

Statement Before the County Council Regarding School Resource Officers (SRO's) and School Security Issues in the Prince George's County Public School System

**Alvin Thornton, Ph.D.,
Chair, Board of Education
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Thank you Chairman Turner and members of the County Council for permitting me as Chair of the Board of Education to be part of the Council's briefing regarding policing in our county. I thank the Council and County Executive Alsobrooks for all that is being done to respond to the community's concerns about policing in our community. I agree that much progress has been made in this area, but additional progress is required to meet the public's expectations. State, county and municipal level policy changes regarding policing are required.

Many years ago, I chaired the initial Citizens Against Police Brutality Committee and am keenly aware of the progress that we have made. I agree with County Executive Alsobrooks that in many ways our county is ahead of the nation and most cities and counties when it comes to the restructuring of policing. She is correct to indicate that the federal consent decree facilitated the progress we have made.

I am here to speak specifically to the Board of Education's recent action involving SRO's. During its last Board meeting, the Board decided to table Board of Education agenda item 8.1 – Removal of School Resource Officers (SRO's) from Prince George's County Public Schools – until September 14, 2020. The Board concluded that additional time was needed to consider the proposal and secure additional input from the community.

In deciding to table the proposal, the Board of Education considered responses from the community and its elected representatives indicating support and opposition to the proposal to remove SROs from our school system. The Board is continuing to receive input from all sectors of the community regarding this important issue.

I have informed the public that I will refer the matter back to the Board's Operations, Budget and Fiscal Affairs Committee to: (1) evaluate and assess the role of SROs in the school system and their alignment with PGCPs security services; (2) seek additional school administrator, staff, parent, student and community input regarding the use of SROs; and (3) work with the CEO to develop a report that will demonstrate how PGCPs budgets devoted to mental health, counselor, social services, special needs and related services are deployed strategically to achieved desired student development needs.

I will ask the Board of Education to authorize me as Board Chair to immediately begin facilitating the Board's engagement with State, County and municipal leaders to develop comprehensive recommendations for modifying the policing function in the community and the Prince George's County Public Schools as the context in which SRO and school security services take place.

Today's Council briefing will add to the broader policy context in which the Board will continue its consideration of the SRO issue. We thank the Council for providing that context.