

To: Board of Education
From: Dr. Laurie Heinz, Superintendent
Date: January 22, 2018
Re: Continued Discussion Regarding the District 64 Middle School Resource Officer Pilot Program

Current Status

At the December 11, 2017 meeting, the Board reviewed the status of the development of Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) with the City of Park Ridge and the Village of Niles for the School Resource Officer (SRO) pilot program at Lincoln and Emerson middle schools. Since the pilot program was approved by the Board on August 28, District 64 has worked closely with legal counsel Hodges, Loizzi to develop an IGA that meets the needs of a middle school pilot program. It was confirmed in December that at the Board's direction, Ekl, Williams & Provenzale LLC had been requested to add further insights into the creation of this draft IGA.

At the December 11 meeting, the Board began discussing a possible timeline following the completion of that consultation to review any changes recommended by the Ekl, Williams report and to continue moving forward with seeking approval of the IGA with the City of Park Ridge and Village of Niles. In particular, Board discussion focused on having an updated "red line" draft IGA, which would indicate any recommendations for changes to the current draft now being considered by the two municipalities.

Over winter recess, the District's legal counsel Hodges reported that it had received the report from Ekl, Williams on December 28, 2017. The material, however, is not in the form of a "red line" draft, but rather provides concepts to consider when introducing an SRO program.

At present, the IGA process is in a holding pattern. It is hoped that the Board's discussion at tonight's meeting will set a clear direction of whether or how to continue moving forward with a review and possible updating of the draft IGA so that the agreements can be finalized with the Village of Niles and City of Park Ridge, and the pilot program launched in the 2017-18 school year.

Recap of Pilot Program Proposal

The proposal for a middle school SRO program came forward at the July 17, 2017 Board of Education meeting based on a desire expressed by the Board to strengthen family/community communication and partnerships focused primarily on behavior expectations and social emotional learning for students. The Board asked administration to identify benefits and specific objectives for this potential initiative.

District 64 assembled an initial planning team including: Lincoln Middle School Principal Tony Murray and Assistant Principal Tim Gleason; Emerson Middle School Principal Jim Morrison and Assistant Principal Tim Benka; and representatives from both the Niles and Park Ridge police departments. The planning team met and identified the following objectives:

- Build positive relationships between students and the local police department
- Promote safety within the school
- Provide a better understanding of the role of the police department within the community
- Open the discussion on current issues with policing and young people
- Provide a venue for students to discuss at-risk behavior
- Encourage open dialogue to provide students with a voice around the issues that impact their schools and communities
- Begin a Police and Junior Advisory Council with students and administration
- Allow for regular check-ins with police and school administration

Additionally, the team felt strongly that our Middle School SRO's will work **at the direction of building administration** to ensure interactions are developmentally appropriate and in alignment with language to be included in the IGA.

Through this brainstorming, it became clear that this proposal aligns with the District 64 *2020 Vision* Strategic Plan objectives related to areas of focus within social emotional learning and the Inquiry-Based Learning strands so staff will look to involve our SRO's in these initiatives. District 64 is implementing new curricular materials in 2017-18 to support social emotional learning, called *Second Step*. Research indicates that when this program is used in middle school, "students exhibit less aggression, make better choices, and experience social and academic success." K-8 grade teachers will have dedicated time each month to plan and deliver Second Step lessons. Second Step topics correlate with topics that are likely to be addressed by SROs and may include: vaping; drug and alcohol prevention; online safety; cyber bullying; social emotional learning; police-citizen contact; Red Ribbon Week (annually observed in October); crime/serious activity; and Healthy Living Month (annually observed in April in Park Ridge). Because SROs will be present in our buildings each week, we also will have the opportunity to be responsive to student issues as they emerge.

At the August 28, 2017 meeting, the Board approved a pilot program at a cost of \$32,959 for the 2017-18 school year. It was noted that the opportunities for police involvement by school will vary slightly as each department has different human and physical resources available. School teams will be in charge of planning ways in which they can maximize the officer(s) during the pilot year.

As the 2017-18 school year got underway, Dr. Heinz, school principals and assistant principals, and local law enforcement presented an overview of the SRO pilot program at the September 2017 PTO meetings at Emerson and Lincoln middle schools. The District also immediately began working with Hodges, Loizzi to draft the IGA agreements that made it clear that our SROs would work under the direction of building leadership. Furthermore, we worked to bring clarity to what our School Resource Officers would and wouldn't engage in while at Lincoln and Emerson. Draft agreements were presented to the City of Park Ridge and Village of Niles for consideration by their legal counsel prior to adoption by their city or village councils.