



## **ELGIN GROUP POLICE SERVICES BOARD**

Municipality of Bayham | Municipality of Central Elgin | Municipality of Dutton Dunwich

Municipality of West Elgin | Township of Malahide | Township of Southwold

---

September 28, 2023

Lori-Ann Pizzolato  
Chair of the Board  
Thames Valley District School Board  
1250 Dundas Street  
London, ON N5W 5P2

Dear Ms. Lori-Ann Pizzolato

On behalf of the Elgin Group Police Services Board, I am writing to express our deep concern regarding the ongoing pause of the School Resource Officer (SRO) program in schools in the Thames Valley District School Board district. We would like to advocate for the return of police officers to these schools, while acknowledging the importance of building positive relationships with students and the need for adaptation to address the concerns raised during the pause.

We understand that the TVDSB paused the SRO program in fall 2021 following a survey that found some students had negative experiences. While we respect the decision to review the program and address these concerns, it is crucial to recognize that the presence of police officers in our schools serves a vital role in ensuring the safety and well-being of our students, teachers, and staff.

The SRO program was initially designed not only to educate students about important topics such as alcohol and drugs, but also to build positive relationships with our youth. This relationship-building aspect is critical in fostering trust between law enforcement and our students, as it helps students see police officers as approachable figures in the community who are there to support and protect them.

In light of the recent increase in school violence, including assaults, weapon possession, and drug-related incidents, our schools require a visible law enforcement presence. Police officers are trained to respond to emergency situations, and their immediate availability can be crucial in ensuring the safety of our school community.

I would like to emphasize that I believe the police officers in our schools are open to adapting their approach as necessary. It is essential to consider the recommendations arising from the ongoing review, such as addressing systemic racism, improving professional learning, increasing diversity among SROs, and using a trauma-informed approach. These recommendations demonstrate a commitment to better serving the diverse needs of our students.

In conclusion, we urge you to consider carefully the value that the SRO program brings to TVDSB schools and the safety of our students. I believe that a collaborative effort between law enforcement, educators,

students, and parents can lead to a program that benefits everyone. Let us work together to ensure that our schools are safe, nurturing environments where our students can thrive.

Thank you for your consideration and for your dedication to the well-being of our students and schools. I look forward to a constructive dialogue and a positive outcome that benefits our entire community.

Sincerely,

Dave Jenkins  
Chairman  
Elgin Group Police Services Board

Cc: Rob Flack, MPP – Elgin-Middlesex-London  
Local Municipal Partners  
Elgin Group Police Services Board