

DATE: February 11, 2025

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: School Resource Officer Program Evaluation Framework

ORIGINATOR: Kathy Muhlethaler, Assistant Superintendent Instructional and Strategic Division Supports

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REFERENCE: [Enhancing School Safety](#)

ISSUE

The Division has developed an Evaluation Framework to guide the evaluation of the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program, which is currently being reintroduced into six Division high schools.

BACKGROUND

To help inform the Board of Trustees' decision about the Division's working relationship with Edmonton Police Services (EPS) and SROs in schools, engagement was conducted. This engagement was not focused solely on SROs, but was centered more broadly around the concept of safety in schools. Engagement activities included Social Innovation Labs involving students, families, community members and Division staff; engagement sessions with principals; and the inclusion of questions related to school safety on the 2023-24 Division Feedback Survey.

On April 30, 2024, the Board approved a [motion](#) for the Division to explore EPS having a formal role in Division schools to enhance student and staff safety. The Board also approved a motion to revert authority back to the Superintendent for decisions, contracts or agreements with or related to policing, security or paramilitary organizations.

During the April 30, 2024, public Board meeting, the Superintendent committed to accountability and reporting to the Board around evaluating the effectiveness of the partnership with EPS related to SROs.

To support the reintroduction of the SRO program in the Division, the following work was done prior to SROs entering the six school communities:

- Leadership staff from the Division and EPS met to discuss the feasibility of SROs returning to Division schools. These discussions examined feedback from the community related to police in schools and both organizations' vision for the program.
- A small working group made up of Division staff (including high school principals) and EPS Youth Integrated Services members, met through the summer and fall of 2024 to explore, design and prepare to support the reintroduction of SROs in six Division high schools on February 3, 2025. The work included:

- Developing a shared understanding of the intent of the SRO program and the role of an SRO in a Division school.
- Examining other SRO models in Canada and feedback from engagement.
 - This work included reflection around concerns raised and exploring ways to address those items that were actionable.
- Exploring school readiness to welcome a SRO into the school community; this work led to the identification of six Division high schools to receive a SRO in February 2025: Jasper Place, M. E. LaZerte, Ross Shephard, Eastglen, Harry Ainlay and Queen Elizabeth schools.
- Establishing a model of collaboration and communication between the two organizations to support the ongoing implementation and monitoring of the SRO program.
- Developing a training, professional learning and orientation program for SROs and school leadership teams. This work occurred prior to SROs joining school communities in February 2025 and covered a broad range of topics. Examples of these topics include:
 - Diversity and belonging
 - Child/youth development and social/emotional learning
 - Restorative practices
 - Neurodiversity
 - Application of alternative measures
 - Digital safety
 - Mental health and well-being
 - First point of intervention (e.g., Zebra, Child and Adolescent Protection Centre)
 - FOIP and confidentiality
- Developing materials to support communicating with staff, students and families of the six schools receiving a SRO.
- Collaborating around hiring practices to ensure a good fit for the SRO program and a school community.
- Developing a Memorandum of Understanding and an evaluation strategy specific to the SRO program in Division schools.
- SROs were welcomed into the six Division schools on February 3, 2025.

CURRENT SITUATION

The primary goal of the SRO Program in the Division is to provide quality dedicated service to students, schools and the community that positively and equitably impacts the safety, well-being and development of youth in the education system. The primary function of the SRO Program is to assist school administration in supporting a safe and caring place of learning for students and staff.

The Division has developed an Evaluation Framework in collaboration with EPS along with feedback from the principals of the six schools reintroducing SROs to their school communities. The Evaluation Framework outlines the key components of the evaluation, which will occur through a phased approach.

- **Phase 1 Evaluation:** The first phase of the evaluation will take place from January to June 2025. This phase will evaluate the program's implementation processes; specifically, it will explore how the activities to support school readiness, preparation, onboarding and welcoming of SROs into the initial six schools have aligned with the intent of the program.
 - Preliminary findings from the Phase 1 Evaluation will be used as they emerge to inform the ongoing implementation of the program in September 2025 and the onboarding of additional schools.
 - A Phase 1 Evaluation Report will be brought to a public Board meeting in fall 2025.

- **Phase 2 Evaluation:** The second phase of the evaluation will take place throughout the 2025-26 school year. This phase will continue to assess the expanded implementation of the SRO Program's reintroduction in the Division and also begin exploring the program's initial effects on belonging and safety.

The Phase 2 Evaluation will explore the program's initial effects on belonging and safety through the lens of three interrelated domains:

1. Relationships, trust and belonging
2. Connection to supports, conflict resolution and de-escalation
3. Diversion and incident response, including emergency preparedness

The evaluation will use a range of data collection tools including surveys, focus groups and administrative data to measure the efficacy of the program's implementation processes and progress toward intended outcomes. Next steps involve collaboration with EPS and the Division's six participating school communities to co-create the key measurement tools and questions for Phase 1 data collection in spring 2025.

KEY POINTS

- The Division's SRO program has been reenvisioned, in collaboration with EPS, to support the reintroduction of SROs in Division schools beginning February 2025.
- This work was informed by feedback from the community regarding police in schools.
- The Division, in collaboration with EPS, has developed an Evaluation Framework to guide the evaluation of the SRO Program.
- The SRO Program is currently being reintroduced into six Division high schools.
- The first phase of the evaluation will take place from January to June 2025. A Phase 1 Evaluation Report will be brought to a public Board meeting in fall 2025.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I School Resource Officer Program Evaluation Framework

KM:kd

Evaluation Framework

School Resource Officer Program

Introduction

At the April 30, 2024 public Board meeting, the Board of Trustees approved the Superintendent to explore Edmonton Police Services (EPS) having a formal role in Division schools; this could include the reintroduction of School Resource Officers (SROs). The SRO Program is a partnership designed to positively impact the safety, well-being and development of youth within the education system. The primary function of the SRO Program is to assist school administration in supporting a safe and caring place of learning for students and staff.

The Division put the program on hold in 2020 after the Board of Trustees requested an independent review. Since then, the Division has worked to listen, review research and gather feedback from families, students, the community and Division staff around the concept of safety. The reintroduction of the SRO Program has been designed with consideration of community feedback shared with the Board of Trustees and feedback from school leadership, staff and students. The Division has been working closely alongside EPS to reimagine the program in alignment with the needs of students, families and school communities. The initial transition of SROs back into six Division high schools includes the following activities unique to this reintroduction of the program:

- Enhanced orientation and training for officers alongside school administrators.
- The implementation of a Community of Practice (CoP) which includes school and EPS leaders.
- Transparent communication with staff, students and families of the school communities receiving a SRO.

These components support continuous feedback, consistency of the SRO Program across schools, shared insights, equitable support for students and transparency while strengthening trust and alignment with the community. As partners, the Division and EPS recognize the importance of supporting Edmonton's youth on their path to adulthood and a life of dignity and fulfillment. This partnership is based on the principle that collaboration is critical to create welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environments that honor diversity and nurture a sense of belonging for all.

Evaluation

This Evaluation Framework was developed through a collaborative approach between the Division and EPS along with feedback from the principals of schools reintroducing SROs to their school communities in February 2025. The evaluation of the SRO Program will use a phased approach, with the Phase 1 Evaluation taking place during the second semester of the 2024-25 school year and the Phase 2 Evaluation occurring throughout the 2025-26 school year (see Figure 1). The Phase 2 Evaluation will include any additional schools receiving a SRO for the 2025-26 school year.

- **Phase 1 Evaluation (January - June 2025):** The first phase will take place from January to June 2025, with a Phase 1 Evaluation Report coming to a public Board meeting in fall 2025. The Phase 1 Evaluation will focus on understanding the process of reintroducing SROs into the six Division high schools. Specifically, this phase of the evaluation will be centred around school readiness, orientation, training and welcoming SROs into the school community in alignment with the intent of the SRO Program.

The findings from the Phase 1 Evaluation will be used as they emerge to inform the ongoing implementation of the program in September 2025 and the onboarding of additional schools.

- **Phase 2 Evaluation (September 2025 - June 2026):** The second phase of the evaluation will continue to assess the implementation of the SRO Program with a focus around the experience of the members of the school

community. The evaluation will focus on short-term outcomes related to the SRO Program’s contribution to supporting belonging and safety in schools among students, families and staff.

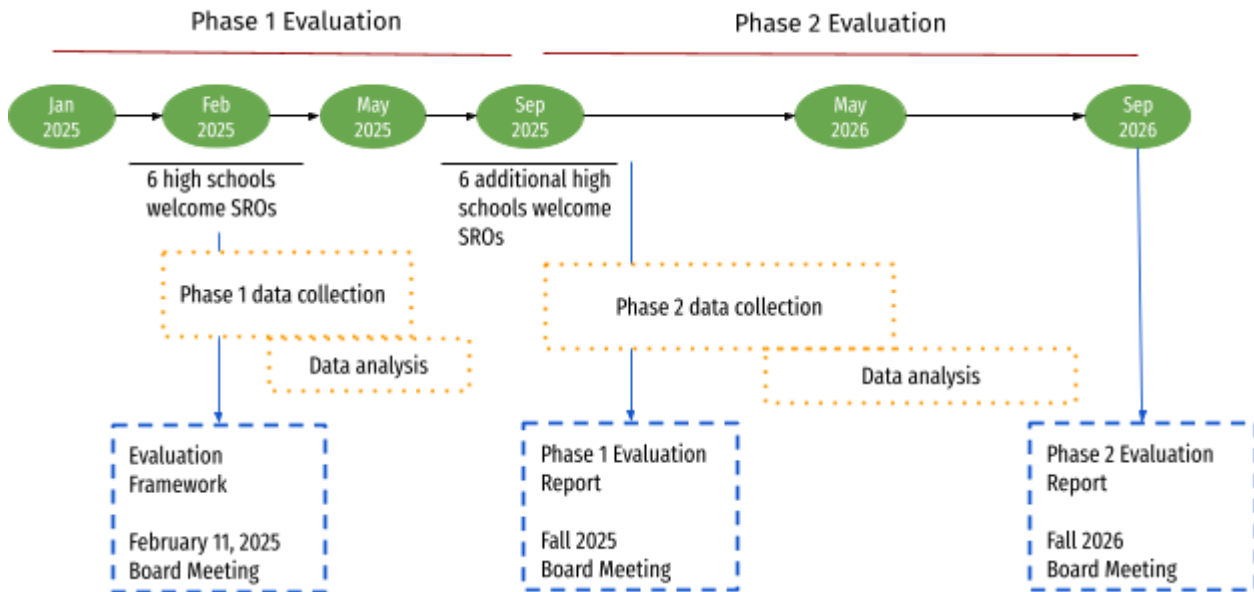


Figure 1: Evaluation Timeline and Key Milestones

Figure 2 provides a high-level overview of this Evaluation Framework (informing both Phase 1 and Phase 2), with a summary of the approach and key goals of the SRO Program in the Division and the measurement tools that will be used to assess the extent to which the program is progressing toward its key goals. Further details are provided throughout this report.



Figure 2: SRO Evaluation Framework Overview

Phase 1 Evaluation: SRO Program Implementation Processes (January-June 2025)

The Phase 1 Evaluation will assess how the activities to support school readiness, preparation, onboarding and welcoming of SROs into the initial six schools have aligned with the intent of the program. The key questions for this implementation evaluation are:

1. To what extent has the program been implemented according to its planned core components?
2. To what extent did the implementation of the program’s communication materials, supporting resources, professional learning and governance structure support alignment with the intent of the program?

To answer the questions above, the evaluation will examine key implementation activities that supported the reintroduction of SROs into Division schools. This will include using a range of data collection tools including surveys, focus groups and administrative data.

Key Implementation Activities	Key Short-Term Outcomes	Key Measurement Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using a process for a school to reflect on their readiness for a SRO ● Creating a process to support welcoming a SRO into the school community ● Developing materials that support communicating across the school community ● Participation in professional learning (PL), training and onboarding prior to welcoming SROs back into schools (themes and topics include things identified as critical by students, families and staff, and research) ● Implementation of the CoP with EPS and school leadership teams and select central leadership staff ● Establishing a process to gather feedback from members of the school community relative to how they feel about having a SRO as a member of their school team (this process needs to ensure diverse and marginalized voices are included) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SROs, school leadership and staff, students, families and community partners have a clear understanding of the role of the SRO in schools ● SROs and relevant school staff deepen their knowledge and skills to support student belonging and safety through selected professional learning opportunities ● The CoP supports relationship building, collaboration and problem solving between the Division and EPS as well as congruence of practice across the schools in alignment with the intent of the model ● Students, families, staff and community partners perceive they have ongoing opportunities to provide feedback, including a clear and accessible process for reporting concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Post-PL and training surveys ○ School surveys (students, staff, families, community partners) ● Focus groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General student population ○ Specific student populations (e.g., diverse identities, students who have direct interactions with the SRO) ○ Staff ○ CoP participants ● Administrative data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of PL sessions, review of processes, etc.

The findings from the Phase 1 Evaluation will be used to inform the ongoing implementation of the program in the 2025-26 school year and will be shared publicly through a report to the Board of Trustees in fall 2025.

Phase 2 Evaluation: Initial Effects on Belonging and Safety (September 2025 - June 2026)

The Phase 2 Evaluation will continue to assess the expanded implementation of the SRO Program’s reintroduction in the Division and also begin exploring the program’s initial effects on belonging and safety. The primary goal of the SRO Program in the Division is to provide quality dedicated service to students, schools and the community that positively and equitably impacts the safety, well-being and development of youth in the education system. The primary function of the SRO Program is to assist school administration in supporting a safe and caring place of learning for students and staff.

To understand how well the program is doing in relation to its primary goal and function, the Phase 2 Evaluation will measure progress on a range of relevant short-term intended outcomes. These intended outcomes will be measured through a variety of data collection tools including surveys, focus groups and administrative data.

The program’s primary goal and function can be broken down into three interrelated domains:

1. Relationships, Trust and Belonging
2. Connection to Supports, Conflict Resolution and De-escalation
3. Diversion and Incident Response, including Emergency Preparedness

First Domain: Relationships, Trust and Belonging

Through youth engagement, education support and collaboration with multidisciplinary teams in schools, the SRO Program aims to build relationships and trust between EPS and school communities. It is intended that these positive relationships contribute to a safe and caring learning environment and enhance a sense of belonging for all students.

Key SRO Program Activities	Key Short-Term Outcomes	Key Measurement Tools
<p>Relationship building with students through engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Informal interactions ● Connections with students ● Participating in school events and activities <p>Relationship building with school staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administrators and faculty ● Mental health therapists ● Supportive roles such as, high school completion and school safety coaches <p>Relationship building with families and community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presentations to families and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students have maintained or improved feelings of belonging and safety after the introduction of a SRO in their school community ● Students feel safe and supported in their interactions with the SRO ● There is mutual respect and trust between students and the SRO as well as between staff and the SRO ● The SRO is a valued member of the multidisciplinary school staffing team ● Students are aware of the supportive adults in school who are able to communicate and refer to one another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Division Feedback Survey (students, staff, families) ○ Youth Resilience Survey (students) ○ School Surveys (students, staff, families, SROs) ● Focus groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General Student population ○ Specific student populations (e.g., diverse identities, students who have direct interactions with the SRO) ○ Staff

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community ● SRO, school, and community agency alignment and planning ● SRO visibility and presence at school wide events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Families feel comfortable engaging with the SRO in support of their child ● Families’ perception of safety within the school community, when there is a SRO, is maintained or improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SROs ○ Families ● Administrative data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Safety presentations provided, time spent meeting with students
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Second Domain: Connection to Supports, Conflict Resolution and De-escalation

Through a collaborative approach, SROs will work with school staff to help connect students with Division, community and EPS supports and resources. SROs will also support schools’ work to engage students in conflict resolution through a restorative justice approach which promotes de-escalation and positive resolution of incidents.

Key SRO Program Activities	Key Short-Term Outcomes	Key Measurement Tools
<p>Connections to resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborating with mental health professionals to liaise with community resources and facilitate access to supports ● Accessing programming offered through EPS specialized youth portfolios and EPS Youth Services, as appropriate ● Accessing direct support and intervention for students who are at-risk due to violence, victimization, crime or other traumatic experiences ● Providing educational presentations on current youth issues ● Supporting access to specialized information and resources for students with disabilities as well as students and families who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, Black, Indigenous and Peoples of Colour <p>Conflict resolution and de-escalation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Informal mediation ● Discussion and circles ● Restorative justice approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students and staff have increased access to a skilled facilitator to support conflict resolution and restorative justice practices ● Students have enhanced and timely access to community resources through the EPS Youth Services and additional support pathways ● Students and staff have enhanced knowledge and skills related to maintaining personal and school safety ● Incidents are de-escalated prior to becoming more serious or criminal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Division Feedback Survey (student, staff, families) ○ School surveys (students, staff, families, SROs) ● Focus groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General student population ○ Specific student populations (e.g., diverse identities, students who have direct interactions with the SRO) ○ Staff ○ SROs ○ Families ● Administrative data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aggregated SRO activity statistics ○ Aggregated safety-related issue statistics

Third Domain: Diversion and Incident Response, including Emergency Preparedness

By providing diversion options, responding to incidents, using restorative measures, supporting victims and enhancing school emergency preparedness, the SRO aims to address safety-related incidents in a supportive and timely manner to minimize the likelihood of harm and victimization.

Key SRO Program Activities	Key Short-Term Outcomes	Key Measurement Tools
<p>Diversion and incident response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisting school administration with responses to non-criminal safety-related incidents, including the use of restorative measures Responding to safety threats, emergencies, and criminal incidents and assisting with crisis responses, including the use of restorative measures Considering and implementing diversion options according to the principles of the Youth Criminal Justice Act and EPS Young People Strategy while enforcing the Criminal Code, Provincial Statutes and Municipal Bylaws Supporting victims, including through the creation of individualized plans to support ongoing safety needs and connections to wraparound supports as appropriate <p>Emergency preparedness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continually assessing and enhancing the emergency preparedness of the school, including assisting with lockdown and/other emergency drills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety-related incidents are addressed in a timely manner Students have increased opportunities for diversion options as an alternative to being connected to the justice system Individualized plans are in place when needed and effectively implemented to reduce risk and support coordinated responses to safety issues Students and families who were victims of safety-related incidents feel supported Students and staff have knowledge of security mechanisms in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Division Feedback Survey (students, staff, families) School Surveys (students, staff, families, SROs) Focus groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific student populations (e.g., diverse identities, students who have direct interactions with the SRO) Staff SROs Families Administrative Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggregated SRO activity statistics Aggregated safety-related incident statistics

Next Steps

The Division will continue to plan and implement the Phase 1 Evaluation with input from EPS and the Division’s six participating school communities. This work will include the co-creation of the key measurement tools and questions for Phase 1 data collection in spring 2025. The Phase 1 Evaluation Report will be brought to a public Board meeting in fall 2025.