



To: City Manager Patrick Trudgeon

From: Chief Erika Scheider

Date: August 29, 2023

Re: New laws affecting school resource officers

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For decades, the Roseville Police Department has dedicated a School Resource Officer (SRO) to work at the Roseville Area High School (RAHS). Based on the success and positive outcomes of our collaboration with Roseville schools, last year a second SRO was added to provide support to additional schools throughout the district. The SROs collaborate with staff and administrators, serve on school and district emergency response teams, and build connections with students and their families. The SRO positions are jointly funded by the City of Roseville and Roseville Area School District.

One of the laws passed during this year's legislation session amended Minnesota Statutes Chapter 121A by adding provisions that limit the use of force toward students. This law applies to all school employees and agents of the school district, including SROs and any law enforcement officers working contractually with a school at sporting and student events. The law was passed without traditional public safety committee review and had no law enforcement stakeholders providing input into this important legislation.

The unintended consequences of this new law are the limitations it places on the lawful authority of SROs, making it more challenging to ensure the safety of our students. Under the new law, the ability of SROs to intervene is limited and they cannot physically engage a student unless there is threat of bodily harm or death. This potentially creates difficult situations for SROs because they would have limited ability to properly intercede in the event a student is physically damaging school property, fleeing from an illegal situation, or engaging in disorderly conduct. The League of Minnesota Cities, the Roseville City Attorney, the Minnesota Chiefs of Police, and the Minnesota Peace and Police Officers Association have all expressed concerns with this new law.

After careful consideration of the potential consequences of the new law, I have made the difficult decision to recommend pausing our SRO partnership with the Roseville Area School District and delay bringing forward the 2023-2024 SRO contracts for council consideration. Allowing our officers to operate under these new laws would create too many significant risks, liabilities, and uncertainties. Given the law's restrictions and ambiguity, I cannot in good conscience subject our SROs, nor our Roseville taxpayers, to the increased civil and criminal liabilities that come with the law as it is currently written.

Last week we met with district administrators. We remain dedicated to ensuring the safety of our students and school staff. We will still have officers available to respond to calls for service at all of our schools and school safety will continue to be a top priority. We will explore new ways for officers to build positive relationships and help mentor our students. We are looking at options to increase staffing levels during large school events such as football games, but any overtime costs for these events will need to be funded through the City to not subject officers and the city to the increased liabilities.

Discussions are continuing at all levels to find a path forward and get our SROs back in the schools, where they can most effectively ensure the safety of our students. Several agencies, including the League of Minnesota Cities, the Department of Education, the Minnesota Chiefs Association, the Minnesota Sheriffs Association, the Attorney General's Office, and the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association remain committed to working with the legislature to find a solution.

For decades, our SROs have been instrumental in not only ensuring the safety of Roseville school staff and students but also building positive relationships and supporting our students and their families. Once a resolution is reached, likely through legislative action, we look forward to reinstating our SRO program.