

August 18, 2025

WHMI
PO Box 935
Howell, MI 48844

Dear WHMI News Team,

I am writing as a concerned member of our community to bring to your attention a matter that many parents, students, and residents find troubling. Recently, Howell Public Schools made the decision to not renew the contract of the School Resource Officer (SRO) Derek Sawyer. I believe this decision warrants further investigation and public discussion—especially given the current climate around school safety nationwide.

In a time when schools are facing increasing challenges related to student behavior, safety concerns, and mental health issues, the presence of a trained, on-site law enforcement officer can be a vital asset. Resource Officers not only help deter violence but also build positive relationships with students and serve as first responders in the event of an emergency.

The district's decision to remove the SRO has not been accompanied by a clear explanation or public forum for discussion, and many parents and community members are left wondering: What prompted this change? Was there community input or transparency in the decision-making process? What safety measures are being put in place to replace the role the SRO played? Surely in a school district the size of Howell there should be more than one SRO.

I urge your newsroom to look into this issue and help bring some clarity to a decision that has potential implications for student safety and community trust. A deeper look by your investigative team could shed light on the reasoning behind the removal, how the decision was made, and what the district's long-term plan is for maintaining a safe school environment.

I have noticed a few schools in the district have hired "Positive Culture Coordinators". What if any impact does this have on our students learning or more importantly, safety!? Is this a wise use of funds? Can the schools not figure out how to create their own positive environment? I for one would rather have that money spent on an additional SRO.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for the work you do keeping our community informed.

Sincerely,

A concerned Howell resident and parent of two HPS students.