

Madalyn Letellier

From: Marianne McPherson [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 8:15 PM
To: Mayor's Office; All City Council; [REDACTED] Public
Comments
Subject: Keep Police out of Somerville's Schools -- listen to community, no return to SRO

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Dear Mayor Wilson, School Committee Members, and City Councilors:

I was shocked to hear that SPS is attempting to bring back police into our schools and is doing so without any transparency, seemingly ignoring the fact that **the School Committee, in 2023, legally directed the Superintendent to follow their guidance on this matter.** As the mother of two SPS students currently finishing 11th and 8th grade, I implore you in the strongest possible terms to abide by the agreements made in 2023 to **keep police out of our schools.**

In my public comment from March 6, 2023, I said to the School Committee: "I deeply support the recommendations related to the district's MOU with the police and how the school committee's motions ultimately will get put into practice. While the state's model MOU is based on having an SRO in a school building, that is not what students and families in our city want -- those data are quite clear. And that's not what I want for my kids and their classmates. So it heartens me to see the changes to the state's MOU as part of our subcommittee's recommendations, and why I urge you to endorse all of those subcommittee recommendations *as delivered* when you vote. Thank you for the support that enabled the subcommittee do its work and bring forward such strong recommendations. **This is a really exciting moment for our city, our schools, and our kids.**" Yet we have not made good on that exciting moment, and I urge you as leaders in our city to do so now.

In the 3 years since that comment, here is what has NOT changed:

1. **The evidence.** We know--both from extensive national research and from families' experiences right here in Somerville--that **police in schools cause harm and do not prevent the biggest harms.** This isn't about "good" versus "bad" police or having more/better training or clearer administrative links between schools and police. Unfortunately, it's how the system of policing works in the US. We don't want this to continue to happen to Somerville children, especially to our students of color, students with disabilities, and students who are immigrants--the students harmed most.
2. **What our community wants: alternatives to police.** Through years of conversations, our Somerville community has loudly and consistently demonstrated broad support for alternatives to police. We don't want police in schools, we want to build community and provide mental health support. The 2023 recommendations reinforce our community's desires for **restorative justice, mental health supports, and training for our teachers,** staff & students about anti-racism and implicit bias. We know this from the hundreds of comments that Safe Schools Somerville has collected and from at least 2 student surveys in Somerville High School. Again and again, **these student and community voices oppose bringing back the SRO or having police in schools.**

3. **The desire for our children, teachers, and staff to be safe at school. Police don't stop school shootings or create safety.** The response to put police in schools to protect kids and staff from the things we fear most does NOT provide protection—it **actually makes students feel unsafe.**

What *HAS* changed in these 3 years? Notably, Federal overreach and ongoing ICE actions in Sanctuary Cities. The threat of ICE is one more reason to reinforce that the *last* thing our children need in their schools is armed police.

What have we learned based on the recommendations from 2023? As part of its 2023 recommendations, the School Committee directed further investment in Restorative Justice including 5 Community Engagement Specialists (CES), Mental-Health First Aid Training via youth-led ambassadors, De-escalation Training (2 trainings per year for staff). I'm aware that at least some CES staff have been hired and have been well received, but there's much more to understand. **Instead of jumping to an action (reintroducing an SRO)** that is NOT evidence based, runs contrary to community voice, and directly contradicts School Committee recommendations, I urge us to **meaningfully learn how the recommendations from 2023 have been implemented and received.** That would answer questions such as:

- What is working well?
- What requires evolution given our current context?
- How are these programs being further invested in & developed?

As a program evaluation professional with experience in systems change and equitable evaluation, if the city needs guidance on how to do that learning in a meaningful and rigorous way, I would be glad to offer my support.

I'm proud to send my children to school in Somerville. My involvement in 2021-2023 regarding police in our schools was one of the first times I engaged in Somerville civic life. I was heartened to see the dedication of those involved, the willingness of the School Committee and SPS administration to listen, to learn, and to follow where community voice and a wealth of evidence led (ultimately to the recommendations SC passed). Upon hearing that leadership is working to bring police back into schools in what feels like an incredibly secretive way, I was shocked, confused, and disheartened. Somerville, we can do better. We **MUST** do better.

In this case, doing better means **implementing the guidance already in front of you -- it's been there for years.** Doing better means **showing up with transparent, open communication** rather than secrecy to push through an unsupported action. Why, as the parent of an SHS student, have I not been asked to contribute my opinion in the face of potentially such a significant change and U-turn? Why has my high school student not been invited to contribute hers? Doing better means **walking the talk of SHS's own #Highlander Habits** -- especially communication, collaboration, and culturally-competent citizenship. Surely, if we are teaching our youth to live these habits, we can and must do the same.

I look forward to your response and to seeing meaningful follow-through on the 2023 recommendations.

Sincerely,

Marianne McPherson

Parent of SHS 11th grader, Argenziano 8th grader



Madalyn Letellier

From: Georgy Cohen [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 11:50 AM
To: Mayor's Office; All City Council; [REDACTED]
Subject: Comments
No police in our schools!

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Hello,

I am the parent of a 7th grader and we are both looking forward to her transition to high school. We are not blind to issues at the high school -- as she is already participating in some activities there, I hear about vaping in the bathroom and such. However, for that and more serious issues, I firmly believe that bringing SROs to Somerville High is not the answer and I strongly discourage the Superintendent from following through with any plan to do so.

Look at Texas post-Uvalde - the failures of police at Uvalde to do anything to help the victims was amplified by the state's decision to roll out police in schools across the state, which only led to more police-perpetrated violence against students. Police in schools is not the answer.

But students do need support and schools do need resources to support behavior issues -- mental health counselors, adjustment counselors, and other professionals focused on deterring bad behavior and supporting students in need would be a huge boon for all Somerville High students. Bringing police to those halls will only instill a culture of fear and put students at risk.

By the time my child comes to the high school, I hope there is more support in place for students and no police officers. Please follow through with the 2023 recommendation against SROs.

Thank you,

Georgiana Cohen
[REDACTED]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Andrew DeBenedictis [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 1:08 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Mayor's Office; All City Council; Public
Subject: Comments
NO to SROs

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Dear Somerville School Committee, City Councilors, and Mayor Wilson,

I was very dismayed to hear that the superintendent has been negotiating an MOU to get police into Somerville High. As a community, we already made the decision to keep police out of our schools based on the fact that police-free schools are safer and better for learning (see <https://www.cfjj.org/policing-in-schools> for example). That the superintendent has reopened this issue, especially at a time when immigrant students already feel less safe due to ICE actions, is entirely irresponsible.

My first child will be starting pre-K in Somerville this fall, and I will not feel safe if there are cops in her schools at any grade level. Please stop this harmful idea now and listen to the community when we say we do not want SROs.

Thank you,
Andrew DeBenedictis
[REDACTED]

Madalyn Letellier

From: Dan Saccardi [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 5:49 PM
To: Mayor's Office; All City Council; [REDACTED]; Public
Comments
Subject: SROs in Somerville public schools

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Dear Mayor Wilson, School Committee Members, and City Councilors:

I was discouraged to hear that SPS is attempting to bring back police into our schools and is doing so with minimal attempts at transparency. As a concerned Somerville resident, I encourage you to instead adhere to the School Committee's 2023 directive that the Superintendent follow their guidance on this matter--guidance that's all the more important now in light of federal overreach and ongoing ICE actions in Sanctuary Cities.

Instead of unilaterally reintroducing an SRO (that is not evidence based, runs contrary to community voice, and directly contradicts School Committee recommendations), I encourage us to meaningfully learn how the recommendations from 2023 have been implemented and received. That would answer questions such as:

- What is working well?
- What requires evolution given our current context?
- How are these programs being further invested in & developed?

I look forward to your response and to seeing meaningful follow-through on the 2023 recommendations.

Sincerely,

Dan

(uncle of a rising SHS 9th grader)