Compiled by SchoolJusticePSD

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School Resource Officer (SRO) Pay and Activities During COVID School Closure: Overview and Key Points

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* **Students in Poudre School District (PSD) have not been in classes since March.**
* **PSD has continued to pay SROs this entire time.**
* **Fort Collins Police Services told SchoolJusticePSD that Poudre School District requested that 7 of the 14 SROs continue to be in the schools during COVID closure.**
  + **PSD told SchoolJusticePSD that Fort Collins Police Services suggested that 7 of the 14 SROs continue to be in schools during COVID closure.**
* **The tasks performed by SROs during school are either superfluous or need to be carried out by trained professionals.**
* **PSD is paying Fort Collins Police for work that should be paid out of the police budget, not the school budget. In June, PSD cut classified positions, including janitors (greatly needed during pandemic) and continued to pay police.**
* **PSD should protect the jobs of PSD employees, not the jobs of police.**

Overview: During the pandemic schools are closed and yet, PSD continues to pay for SROs.  The cost is approximately half of what they are paid when schools are open. The financial cost of SROs to the Poudre School District is troublesome, especially at a time where COVID related budget cuts are significant. The City of Fort Collins pays half, and PSD matches what the city pays. According to Tim Doran, of Fort Collins Police Services, this is the current projected expense for the city of Fort Collins, SROs, originally and during COVID. This does not include Larimer County or Timnath. As this cost is matched (not split) by the district, this is what PSD pays for SROs when schools are closed.[[1]](#footnote-1)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Original** | **Covid** |
|  | **Sgt** | 1 | 1 |
|  | **Corporal** | 2 | 1 |
|  | **Officer** | 11 | 5 |
| **2020** | **Jul-Sep** | $138,181 | $70,196 |
| **2020** | **Oct-Dec** | $253,332 | $128,693 |
| **2021** | **Jan-Mar** | $245,655 | $124,794 |
| **2021** | **Apr-Jun** | $207,272 | $105,295 |
|  | **Total** | **$844,440** | **$428,978[[2]](#footnote-2)** |

What is PSD paying police to do during school closures?

According to Fort Collins Police Chief Jeff Swoboda, during COVID school closures, SROs roles are:

* They are working in offices from closed schools or at the police department.
* They will be working in the community conducting investigations and/or follow-ups.
* They field “S[afe 2 Tell](https://safe2tell.org)” calls.
* They could be notified when students are arrested.[[3]](#footnote-3)

In addition to these formal “duties,”according to Fort Collins Police Service Instagram, SROs hand out laptops to students who are studying from home.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Key Points:

* Why is PSD paying police to work when schools are closed?
* COVID school closures have revealed the massive expense of SROs, and the ability we have as a community to demand that these tasks are performed by other professionals.
* Safe2Tell calls must be fielded by trained dispatchers and handled by the designated Safe2Tell team, not by SROs with nowhere to go can and should be fielded by non-enforcement professionals, such as counselors and social workers.
* Uniformed police officers do not need to hand out laptops.
* SROs should never be notified when students are arrested out of school. This leads to profiling and likely violates confidentiality.
* There is absolutely no reason why 7 SROs should be working during a time when schools are not open.
* The money spent on SROs when schools are closed could be better spent on meeting the needs of students during a global pandemic, like providing laptops, tutoring, meals for students, student health and mental health
* PSD needs to find ways to save money, not waste money paying for police while students are not in school

1. These are the costs for the Fort Collins SROs only.  If Timnath and Larimer Sheriff SROs are paid also the costs to PSD could be higher. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Source, Tim Doran, Fort Collins Police Services [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Source, Jeff Swodoba, Fort Collins Police Chief [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Source, Fort Collins Police Services twitter [↑](#footnote-ref-4)