

New Bedford Public Schools to hold Community Conversation on School Resource Officer Program

New Bedford Public Schools has begun a series of Community Conversations focused on the mission and efficacy of the district's School Resource Officer Program. Discussions with students and staff scheduled this week and next, will be followed by a virtual public meeting via Zoom with New Bedford stakeholders on Wednesday, October 14 at 5:00 p.m. As capacity is limited, pre-registration is required for the October 14 meeting. To participate, sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/NBPS-SRO-Meeting>. Name and email addresses are for registration purposes only to share the Zoom link.

Superintendent Thomas Anderson stated, "The School Resource Officer Program has been in New Bedford Public Schools for many years. The objective of these engagement sessions is to share the historical context and provide varying perspectives from those in New Bedford. This is an emotionally charged social issue for many in our community for me both personally and professionally. We are obligated to be transparent and objective in our thinking. We all have different realities and to eradicate racism and inequities on all levels we must have candid respectful dialogue."

Jariel Vergne, NBPS Wraparound Manager noted, "These engagement sessions will allow us to gather feedback on this important issue for our schools and community. Utilizing the Zoom virtual platform, we are hosting engagement sessions for students, staff, parents, and community members on different dates. This will allow the sharing of individual perspectives on the School Resources Officer Program in New Bedford Public

Schools.” The NBPS Wraparound Services Department will host the October 14 Community Conversation.

What participants can expect

The October 14 Community Conversation engagement session will include a Welcome and Introduction in a virtual main room with an overview video, and breakout sessions to allow participants to share their thinking, after which all participants will convene to hear the perspectives from each breakout group.

“These discussions and facilitated break-out sessions will generate deep thinking and paint a clear picture of our next steps,” noted Superintendent Anderson, adding that the “objective is to assess the effectiveness of the New Bedford Public School’s School Resource Officer Program and determine our next steps based on the data generated from the series of meetings.”

If New Bedford Community members would like to share their experience anonymously, they may do so by completing a survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NG5YTNK>. The survey is also available in Spanish: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/66C9WJ6>, Portuguese: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6WVQ3HW>, and K’iche: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6CFFWKP>