



Governing Board of the William S. Hart Union High School District

June 8, 2022

Dear Honorable Chair of the Board and Honorable Board of Supervisors,

We are the Governing Board of the William S. Hart Union High School District – a 7-12 district that serves over 21,000 students in Northern Los Angeles County. We are writing to request that your Board approve the continuation of the contract we have with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for services rendered with School Resource Officers (SRO).

In June of 2021, the Board of Supervisors took action to call for an analysis of the impact of law enforcement presence on school campuses. The anticipated report called for data specific to student arrests, criminalization of students, fear experienced by students, law enforcement costs, and restorative justice alternatives. Unfortunately, the Board did not ask for analysis, data, or anecdotal evidence of the positive impacts of SROs, which would reflect a more comprehensive understanding of the SRO program in the Santa Clarita Valley. Our School Resource Officers engage with our students in a supportive and positive manner, creating a safer school experience. This has allowed our students, families, and the community at large to develop positive, trusting relationships with our law enforcement officers.

As the Board of Supervisors is likely aware, our District suffered an incalculable loss in November of 2019 when a gunman murdered two precious children in the quad at Saugus High School. The swift and professional response of law enforcement on that day highlighted for us the value of the collaborative relationship we maintain with local law enforcement through our SRO program. Since the shooting, our SROs have taken a proactive approach to investigating and resolving countless real and perceived threats. Parents in our community are comforted recognizing that we have SROs who know our individual school communities and are part of a safety plan that can swiftly and efficiently respond to emergency situations. The visible and invisible wounds caused by the Saugus shooting will never entirely heal. However, we can confidently attest that our Safety Resource Officers have helped our community move down this road to recovery.

Now we are hearing that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors may take additional action to restrict districts from having the ability to contract for the services of School Resource Officers on our campuses. Given our own experience with tragedy, and considering the ongoing instances of campus violence at places like Oxford, Michigan, and Uvalde, Texas, we respectfully ask that the Board of Supervisors consider the devastating impact this would have on our community. We believe that educational efforts and policies should be tailored to

reflect the communities and families we serve. We also believe our locally elected Governing Board is best positioned to determine the individual needs of our own community.

We respectfully ask that your Board approve the continuation of, and future contracts with, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, School Resource Officer Program. Please do not take away this essential tool for keeping campuses safe.

Sincerely,

Governing Board Members
William S. Hart Union High School District