

April 25, 2018



E-TRANSMITTAL/ U.S. REGULAR MAIL

Ms. Valerie Cuevas, Board President and WCCUSD Board of Trustees
West Contra Costa Unified School District
1108 Bissell Avenue
Richmond, CA 94801

Re: **WCCUSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES AGENDA FOR APRIL 25, 2018:**
**Comment Letter of Concern on Agenda Item F.1 – Update on the Positive
School Climate Resolution and Recommendations for School Resource
Officer Staffing Levels**

Dear WCCUSD Board President Cuevas and Board Trustees:

On behalf of the City of San Pablo City Council, we are very concerned about the proposed recommendations under WCCUSD Board agenda item F.1 to potentially reduce School Resource Officer (SRO) funding to local cities in the West County region. **For the record, the City of San Pablo is OPPOSED to any SRO funding reductions by the WCCUSD Board at this time.**

BACKGROUND

In November 2017, the WCCUSD Board of Education (Board) approved Resolution No. 49-1718 which established a Positive School Climate, and directed the full implementation of Restorative Practices and school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports at all District schools, tiers of interventions and alternatives to school suspension, and the establishment of a clear policy and implementation plan to re-evaluate the roles, duties, functions and practices of law enforcement in our schools.

Under the Board's adopted Resolution, the WCCUSD Superintendent Duffy was directed to collect data on SRO staffing levels, calls for service, arrests and alternative practices in place at District schools. In addition, he was tasked with presenting a set of recommendations regarding appropriate levels of police staffing. Henceforth, this agenda item gives the Board and the public an opportunity to discuss the proposed Resolution and proposed recommendations by District staff at your regular meeting on April 25, 2018 as posted.

We further understand the Board may choose to accept the recommended options presented, or make its own determination regarding this matter which would then be discussed formally at the May 2, 2018 WCCUSD Board meeting. **However, before the Board considers these recommendations, the information being presented and recommendations being made were first revealed to local West County cities following the posting of the WCCHSD agenda on Friday, April 21, 2018, with no detailed discussion or deliberation between City Managers, law enforcement, and District staff over the recommended options being presented, and their potential impacts to local schools and police services in our community.**

San Pablo believes that the Board should take into consideration (as initially expressed in our previous November 17, 2017 correspondence) that any drastic and immediate budget reductions in SRO funding to local cities would **significantly undermine** our local community policing programs in San Pablo. Community-oriented youth policing programs build skills to encourage local students to stay away from at-risk behaviors, and significantly impact the ongoing goals outlined in the joint Full-Service Community Schools Initiative established by the City of San Pablo and WCCUSD in local San Pablo schools, as follows: Dover Elementary, Bayview Elementary, Downer Elementary, Lake Elementary, Riverside Elementary, and especially Helms Middle School.

Cost Sharing – SRO Program

San Pablo also wishes to point out that SRO funding assistance to the City of San Pablo from the District Board on an annual basis has been in existence since FY 2014/15 unlike the other West County cities who have received full SRO funding support from the District since 2006. Additionally, the City's Annual General Fund Operating Budget expends a total of nearly \$450,000 annually toward our Police Department's Priority Oriented Policing (POP) Unit which funds a total of two (2) SRO officers, and a portion of one (1) Sergeant position for all local schools in San Pablo.

Currently, the City's budget resources earmarked for the POP unit greatly exceeds the annual WCCUSD SRO funding contribution of nearly \$178,000 for FY 2017/18. This represents a current 60/40 cost share between City and District resources since FY 2014/15 (excluding Departmental equipment and training costs). Any potential revision by the District to reduce SRO funding will cause an undue financial burden to local cities, like San Pablo, who have been sustaining these programs consistently on an annual basis. Any SRO funding reductions going forward, especially in the wake of increased CalPERS sustainability costs state-wide, would dramatically shift this cost-share balance to result in a budget deficit for FY 2018/19, and outlying years. In fact, an actual 50/50 cost share agreement under possible consideration by the Board should be increased proportionately for San Pablo to accurately reflect the 50% of the City's budgeted POP unit costs, or \$225,000 annually.

Community-Oriented Policing

To reiterate, SRO programs are a foundation in the building of a 21st Century Community-Oriented Policing model in San Pablo which focuses on youth and building trust in our community with local law enforcement. Trust between law enforcement agencies and the people they protect and serve is essential in a democracy. It is key to

the stability of our local communities, the integrity of our local community policing programs, and the safe and effective delivery of policing services. Overall, the SRO program allows our community to engage and develop positive relationships and solutions that impact not only faculty and local students within the classroom, but our families at home as well. **Due in large part to the commitment to the SRO program, juvenile arrests have steadily declined from 139 in 2011 to 37 in 2016 in San Pablo which was omitted from the Board presentation items for consideration under Agenda Item F.1.**

WCCUSD BOARD RECOMMENDATION

In the spirit of cooperation, first and foremost, the WCCUSD and local cities should continue to work collaboratively on the following policy considerations, as follows:

- 1) Identify equitable solutions that support both the District's desire to implement a new Positive School Climate Policy; and
- 2) Sustain vital SRO funding provided by WCCUSD to local Police Departments for these services to be maintained at WCCUSD schools in the West County region.

In closing, San Pablo prefers that NO funding reductions to SRO funding be formally implemented by the Board as there is considerable uncertainty if current service levels can be sustained by all West County cities District-wide at this time.

NOTE: RECOMMENDATION #3 – ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION/REVIEW

The City of San Pablo would consider supporting more dialogue with District staff under the proposed Recommendation #3 scenario which provides for a proposed ramp-up of annual SRO funding reductions over the next 3 years cumulating in a 50/50 cost share by FY 2020/21, or \$225,000 annually covered by the District to state it accurately. If implemented by the Board, Recommendation #3 could potentially grant local cities sufficient time to develop a budget and service level sustainability plan to maintain current SRO service levels at local schools without this being seen as a dramatic and impactful hit to local community oriented policing programs in San Pablo, and region-wide in West County.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely



Genoveva Garcia Calloway, Mayor
City of San Pablo

cc: WCCUSD Superintendent Matt Duffy
San Pablo Councilmembers
San Pablo City Manager Matt Rodriguez
San Pablo Assistant City Manager Reina J. Schwartz
San Pablo Chief of Police Ron Raman