



Northern  
California

**Via Electronic Mail**

January 20, 2021

Larry Sweeney, President, Board of Education  
Dianne Jones, Vice President, Board of Education  
Vivek Prasad, Clerk, Board of Education  
Desrie Campbell, Member, Board of Education  
Yajing Zhang, Member, Board of Education  
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CJ Cammack, Superintendent  
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Re: Follow-Through on Board's Prior Decision to Adopt the SRO Task Force's Recommendations to Remove the District's SRO Program and Invest in Student Supports

Dear Board of Education and Superintendent Cammack,

I write on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California to express our unequivocal support for the School Board's recent decision to remove the District's SRO Program and re-allocate resources from the SRO program to restorative practices. We applaud the District's leadership to increase the number of mental health professionals in the District and to train staff in de-escalation techniques that are shown to be more effective in addressing student behavior and keeping students on track to succeed academically.

However, we are deeply concerned about the School Board's rash decision to consider renegeing on this commitment to the students and families of Fremont USD. When a School Board does not follow through on its own commitments, it erodes trust that is critical to the community it serves. This is especially true here, as the School Board heard from over one hundred community members, including students, who were in strong support of the Board's vote to adopt the District's SRO Review Task Force recommendations.

American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Abdi Soltani • BOARD CHAIR Farah Brelvi

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We firmly believe that a reversal of the Board vote from November 2020, and restoration of the SRO program, would reasonably be seen as an endorsement of the disproportionate negative impact of police in schools – and specifically within the District – on Black and Latinx students, as well as students with disabilities. Our understanding from the SRO Review Task Force Report is that, from 2015 to 2018, Black students in Fremont USD, who represent just 2 percent of the student body, were arrested by school police by a disproportionality factor of 10 times their population in the District. These practices expose the District to significant potential legal liability and also have serious and damaging impacts on students, as arrests double high school students' odds of dropping out, with subsequent court involvement doubling these odds, even when controlling for key indicators of future academic achievement such as parental poverty, grade retention, and middle school grade point average.

The SRO program also has had a devastating impact on students with disabilities, as highlighted by the SRO Task Force's findings that "the most frequent use of an SRO is to respond to a mental health issue in the form of a 5150," when a student is undergoing a mental health crisis. These traumatizing interactions could be avoided by utilizing more effective alternatives that enhance student well-being while creating a safer, more inclusive and nurturing environment for all students by employing mental health professionals who have the training and expertise in a variety of non-aggressive, evidence-based techniques.

We urge you to maintain your commitment to being a part of the ever-growing number of California school districts that have eliminated SRO programs to achieve authentic student wellbeing, safety, and equity, including for Black and Latinx students and students with disabilities.

Sincerely,



Linnea Nelson  
Education Equity Staff Attorney

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