



Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School District
School Administrative Unit #63

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Superintendent Report
November 14, 2023



Thank you to **Wilton Main Street Association**! On November 7th and 8th, members of the association worked with Emily Hall's 8th grade art class to create *Parols* (a traditional Filipino star lantern) which will be placed in downtown Wilton and lit on December 8th & 17th. What an awesome community collaboration! Thank you Emily!

- I attended a **workshop on** critical issues in legislation held at Primex on November 6th. I have since followed up with our building principals and curriculum coordinator to discuss Dyslexia screening & interventions and Civics education and curriculum, two topics covered at the workshop.
- Dan Bausha, **WJAA Basketball**, and I had a discussion about working together to ensure that our school basketball teams and WJAA basketball both have our needs to use the FRES gym met. As importantly, we talked about great ideas on how to better integrate our two programs, e.g., player clinics with our varsity teams, and mini WJAA games during an extended half-time WLC varsity game.
- Last Thursday at 9am, local **Veterans** were treated to a breakfast followed up by an assembly in their honor. Unfortunately, due to space constraints, only middle school students/staff were able to be present for this event. The tribute would not have been successful without the commitment of many individuals: The American Legion Color Guard, Evan Crotty & Kayden Graham (who led the Pledge of Allegiance), Cadence Hazleton & Eila O'Toole (who read their Voice of Democracy Essay), the WLC Choir (who sang the National Anthem & two additional songs), Cheryl Carter, our WLC facility crew, our wonderful food service staff, Olympia Clark and her team of student who made food and decorations, and Tom Ronning for leading the event. It was a successful team effort and a tremendous honor to recognize and celebrate our military veterans.



American Legion Color Guard



Assembly



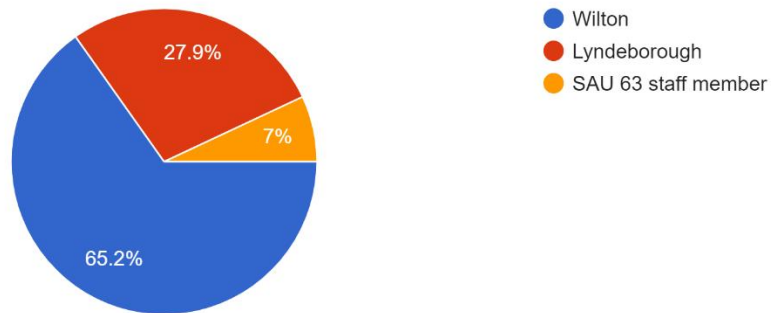
WLC Choir

- On October 30, I visited with the **Boys and Girls Club of Souhegan Valley** to discuss how we can grow our partnership. We have many students attending their afterschool programs, and our meeting focused on embedding more academic elements into their programming that align with our reading and math curriculum, particularly for our FRES students. I am looking forward to taking the next steps to bring FRES and the Boys and Girls Club staff together to make this a successful collaboration that will benefit many of our students.
- I recently met with the **High Mowing** leadership team to continue our working relationship. We brainstormed ideas where our schools may mutually benefit, e.g., professional development and grant activities. I also heard their need to have a venue for some home basketball games this winter, and I am working to find a solution. Last, I again extended our gratitude for the support they gave us when our passenger van was being repaired.
- We are completing a Security Action for Education (**SAFE**) **grant** that will enhance our campus security at all three buildings and upgrade our related software. Estimated cost for this project proposal is \$80,000 and the submission due date is November 30th.
- **Emily Hall** should be commended for her efforts to bring together our art program and local communities. She is currently working with Wilton to support a ceramic moziac mural in a location downtown. Thank you also to Nick Germain, Wilton Town Administrator, for his efforts to help us establish a connection with the Wilton Economic Development Committee and the Conservation Commission.
- Last, I have attached the results of the School Resource Officer **survey**, including comments, for your review. I believe we had a strong response to the survey (201 responses), and I appreciate the 55 written responses from our staff and community members that provide a broad range of feedback.

School Resource Officer (SRO) Survey

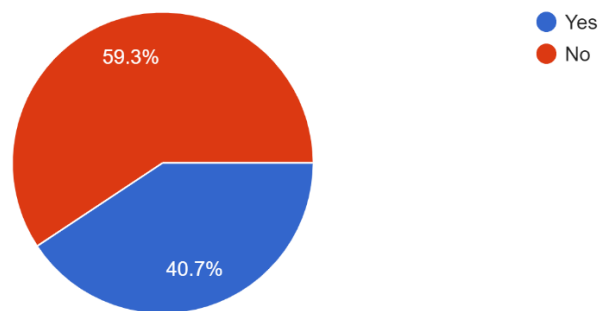
1. I am a resident of

201 responses



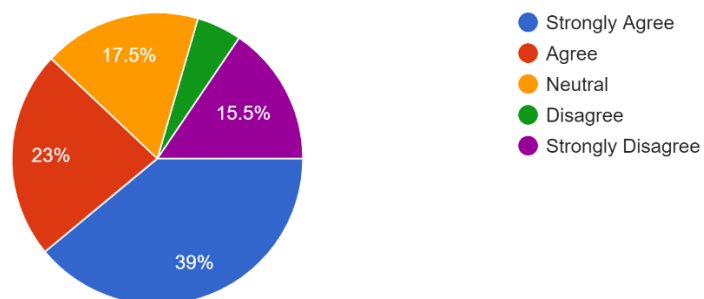
2. My children are currently enrolled in the Wilton- Lyndeborough School District

199 responses



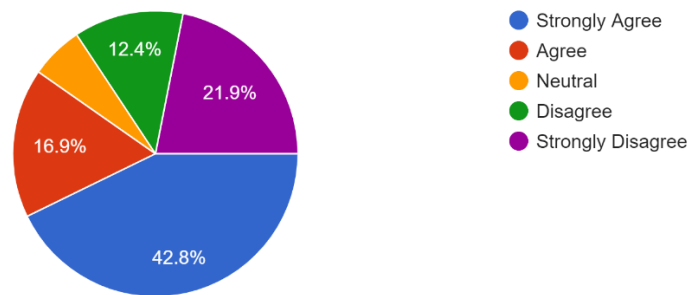
4. I am aware that the School Board supports the addition of a School Resource Officer (SRO) to our schools for the 2024-25 school year

200 responses



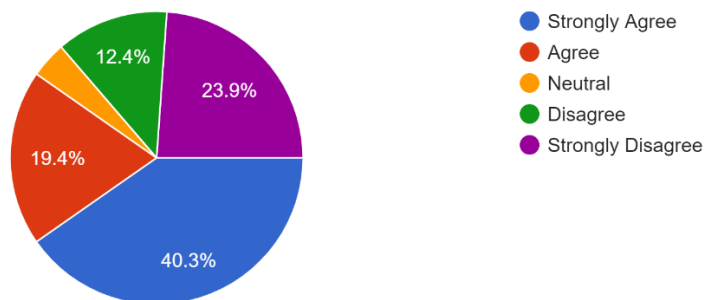
5. It is important to have a School Resource Officer assigned to our Wilton-Lyndeborough schools.

201 responses



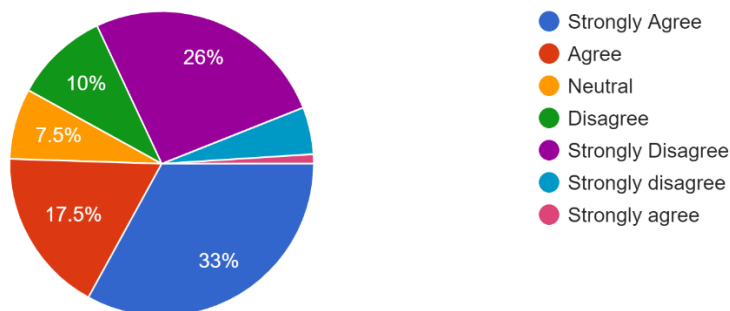
6. Our local government and school district needs to make available funding for an SRO position in our schools

201 responses



7. As a tax-payer, I support the funding of an SRO position through the use of both local government and school district funds

200 responses



SA/Agree = 52%

SD/Disagree = 41%

Responses

- An SRO is very much needed in this District
- Best staff ever
- Research has shown that SRO do not make schools safer but often lead to damaging student relationships with school. Please find below a link to one of many studies:
<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/PIJPSM-05-2016-0065/full/html>
- It also increases the school to prison pipeline. The following quote comes from an article published on a government website and entitled The Growing Concerns of School Resource officers: "Whereas the original intent of SROs was to create a safer environment, some unintended consequences of placing law enforcement in schools have been (a) greater opportunities for negative interactions between youth and police and (b) an increase in youth being referred to the juvenile justice system for assault, weapons, and drug offenses (National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2014). As highlighted by the U.S. Department of Justice, a poorly implemented SRO program can exacerbate the school-to-prison pipeline, resulting in significant harm to students' educational outcomes" (Ryan, 2018). A link to this article can be found below: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1163923.pdf> We should use the money that would go towards a SRO towards more mental health support, counselors, social workers, etc. I strongly oppose SRO's in schools.
- We need to think of the safety for our children not money. This world unfortunately is not getting any easier
- Not supportive of a permanent armed officer in our schools. With the proximity of the police station to WLC this is redundant in the event of a critical emergency. I'm disappointed the school board "voted to support this position" without knowing the cost and without the support of the town governments, taxpayers, and no input from the school budget committee.
- I believe one SRO is needed and with a concentration of his/her time at WLC.
- Is there grant funding available? Does this officer take the place of a current officer in terms of the Police Department staff? or does a current officer become the SRO?
- This is so important for students and teachers. This one needs to be fought for!
- My house is in Wilton, My backyard is in Lyndeborough I also work for the sau63. The High school needs this desperately.
- I don't believe the option of having a security guard for a lower cost would be a good option. SRO's have training specifically on how to work with students and build relationships with students. SRO's can have a big impact by building relationships with the students and school community - not just being an authority presence on campus. If an SRO is approved I feel the selection process of that SRO needs to be very thoughtful and the right candidate would need to show that they want to work with and build relationships with our students. Our students need people they can trust and people they can go to, an SRO can be one of those resources for our kids.
- Great deterrence!!
- This is a valuable resource that our school currently lack. It is an option to build community connection within our schools in another form.
- My understanding of a school resource officer is a highly trained and experienced police officer whose main priority is the schools. Having a resource officer in a school environment can go wrong quickly if that individual is not trained to defuse conflict or is racist or is homophobic. It is also important that the individual is trained to work with mentally ill youth. I love the idea of having this support available for the staff and administrators but it is important that this person is trained and humane.

- While I understand the WANT for an SRO in our district, is there really a NEED for it? I certainly advocate for school safety for all students within SAU63, I'm just not sure we truly need it considering the size of our district. I would be interested in learning more.
- I believe that an SRO would benefit the community. Thank you for your effort to reach out to the community.
- Easier to support this if a competent individual is hired.
- <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/making-schools-safe-and-just>
<https://www.cato.org/blog/school-resource-officers-police-presence-schools-doing-more-harm-good>
- SROs do not contribute to a healthy learning environment. Any funding for an SRO could have gone toward actual educational improvements. I am very disappointed this is even being considered.
- who supervises the SRO? Need more info about this
- The district must get grant funding available for the SRO. It has to be part of the initial SRO startup.
- I would rather see the funds spent on education. If the school personal need law enforcement the school has problems that a SRO will be unable to solve.
- The school should just be for teaching. This is a case of rule by exception. Just because something happened in one location does not mean we should change our schools. It would change the atmosphere and perceptions.
- With all of the school shootings across our nation, no price is too high to protect our children and faculty.
- Having an SRO is not just a man with a gun, they will also be a resource for our students, someone to talk to, someone to offer guidance and assistance and maybe provide a role model.
- I strongly support the addition of an SRO.
- I would like to see statistics. There have been instances when a SRO over reacts and makes a small issue into a very big deal, i.e., handcuffed a teen for refusing to get off a bus, and a middle school kerfuffle (A perfect time for a lesson in conflict resolution.) turned into an assault charge. I would rather spend this kind of money on security.
- Don't "fix" something that ain't broke! Don't look for trouble. Instead, provide ORDER and RESPECT for all in the classroom. REMOVE unruly children - do not "integrate" them. Require parents to be responsible for their offspring.
- There are no statistics provided to indicate a need for this position. Current violence, problems, etc. in this school district. Parents should teach their children social values, not the taxpayers paying someone else to do it.
- I think there has been a need for this position for a long time. Though I no longer have school age children I believe we need to ensure our schools are safe and secure for all
- We cannot support a full-time police officer at this time in Wilton.
- I would like to see the school budget committee make a serious effort at cuts in order to fund a SRO. My fixed income does not keep up with school spending, while I faithfully pay my taxes I would like to see a cooperative effort on the part of the School Budget committee to be be respectful of who they get their monies from and to make budgetary cuts. I think the children's safety takes priority. In addition I question will one SRO move from HS to the Fres to the kindergarten?
- There is no factual support for this need supplied anywhere.
- Actions that present children's schools as DANGEROUS PLACES that need armed protectors working in them is NOT a good theme. The probability of dangerous people swarming the school systems in Wilton- Lyndeborough-local counties does not appear to be high enough to warrant this DRASTIC step in a scary direction. There are WAY too many guns floating around in society. Don't add another gun, even if it is considered "professional".
- Focus on the functions of both these organizations. The Wilton police organization function is to protect and serve the citizens of Wilton NH. The function of the Wilton School organization is to educate the grade school age population of Wilton NH. Intermingling the two organizational functions will introduce fear into the student environment and weaken organizational functions. Everyone must ask themselves why is this being

proposed? Is it out of an emotion as Fear? If so, it is absolutely the wrong direction. Great decisions are never devised when one is emotional. If this idea is cultivated from other situations outside our environment, then creating new situations by the exception to the norm is always very expensive as the means to the end never ends. Ask the basic question: How many times have Wilton police been summoned to school property in the last year? If there is a need then yes hire additional police in THEIR organization NOT an educational organization.

- I would like to know what the expectations of a local RSO would be. What specific training does the RSO have and how will that training be implemented in our district. What problems currently exist that could benefit by having an RSO.
- No way does this taxpayer want a SRO. We already pay for the police and you admin personal should be able to handle some of the other duties. Stop thinking up more ways to increase your budget !! NO and Hell NO !!
- For our school that has a low standard of education, and poor rankings among its peers, spending money on a police officer seems silly. There are dozens of other programs and services we could provide to our students that will actually teach them. It's not good money spent and with the already exorbitant budget of the school it would be wasteful.
- I reviewed the presentation to the school board and found it contradicts or ignores the reality of having a SRO in school. In a study using federal data from 2014 to 2018 to evaluate the impact of school-based police, researchers found no evidence that SROs reduce more serious gun-related offenses, and that firearm-related offenses often INCREASED after the hiring of an SRO. The findings "makes it clear that any potential benefits in violence reduction or gun detection come at very high costs to students." Source: <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/school-police-prevent-some-violence-but-not-shootings-research-finds/2023/07#:~:text=But%20on%20the%20other%20hand,students%20and%20students%20with%20disabilities>. I am aware the school board supports hiring a SRO but survey question no. 4 is worded poorly and nonsensical for the purposes of this survey.
- Most important, the SRO will enforce laws in place in regard to vandalism, physical assaults and any forms of dangerous aggression.
- Enough with the non-teaching staff. It is getting out of hand.
- Start by hiring competent administrators, ones not from the old boy network.
- Salary cap of \$60k. This person should not be make triple the amount of an actual educator.
- As a staff member in a school district with an SRO, I believe strongly in this effort to bring one on board in our schools. Our SROs are a valued resource, do so much for our students and are a daily presence in our school activities and day to day student life. They are senior project mentors, ears to listen when needed and a friend more often than not. I believe the same thing would be true in our school district.
- Follow the facts. Local police can come in and provide lectures/seminars or even a meet and greet any time without impacting the education budget. Why replace a teacher or use funding that could be used to augment existing programs/activities.
- I could think of many things we could use money on to improve the schools and an SRO is not one.
- I find it hard to support paying an officer with local/school funds when teachers in W/L schools are already being paid so low we are having a hard time finding good teachers. I believe we need to use that money to pay teachers more as education is so important to creating the next generation of compassionate, open, accepting, and critically thinking kids.
- SRO does not help in an active shooter situation. The only way it works is when the SRO has the full confidence of the staff and pupils for reporting a potential risk. That takes years and I do not believe we can provide the pay, benefits and atmosphere that would be required. If we vote for that how does it align with teacher and staff compensation? Would an SRO be paid more and, if so how would that be accepted by the staff?
- I would much rather see those funds used to improve our current programs and departments. Or improve salaries for our current faculty and staff. With the district being asked to present a 0% increase budget for the

24-25 SY, I think this is an easy cut to assist with that. I also hope this is not contributing to the request for a 0% increase.

- "School Resource Officer" sticks a cop in the school, where police don't belong. Studies have shown that SROs are more likely to punish/arrest/imprison minority children, often with reactions that far exceed what the situation calls for. To suggest putting officers in schools here is to signal to non-white families that their children won't be safe due to the very person placed there to ensure their safety. Want to know what keeps kids safe more than SROs? Free breakfast and lunch. The money that you propose be spent on one SRO would likely provide a good meal to a good number of the kids in the district.
- There is nothing fair about paying money for a service you (I) will never use ! Please find a way to pay for it without dipping into my shallow pockets ! Anybody with kids will say yes . I have no kids , please don't make me pay for this . Tax the people with kids .that would be fair .
- Our district doesn't do well academically as it is, let's not waste more of our money for such a small population of kids that would likely make zero difference. Encourage teachers and administrators to engage more heavily with less tolerant students and make better use of the money we're already paying.
- This position has been discussed for the WLC Schools since 2004 according to the Milford Cabinet archive and I brought it up at the WLC School Meetings in 2007 and again in 2009. I also proposed it to the School Board in 2012 and yet here we are again in 2023 debating it. You need to pursue getting this done before a tragedy happens here in Wilton at our schools due to the lack of this position being created. You only have to look at our neighboring state of Maine to see people who are saying things like this never happen here to understand that violence occurs everywhere and no town or school is too small to be exempt. The best security is put in place before you need it not after you're broken into and the best law enforcement is engaged as a deterrent and not as a feel good effort to assure the public that a bad event won't happen again after someone hurts people. I can't put this into terms that don't come across as alarmist but I really think that this will be a good investment in the safety of the children, their parents and the staff which regardless of the Town of Wilton's Board of Selectman's opinion needs to happen.
- The wording of the questions in this survey are leading. You should word questions like this neutrally going forward to not lead people to your desired outcome.
- An SRO is certainly an important position in many schools and districts. The information provided in the slides, and what I've been able to find in the school board minutes did not provide enough information to warrant me a greenlight to the above questions. Do I want my children to be safe at school? Yes. Do I think an officer posted in the school is an answer- I don't have enough information to answer yes yet.