



5130 W. Vliet Street

Milwaukee, WI 53208

414-259-7801 (fax)

414-259-1990

[www.mtea.org](http://www.mtea.org)

October 15, 2007

Alderman James Bohl, Jr.  
200 E Wells St  
Milwaukee WI 53202-3570

Dear Alderman Bohl, Jr.:

The Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association supports the expansion of the School Resource Officer (SRO) pilot program. Our union specifically supports the Bradley Tech pilot as the model for expansion to two south side and two north side MPS high schools.

Our support is based on the assessments of the pilot programs as outlined below:

- The interactions between the police officers and the school communities – students, parents, and staff – were very positive.
- The SROs spent most of their time on education and working with students and parents – a proactive, preventive approach to law enforcement.
- The number of student suspensions, fights, verbal threats, and municipal citations were significantly reduced at Bradley Tech.
- The Milwaukee Urban League, the NAACP, the Southside Organizing Committee, and the United Community Center agreed to receive community input on the pilots, and none of them reported receiving any concerns.

The careful selection of the officers assigned to the schools and the specialized training they received were essential to the success of the pilot programs. These factors must be duplicated for any expansion – as well as an ongoing assessment of the program in each high school. We also highly recommend that the officers be racially and ethnically representative of the school student population.

It is also important to recognize the context of the SRO pilot programs. The presence of two police officers supplemented the invaluable work of the MPS school safety assistants. As in the past, the school safety assistants anticipated and diffused countless potentially explosive situations. They are an integral and critical component of maintaining the safety of students and staff. Our union believes MPS needs more school safety assistants – with at least one full-time in every school.

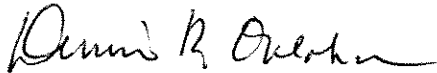
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Prior to the pilot programs, our members had serious concerns with the presence of police officers in MPS schools. We are keenly aware of the negative perceptions of police officers among many segments of the Milwaukee community. Fortunately, the SRO program has improved the image of police officers among Bradley Tech students, parents, and staff.

In conclusion, we believe the limited expansion of the School Resource Officer program, with the conditions outlined above, is a critical part of many steps needed to help keep the violence of the streets out of MPS schools.

We urge you to support this expansion as part of the budget you adopt for our city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis R. Oulahan". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Dennis Oulahan  
MTEA President

tm.kal:word:sro