

To whom it may concern,

Thank you so much for providing the Halton District School Board (HDSB) with the opportunity to contribute to the Halton Regional Police (HRPS)'s Strategic Plan. We recognize the important relationship that exists between the HRPS and the HDSB, and truly value the opportunity to submit our thoughts.

The questions provided were used to guide discussion at our Committee of the Whole Meeting on Wednesday, October 11, 2023. A discussion amongst both Trustees and Senior Staff ensured comprehensive answers from a school board perspective and summaries are provided below:

1. What, in your opinion, are the main threats to the safety of everyone in Halton Region?

1. Everything, at its root, is a by-product of poverty in the Region. More focussed resources on affordable housing, social services and inclusive programming and food services would help to alleviate this.
2. Criminal activities involving things such as illegal drugs, guns, car theft, and home invasions in broad daylight.
3. The lack of infrastructure in some areas of Halton Region make the travel in and around the region quite difficult and dangerous (single lanes in Halton Hills where farming equipment takes up more than half the road).
4. Repeatedly, cyber/social fraud preying on the most vulnerable, as well as the negative influence of various social media platforms and users/"broadcasters"/"influencers" was highlighted.
5. Repeatedly, the increase in Hate Crimes with attention to the escalating brazenness of open hostility, vandalism and violence is unsettling, particularly for those who are marginalized, was highlighted.

Comments specific to children/youth, as we have particular interest in taking care of our students:

- Accidents: leading cause of death for children,
- Suicide,
- Substance use and abuse (alcohol, nicotine, opioids, etc.),
- Assault: physical and sexual, and
- Necessities of life: Individuals' safety is threatened when they do not have sufficient housing, food, and clothing. These conditions also correlate with increased likelihood to participate in crime.

2. What, in your opinion, has to be achieved to reduce the likelihood or impact of those threats to the safety of everyone in Halton Region?

1. Overall, the partnership between schools, educational programming and the police services was seen as reducing threats to the populations within the Halton Region with specific examples of:
 - a. How to recognize unsafe practices, fraudsters, sex trafficking, etc..

- b. The role of HRPS in supporting those who are victimized and feel forced into criminal activity.
 - c. Clarity about what EDI actually stands for.
 - d. Suicide: access to mental health supports, equity and full welcome for LGBTQ youth (especially trans).
 - e. Substance use (alcohol, nicotine, opioids, etc.): how do we simultaneously limit access and ensure supply is safe? Learn from our successes and failures with smoking, vaping and opioids (regulate, tax, limit advertising, public health advertising, crack down on illicit supply).
 - f. Consent, eliminate poverty.
 - g. Mental Health supports.
2. Affordable housing for all and improved immigrant services ensuring all residents (especially children) have secure access to housing, food, and clothing would dramatically increase community safety.
 3. There was also a recognition that slower cars, safer infrastructure design (i.e. streets and parking lots), and better enforcement (yes, photo radar works!) support traffic safety
 4. Advocacy to other levels of government who can address the presence of organized crime and weapons in our Region that are beyond the ability of HRPS to address in a preventative way.
 5. Several times diversion programs for youth at risk / social-recreational programs to engage youth at risk were also seen as important social safety nets.

3. Anything else that you would like to share with us about the current or future state of community safety in Halton Region?

Additional comments included ideas surrounding:

1. Increase the presence of police officers in the community at special events so that the community becomes comfortable with their presence.
2. Neighborhood information sessions to educate the public about their local community concerns.
3. The installation of cameras at the school area to monitor suspicious actions.
4. Encouraging law enforcement officers to visit schools to use real cases as educational materials - this will support increased positive interactions between youth and police officers - building relationships and bridges through common understanding of each other.
5. Continued awareness - and prevention - of human trafficking,

Many thanks again for the invitation to contribute to your strategic plan. The HDSB appreciates the ongoing partnership that exists with the HRPS and continues to look at how each entity can support one another in creating positive change within our communities.

Margo Shuttleworth [Trustee]