

Successful Children and Youth Policy Team

December 5, 2018, Meeting Summary

Key decisions and actions are in **bold**.

SCYPT Members in Attendance:

Kimberly Adams, Diane Alejandro (for Sean Perryman), Hassan Alkurdi, Bob Bermingham, Nanette Bowler, Telaekah Brooks, Karla Bruce, Tisha Deeghan, Alicia Doe, Francisco Duran, Fred Grant, Mark Ginsberg, Kelly Henderson, Cathy Hudgins, Teresa Johnson, Tammy Derenak Kaufax, Loriann LaBarca (for Ed Roessler), Michelle Leete, Rick Leichtweis, Chris Leonard, Jeff McKay, Megan McLaughlin, Nandred Navarro (for Judith Dittman), Mary Ann Panarelli, Fahemeh Pirzadeh, Jeff Platenberg, Dave Rohrer, Douglas Tyson, Daryl Washington

Discussion Item – School Resource Officer Program

Lt. Loriann LaBarca, the Police Department's School Liaison Commander, gave a brief overview of the new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) for the School Resource Officer (SRO) program. Lt. LaBarca noted that the significant changes in the new MOU include clearly defined roles for SROs and school administrators, training requirements for SROs, and the elimination of SRO involvement in administrative searches of students.

Several FCPS principals were present to share their experiences with the SRO program. Chuck Miller (Twain Middle School) stated that the clarified role definitions are helpful, but that school administrators still need to do more to educate teachers and other staff on the role of the SRO. He also emphasized the importance of SROs as role models and mentors to students. Ellen Reilly (McLean High School) agreed, stating that McLean's SRO is the most popular person in the building and that he excels in building relationships and gaining students' trust. Dave Jagels (Centreville High School) mentioned that the newly clarified definition of his role through the MOU is just as important as the SRO role definition. Throughout the meeting, SCYPT members noted how important and welcomed the role clarifications are.

Fred Grant asked about details of the SRO training curriculum and if SROs are members of the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO). Lt. LaBarca replied that she is not a NASRO member, but that other SROs may be. All SROs participate in 40 hours of training per year; recent areas of focus have been on the Alternative Accountability Program (AAP), mental health, and state-required topics. SROs also participate in FCPD-required trainings. Francisco Duran expressed appreciation that cultural proficiency and response is included. Nandred Navarro asked who provides the implicit bias training; Lt. LaBarca explained that it is currently provided by FCPS, since a County contract for the training expired.

Diane Alejandro, representing the NAACP, expressed concern that not enough is being done to address racial and ethnic disparities in disciplinary and juvenile justice actions and outcomes,

and asked if first quarter data could be presented. Lt. LaBarca stated that the evaluation plan, and the systems for entering and analyzing data, are still in development. Bob Bermingham replied that raw data on charges filed by SROs (from a state database) could be provided, but cautioned that it is raw data and lacks context when viewed on its own. For example, Lt. LaBarca noted that in some cases SROs are required to file charges at a victim's request. And Mr. Bermingham stated there can be a lag in the data, such that charges may not appear in the database for several months. Furthermore, differences in terminology across systems and the lack of outcome measures need to be accounted for in interpreting the charge data.

Mr. Bermingham stressed that involvement in the juvenile justice system continues to decline. Most low risk first time offenders are diverted from the system. And the AAP program (a restorative justice program) prevents many youth from even getting to a formal diversion program by giving police officers that opportunity to divert youth into AAP without even involving the juvenile justice system. To date, over 1,000 students have been served in the AAP program. Megan McLaughlin praised AAP as a great collaborative effort to address disparities and improve outcomes, and Dave Rohrer noted that the Police Department is fully committed to the program, which emphasizes accountability.

Mr. Rohrer explained that it is incredibly important for SROs to develop positive relationships with students, parents, and the community. As such, selecting the right officers for SRO positions is of the utmost importance for commanders. Tammy Derenak Kaufax agreed, and noted that complementary efforts such as officers joining students at lunch, are valuable in building rapport.

Cathy Hudgins emphasized that the SRO program, AAP, and other efforts should be part of an intentional plan, with intentionally defined outcome and progress measures and reporting, to continually reduce disparities. Karla Bruce agreed, and stated that the strategy should also include means for engaging the community to get their input and to keep them informed. Kelly Henderson expressed hope that reports would reflect working with families and communities. Hasan Alkurdi also noted that it would be helpful for reports to include prior program assessments and evaluations. Dr. Duran noted that the annual report will be posted on FCPS's annual equity profile.

Ms. Navarro asked if community outreach is being done to explain to community members that SROs are not contacting US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Dr. Duran explained that the FCPS superintendent and legal counsel have shared information with principals, and that parent liaisons have been given information to share with parents. Ms. Navarro recommended partnering with community-based organizations to better connect with parents and community members, who may still be fearful. Ms. Alejandro expressed concern that FERPA (the federal education privacy law) does not prohibit sharing law enforcement records, so officers may be able to share such information with ICE; overlap between what is considered a school disciplinary issue and a law enforcement issue can complicate the matter. Mr. Rohrer replied that he does not support a rule prohibiting officers from collaborating with ICE for criminal matters, but that FCPD officers (including SROs) do not share information or collaborate with ICE for any civil or administrative immigration enforcement.

Dr. Henderson asked if SRO training included a focus on primary prevention, including topics such as school climate and behavior management systems. Mr. Jagels noted that the SRO is a

part of his school's multi-tiered systems of support approach and plays an important role in promoting social emotional wellness. Many schools are incorporating SROs into these efforts, and continued communication among schools can help spread best practices. Dr. Reilly stated that the SRO helps review Youth Survey data at McLean and develop prevention strategies informed by that data, is engaged with school initiatives and clubs such as Sources of Strength and Our Minds Matter, and actively connects SRO work and training to things happening at the school. Mr. Miller agreed, stating that Twain's SRO is fully integrated into the school staff and participates in Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports programming.

Mr. Alkurdi closed the discussion by noting that, as a refugee, it took him a while to learn to not fear American police. He and his family respect our police and view them as role models for their children. However, he also noted that, as a refugee, he finds that it is not normal to have to look at school data from a time when there were no SROs in schools.

Discussion Item – Early Childhood Funding and Program Models

Elizabeth Gaines and Olivia Allen of the Children's Funding Project shared innovating funding mechanisms used by several jurisdictions across the country to support early childhood programming. The presentation and discussion were intended as a first step in the SCYPT's work to develop new strategies to expand access to such programming in Fairfax.

Nannette Bowler emphasized that, to get buy-in from voters and the public, it is necessary to specify how funds would be spent. The challenge is in doing so but also retaining enough flexibility to be responsive to changing needs. Jeff McKay added that voters are likely only to vote for something new, not to help fund existing services; therefore, it's important to understand the magnitude of need. Karla Bruce noted that need should be defined in multiple ways; wait list numbers are important, but so are economic benefits, for example. Mark Ginsberg agreed that the economic argument is important; high quality educational opportunities attract economic investment. Cathy Hudgins stated that we would have to help the community understand the impact of kids not having a pre-k experience and what we could gain by reaching every family. Ms. Bruce stated that policy issues should be accompanied by community outreach strategies to inform and expand public will.

Mr. McKay asked for future reports to include Virginia examples, given the limitations Virginia counties face given the Dillon Rule. Ms. Gaines replied that the Children's Funding Project has experience developing revenue options memos for specific localities and could do so for Fairfax.

Francisco Duran reminded the group that FCPS is participating in a five year University of Virginia study examining a number of outcomes on pre-K through third graders, and that the data and results from the study should be used to help inform our efforts.

Public Comment

George Becerra spoke on the SRO MOU. Regarding data, he recommended that raw numbers be presented along with rates and percentages; low numbers, in particular, help provide context

regarding how well our systems work. Similarly, conviction and other data related to the outcome of charges should be included with charge data. He noted that data reported on a quarterly basis may compromise privacy if numbers are low. Finally, summer may provide a good opportunity for SROs to engage with the broader community to develop relationships and trust.

Marcella Levine, of ACLU People Power, stated that the Police Department had been asked to report to the School Board regarding SRO contacts with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and asked if the report was available. SCYPT members were unaware of the request; Tammy Derenak Kaufax stated that FCPS staff would look into it and bring an update back to the SCYPT in February.