriate changes.

One student stated that they don't need extra help from the police, so they suggested no police involvement. Another student said it is important to consider the number of officers present in the school. Students do not want to feel like they are constantly being monitored, so only a small number of police should be involved. The use of a security guard was also proposed as a way to help students feel safe when they enter the school. Multiple students suggested that HSROs are dressed informally when they are in the school. They should be wearing plain clothes and have no gun. One student suggested that a taser is on their person as opposed to a gun. Another suggested the use of a sticker to identify them instead of a badge, which they describe as "unsettling".

The officers who work with students need to be screened to ensure they have a "proper character" and are a good fit for the school. Students think that HSROs should be kind, polite, inclusive, and take the initiative to actively talk to students. Officers should begin to help out in the school. Some students also stated that police should not make surprise, or pop-up visits. They explain that students should know when an outside authority figure is entering the school and have weapons. An announcement to let students know when an officer is present can prevent students from assuming the worst when they see a police car.

Focus Group Protocol

SECTION 1: (15 minutes)

EVERY BODY INTRODUCTION (SCC to lead)

SCC: introduce the organization + the facilitator
Students: Name
GECDSB Staff listening in
LO note taker

ABOUT THIS REVIEW (LO to share)
In this review, 'Community Police Presence and Programs' includes:
1. Grade 6 Values Influences and Peers (VIP) - multiple presentations over the Grade 6 year, with a certificate and graduation ceremony.
2. Grade 9 B-RAD - one presentation for each topic: Bullying, Relationships, Alcohol, and Drugs, early in the Grade 9 school year.
3. 'High School Resource Officer;' (SRO): the SRO may give presentations, speak to classrooms, socialize with students in the hallways, attend school events, and more. Every few years, each school is assigned a new SRO.
4. Other police-led presentations (for example a teacher asks the SRO to speak about vaping).

Since the pandemic, officers and programs have been mainly not in schools, but some virtual programming has occurred.

The School Board has asked LogicalOutcomes to review its Community Police Programs. LogicalOutcomes is listening to students, teachers, staff, parents, community members and police, and will prepare recommendations to help the Board understand the impact of these programs on students.

Share Link in chat to 'About the review/FAQ' [*https://bit.ly/3CpPmej*](https://bit.ly/3CpPmej)

SAFE SPACE SETTING AND CHECK IN – (SCC)
Check-in: name, pronouns if you want to share, how you're feeling and a question, which can be 'share a fun fact/share something most people don't know about you'

Focus Group

The Four Pillars: Respect, Listen, Understand, Communicate™

Your rights and verbal consent (SCC)
Respecting you, and your safety is the most important. We're asking you to be vulnerable, and share your experiences and emotions. If you want to stop at any time, that is fine.

There is an inclusion room, where you can chat with a student counsellor [Add Name from introductions] *LO to add link to separate room in the chat*

You do not need to answer every question. You can use Chat if you prefer.

We understand that discussing the police in any capacity may be difficult and cause feelings of distress, anxiety, and anger.

If you are struggling, or just need someone to talk to...
- During the call: join the inclusion room
- After the call: see this handout for Windsor area supports (LO Add link to chat https://bit.ly/3DpQDDB]

We'll take your decision to be on this call and share your thoughts with us as your consent to be a part of this review. Let's continue.

SECTION 2: DISCUSSION – 35 minutes (SCC to lead)

You can answer in the chat. Take your time. Sharing your opinions is optional.

1. How would you describe your feelings around safety in your high school? What makes you feel safe here? What makes you feel unsafe here?
2. How does seeing uniformed police officers at your school make you feel? Does it change your feelings of safety? How?
3. Please describe the extent of your trust for police in your community. What has led you to feel that way?
4. What do you think police involvement in your school should look like? How should police involvement in your school look? How should or shouldn't they be involved?

Section 3. FEEDBACK SURVEY – 5 minutes (SCC to lead)
Thank you!

We know this topic can be difficult If you are struggling, or just need someone to talk to, you may wish to revisit the support list here (LO to re-share https://bit.ly/3DpQDDB]

One last question: can you give us feedback on today's discussion? It will take 2 minutes.
(link to survey)

LogicalOutcomes will complete 6 focus groups with students, and the student survey is now active. They will be in touch with you when the review is complete by email, with an update.

Youth-focused supports: https://www.publicboard.ca/en/about-gecdsb/supports-for-participants-of-gecdsb-community-policing-review.aspx

Appendix 5 - Surveys

Student Responses

Respondent identity summary

GRADE

What grade are you in?

Grade 9	40
Grade 10	71
Grade 11	82
Grade 12	90
Not in secondary school at GECDSB	4

DISABILITY

Do you have a disability?

Yes	132
No	398
I'm not sure	68
I do not understand the question	2
I prefer not to answer	19

RACIAL IDENITY

What race category best describes you? (Select all that apply)

Indigenous	29
Black/African	42
East Asian	26
Latin	15
Middle Eastern	84
Southeast Asian	15
South Asian	38
White	389
I prefer not to answer	25
My racial identity is not included	15

FAITH AND SPIRITUALITY

What is your religion, faith, or spirituality? (Select all that apply)

Indigenous Spirituality	8
Agnostic	35
Atheist	80
Buddhist	7
Christian	147
Hindu	7
Jewish	3
Muslim	88
Sikh	11
No religion	200
Another religion not listed	41
I prefer not to answer	49

GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Please choose all of the following that describe you.

Girl or Woman	306
Boy or Man	254
Trans	37
Two Spirit	5
Non-binary	31
Gender non-conforming	15
Gender fluid	22
Intersex	4
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer	126
Straight/Heterosexual	160
Gender identity(ies) not listed	4
Sexual orientation not listed	23
I'm not sure	14
I don't understand the question	1
I prefer not to answer	11

IMMIGRATION STATUS

How long have you lived in Canada?

I was born here	499
I moved to Canada in the last five years	39
I moved to Canada more than five years ago	71
I don't know	2
I prefer not to answer	5

Answers

Note: The Findings section of the report includes identity analysis of select questions (i.e. responses by gender and sexuality, race, and disability)

Note: individual comments are not included here. A selection of de-identified comments is presented in the Findings section of the report.

In general, do you feel safe at school?

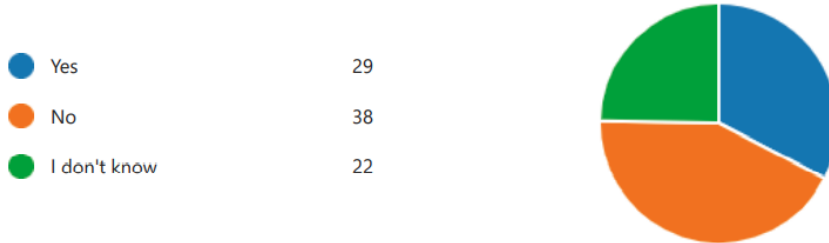|		
●	Very Safe	332
●	Somewhat safe	236
●	Somewhat unsafe	44
●	Very unsafe	7

12. Did you participate in Grade 9 B-RAD?

The program is delivered by a Police officer, and includes one presentation for each topic Bullying, Relationships, Alcohol and Drugs , early in the Grade 9 school year.
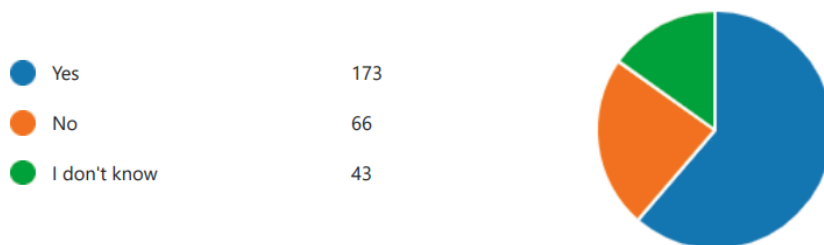
🔵	Yes	29
🟠	No	38
🟢	I don't know	22

13. Was Grade 9 B-RAD a valuable experience for you?

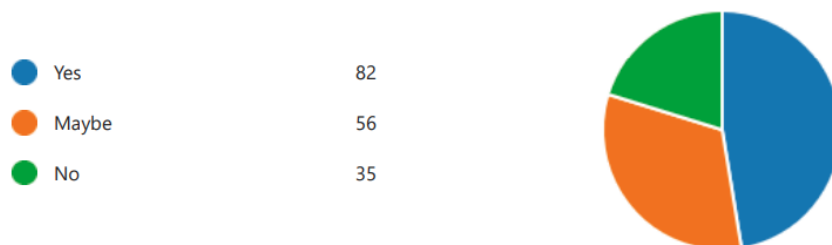|		
🔵	Yes	10
🟠	No	9
🟢	Maybe	10

15. Did you participate in Grade 6 VIP?

This program included multiple presentations over the Grade 6 year with a focus on Values, Influences, and Peers, and included a certificate and graduation ceremony

🔵	Yes	173
🟠	No	66
🟢	I don't know	43

16. Was Grade 6 VIP a valuable experience for you?
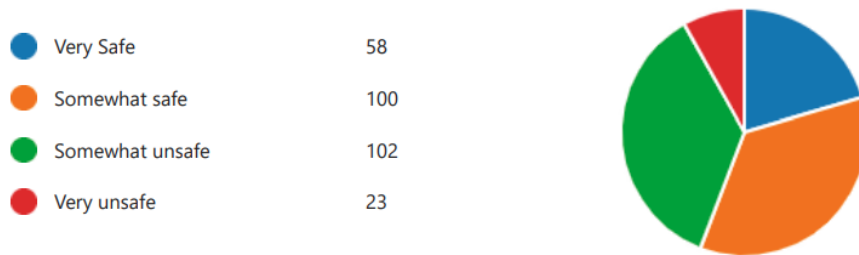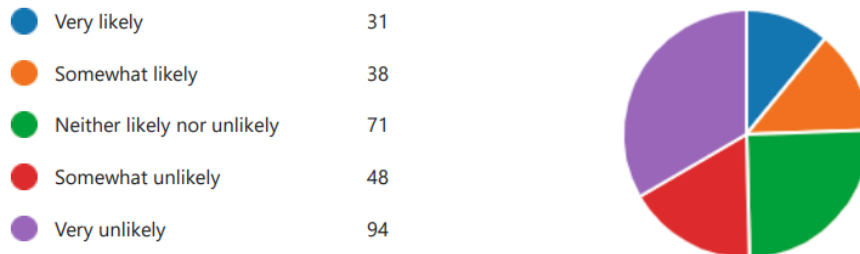
🔵	Yes	82
🟠	Maybe	56
🟢	No	35

18. Since starting high school, have you had the opportunity to meet or talk with a 'School Resource Officer'?

🔵	Yes	12
🟠	No	212
🟢	I'm not sure	57

19. How does seeing a Police Officer at school, make you feel?

🔵	Very Safe	58
🟠	Somewhat safe	100
🟢	Somewhat unsafe	102
🔴	Very unsafe	23

20. How likely are you to talk to your school's 'School Resource Officer' (if you saw them in the hallway)?

🔵	Very likely	31
🟠	Somewhat likely	38
🟢	Neither likely nor unlikely	71
🔴	Somewhat unlikely	48
🟣	Very unlikely	94

22. If you see an Officer at school, do you try to avoid them?

🔵	Never	90
🟠	Rarely	64
🟢	Sometimes	63
🔴	Often	30
🟣	Always	33
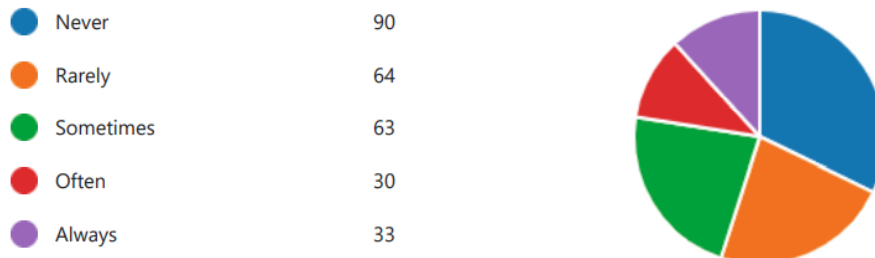
21. If you see an Officer at school, how do you feel? (Choose all that apply.)
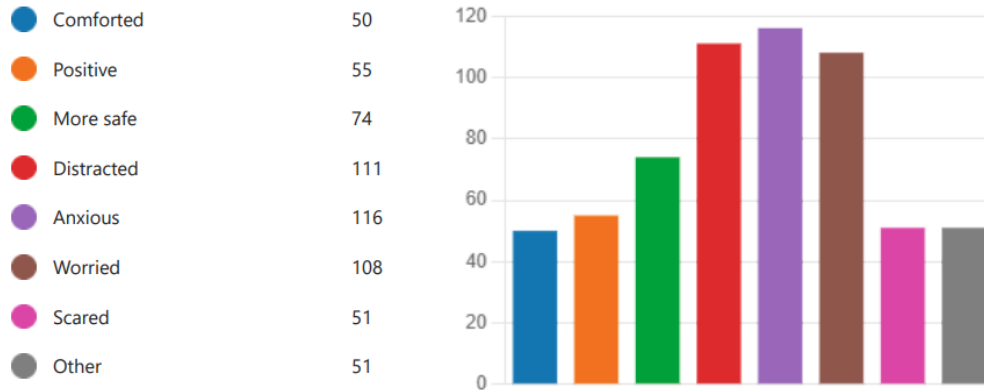
● Comforted	50
● Positive	55
● More safe	74
● Distracted	111
● Anxious	116
● Worried	108
● Scared	51
● Other	51

24. How often do you feel positive about the police in your community?

● Never	17
● Rarely	50
● Sometimes	122
● Often	70
● Always	23

25. How often do you trust the police in your community?

● Never	15
● Rarely	50
● Sometimes	82
● Often	108
● Always	28
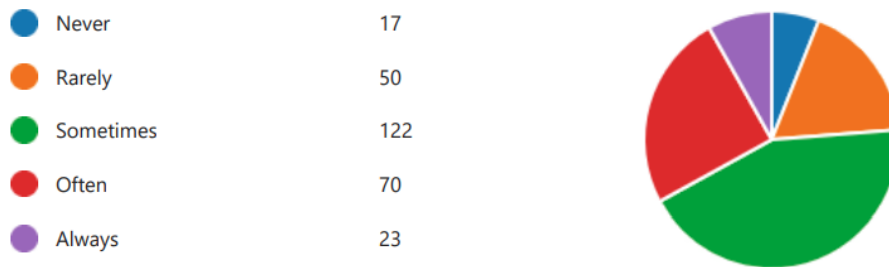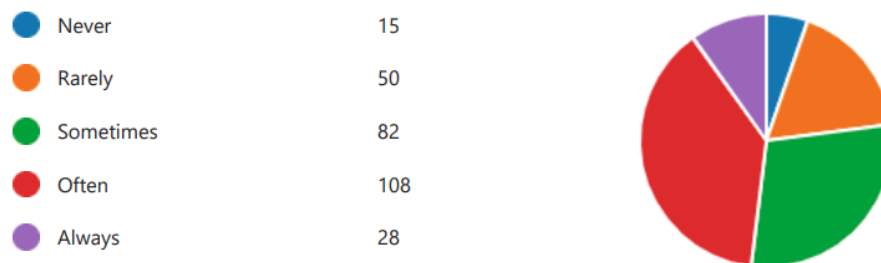
26. Have your experiences with police in your school made your perspectives on police more positive in general?

🔵	Yes	67
🟠	No	44
🟢	I have no experience with police...	118
🔴	I don't know how to answer this...	54

27. Would you like to see more involvement from police in your school, less, or no involvement?

🔵	More involement	124
🟠	Less involvement	70
🟢	No involvement	70

Community Responses

Respondent identity summary

2. What type of GECDSB Community Member are you? Please choose one.

🔵	Former Student	81
🟠	Teacher, Staff, Administrator	611
🟢	Parent, Guardian, Caregiver	2285
🔴	Current Student (For Secondary ...	68
🟣	Community member not listed ...	68

For the Former Students: How many years ago did you attend GECDSB schools?

🔵	Less than 5 years ago (2017)	24
🟠	Between 5 - 15 years ago	23
🟢	More than 15 years ago	50
🔴	Current student - continue if ele...	52

DISABILITY
Do you have a disability?

Yes	253
No	2745
I'm not sure	24
I do not understand the question	3
I prefer not to answer	81

RACIAL IDENTITY
What race category best describes you? (Select all that apply)

Indigenous	80
Black/African	108
East Asian	89
Latin	53
Middle Eastern	124
Southeast Asian	33
South Asian	122
White	2179
I prefer not to answer	414
My racial identity is not included	44

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

What is your religion, creed, faith, and/or spirituality?

Indigenous Spirituality	35
Agnostic	145
Atheist	173
Buddhist	16
Christian	1213
Hindu	35
Jewish	29
Muslim	151
Sikh	42
No religion	757
Another religion not listed	154
I prefer not to answer	464

GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Please choose all of the following that describe you

Girl or Woman	2119
Boy or Man	762
Trans	6
Two Spirit	4
Non-binary	10
Gender non-conforming	7
Gender fluid	8
Intersex	2
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer	83
Straight/Heterosexual	535
Gender identity(ies) not listed	2
Sexual orientation not listed	19
I'm not sure	9
I don't understand the question	16
I prefer not to answer	202

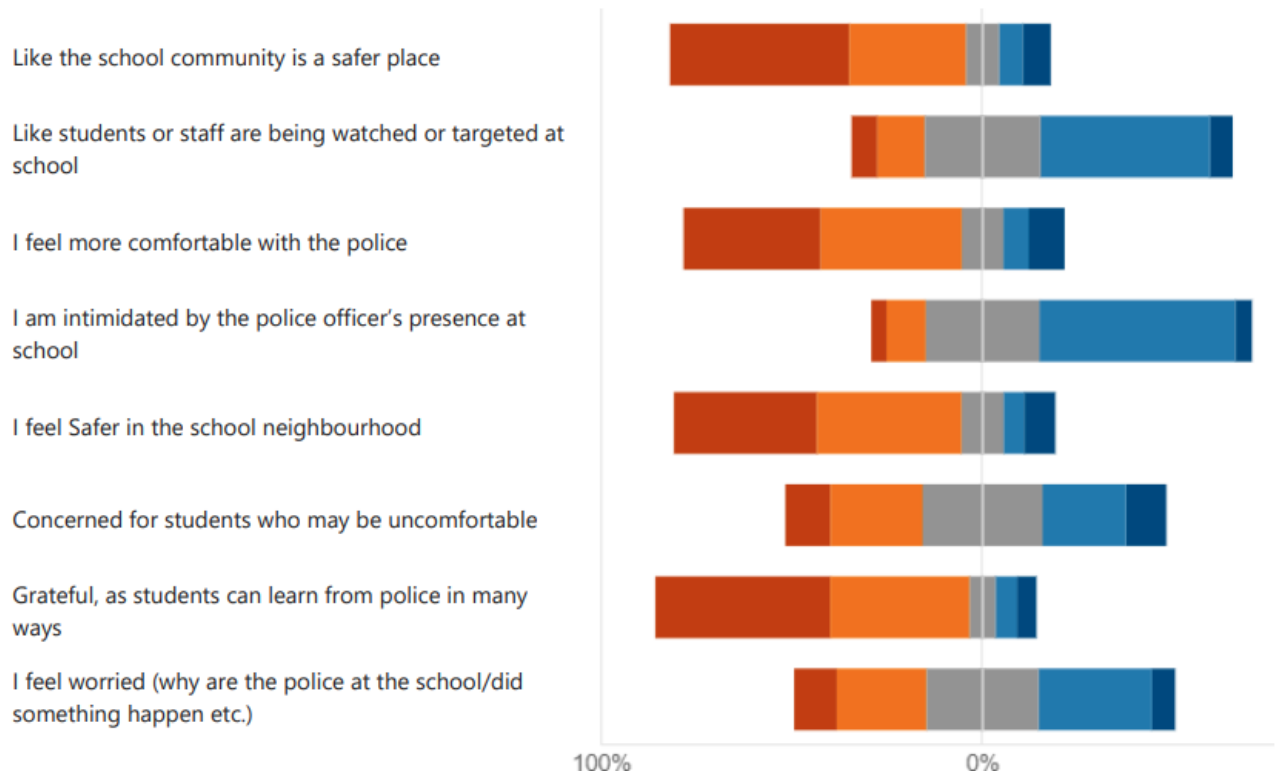## IMMIGRATION STATUS

How long have you lived in Canada?

I was born here	2509
I moved to Canada in the last five years	99
I moved to Canada more than five years ago	409
I don't know	4
I prefer not to answer	81

Answers

Note: individual comments are not included here. A selection of de-identified comments is presented in the Findings section of the report.

12. When you think about or see police officers in school, how does this make you feel?

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disgagree ■ I'm Not Sure

Like the school community is a safer place

Like students or staff are being watched or targeted at school

I feel more comfortable with the police

I am intimidated by the police officer's presence at school

I feel Safer in the school neighbourhood

Concerned for students who may be uncomfortable

Grateful, as students can learn from police in many ways

I feel worried (why are the police at the school/did something happen etc.)

100%   0%

13. What do you think police should be doing at school? Choose all that apply.

●	Build relationships and support ...	2623
●	Respond to non-emergencies	1254
●	Respond to emergencies	2581
●	Conduct investigations, lay char...	1182
●	Prevent crimes	1734
●	Collect information from studen...	903
●	Give presentations on school Sa...	2581
●	Other (please specify below)	273
●	None of these	72
●	I don't know.	36
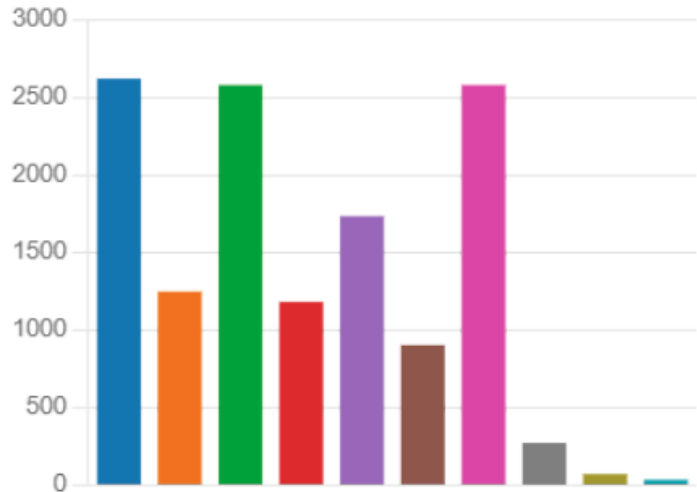
(If you chose Other, a comment option was available).

15. In your opinion, should the School Board continue to offer Community Police presence and programs in schools?

●	Yes	2558
●	No	273
●	Maybe	283

Identity Questions in Full

DISABILITY

Do you have a disability? Some examples of disabilities include: significant vision impairment, d/Dead or hard of hearing, speech difficulties, mental health condition, cognitive or learning disability, addiction, acquired brain injury, neurological condition, autism spectrum, chronic illness, physical disability.

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure
- I do not understand this question
- I prefer not to answer

RACIAL IDENTITY

In our society, people are often described by their race or racial background. Which category best describes you? (Select all that apply)

- Indigenous (such as First Nations, Métis, Inuit)
- Black/African (such as African, Afro-Caribbean, African Canadian descent)
- East Asian (such as Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese descent)
- Latin (Latin American, Hispanic descent)
- Middle Eastern/North African (such as Arab, Persian, Afghan descent, including Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Turkish, Kurdish descent)
- Southeast Asia (such as Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, Vietnamese descent)
- South Asian (such as Indian, East Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Indo-Caribbean descent)
- White (such as European descent, including English, Scottish, Irish, Russian, Italian, Polish, Portuguese)
- I prefer not to answer
- My racial identity is not included here

FAITH/RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY

What is your religion, faith, or spirituality? (Select all that apply)

- Indigenous Spirituality
- Agnostic
- Atheist
- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- No religion
- Another religion not listed
- I prefer not to answer

GENDER & SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Please choose all of the following that describe you. (Select all that apply)

- Girl or Woman
- Boy or Man
- Trans
- Two Spirit
- Non-binary

- Gender non-conforming
- Gender fluid
- Intersex
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer
- Straight/Heterosexual
- Gender identity not listed above
- Sexual orientation not listed above
- I'm not sure
- I don't understand the question
- I prefer not to answer

IMMIGRATION STATUS

How long have you lived in Canada?
- I was born here
- I moved to Canada in the last 5 years (after 2017)
- I moved to Canada more than 5 years ago (before 2017)
- I don't know
- I prefer not to answer

Did your family come to Canada as refugees/refugee claimants/asylum seekers? (Select all that apply)
- No, I/We did not
- Yes, I did
- Yes, my parents did
- Yes, my grandparents did
- Yes, other close family mem

Appendix 6. Citations from *Fraser v. Canada (Attorney Genera), 2020 SCC 28*, Supreme Court of Canada, on Adverse Effects Discrimination [23]

[30] …Adverse impact discrimination occurs when a seemingly neutral law has a disproportionate impact on members of groups protected on the basis of an enumerated or analogous ground …. Instead of explicitly singling out those who are in the protected groups for differential treatment, the law indirectly places them at a disadvantage (Sophia Moreau, "What Is Discrimination?" (2010), 38 *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 143, at p. 155).

[31] Increased awareness of adverse impact discrimination has been a "central trend in the development of discrimination law", marking a shift away from a fault-based conception of discrimination towards an effects-based model which critically examines systems, structures, and their impact on disadvantaged groups (Denise G. Réaume, "Harm and Fault in Discrimination Law: The Transition from Intentional to Adverse Effect Discrimination" (2001), 2 *Theor. Inq. L.* 349, at pp. 350-51; see also Béatrice Vizkelety, *Proving Discrimination in Canada* (1987), at p. 18; Sheppard (2010), at pp. 19-20). Accompanying this shift was the recognition that discrimination is "frequently a product of continuing to do things 'the way they have always been done'", and that governments must be "particularly vigilant about the effects of their own policies" on members of disadvantaged groups (Fay Faraday, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back? Substantive Equality, Systemic Discrimination and Pay Equity at the Supreme Court of Canada" (2020), 94 *S.C.L.R.* (2d) 301, at p. 310; Sophia Moreau, "The Moral Seriousness of Indirect Discrimination", in Hugh Collins and Tarunabh Khaitan, eds., *Foundations of Indirect Discrimination Law* (2018), 123, at p. 145).

[53] How does this work in practice? Instead of asking whether a law explicitly targets a protected group for differential treatment, a court must explore whether it does so indirectly through its impact on members of that group (see *Eldridge*, at paras. 60-62; *Vriend*, at para. 82). A law, for example, may include seemingly neutral rules, restrictions or criteria that operate in practice as "built-in headwinds" for members of protected groups…. To assess the adverse impact of these policies, courts looked beyond the facially neutral criteria on which they were based, and examined whether they had the effect of placing members of protected groups at a disadvantage (Moreau (2018), at p. 125).

[58] …. Evidence about the "results of a system" may provide concrete proof that members of protected groups are being disproportionately impacted (*Action Travail*, at p. 1139; Vizkelety, at pp. 170-74). This evidence may include statistics, especially if the pool of people adversely affected by a criterion or standard includes *both* members of a protected group *and* members of more advantaged groups (Sheppard (2001), at pp. 545-46; Braun, at pp. 120-21).

[72] Third, claimants need not show that the criteria, characteristics or other factors used in the impugned law affect all members of a protected group in the same way. This Court has long held that "[t]he fact that discrimination is only partial does not convert it into non-discrimination" (*Brooks v. Canada Safeway Ltd.*, [1989] 1 S.C.R. 1219, at p. 1248, quoting James MacPherson, "Sex Discrimination in Canada: Taking Stock at the Start of a New Decade" (1980), 1 C.H.R.R. C/7, at p. C/11).

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[23] https://decisions.scc-csc.ca/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/18510/index.do