



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

**COUNCILMEMBER NANCY NAVARRO
DISTRICT 4**

**CHAIR, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND
FISCAL POLICY COMMITTEE**

EDUCATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM

February 5, 2021

TO: Marc Elrich, County Executive

FROM: Nancy Navarro, Chair, Government Operations & Fiscal Policy Committee

SUBJECT: On School Resource Officers: A way forward

It was great speaking to you about an alternative approach to the current School Resources Officer (SRO) model. The model I envision would be consistent with state law, by assigning police officers to different geographic beats or clusters and creating teams that include mental health professionals and counselors. We would create a memorandum of understanding that would clearly define which type of issues would qualify for calls for assistance, thus eliminating the practice of calling law enforcement personnel for what should be disciplinary issues.

Like you and my colleagues on the Council, I am committed to a re-imagining of our county's public safety resources that dismantles racial inequities, is holistic and humanizes both our residents and members of our police force. I am eager to adopt a program for our children that incorporates positive youth development principles (counselors, nurses, parent community coordinators, youth outreach workers, pupil personnel workers, etc.), while prioritizing safety in our schools. We need resources for the emotional and social well-being of our students that are comprehensive and culturally appropriate.

The Montgomery County Board of Education is currently reviewing the issue of School Resource Officers (SROs) in school facilities and I had hoped they would have recommendations this past January. As a

STELLA B. WERNER COUNCIL OFFICE BUILDING • ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

(240) 777-7968 • TTY (240) 777-7914

COUNCILMEMBER.NAVARRO@MONTGOMERYCOUNTYMD.GOV • WWW.COUNCILMEMBERNAVARRO.COM

former member of the Board of Education, I was willing to respect the process and weigh in after hearing from the school board. They have since postponed their decision and at this point, I believe we need to move ahead and craft an alternative approach to the current School Resources Officer (SRO) model.

Listening to the community, studying the bills on SROs before the council and the state legislature, and the preliminary reports of the reimagining safety workgroup and the school system's workgroup on SROs, I am struck by how everyone seems genuinely focused on change in how Public Safety and the wellbeing of our students should be prioritized. Out of respect for all the work that has been done, I believe that in your administrative capacity, you can take all the input into consideration to design and propose a brand new model that de-emphasizes a law enforcement focus within our schools and instead focuses on the mentoring and mental health needs of our students. Our County has invested in Positive Youth Development Initiatives (PYD) that should be incorporated, and we can strengthen these with nationally recognized programs like CAHOOTS and The SANTE group models. This new approach would come with appropriate staffing and resources. The timing is perfect, now that the budget cycle is upon us.

Since school will be virtual for a while, we have the time we need as a team to work together and come up with the ideal model. I look forward to hearing from you on my proposal.

CC: Members of the County Council

Members of the Montgomery County Board of Education

Dr. Jack Smith, Superintendent of Schools

Chiefs of Staff

Rich Madaleno, Chief Administrative Officer (Acting)

Marlene Michaelson, Executive Director, County Council

Caroline Sturgis, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer