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# Niagara Regional Police Service **138.**

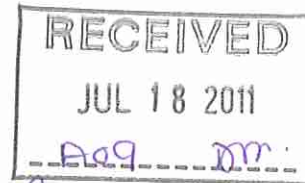
Chief of Police Wendy E. Southall

## REPORT OF THE POLICE SERVICE

TO

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA POLICE SERVICES BOARD

**Board Report Number:** 139/2011  
**Date of Report:** 2011-07-05  
**Date of Board Meeting:** 2010-07-28



*Public Agenda*

**Acting Chairperson Todd Shoalts  
and Members of the  
Regional Municipality of Niagara Police Services Board**

**Reference: Annual Report on Youth Crime – By-law 236-2000**  
**Recommendation: Receive for Information**

**Background:**

On 2003-09-25, the Regional Municipality of Niagara, Police Services Board enacted by-law No. 236-2000. This by-law is in response to the Provincial Adequacy Standards Regulation that requires the Board to have a policy in place with respect to investigations into youth crime. This report has been prepared to address these requirements .



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**Section 4 of the By-Law directs the Chief of Police to:**

- ◆ **Develop and maintain procedures on, and processes for, undertaking and managing investigations into youth crime in accordance with the Adequacy Standard LE-044.**

The Niagara Regional Police Service's General Orders 085.03 Young Persons (last revision September 10, 2008) and 111.06 – Intelligence Services Unit and Technical Support Access (last revision February 25, 2008) are the primary orders related to this by-law and currently meet the requirements of the Adequacy Standard. In addition the Service has a number of protocols, including with both school boards and various community organizations, which assist us in working collaboratively in addressing youth crime issues in Niagara (ex. *The NRPS Extrajudicial Measures Referral Program* and *Niagara Region TAPP-C Protocols*<sup>1</sup>).

- ◆ **Develop and maintain a school liaison program which includes establishing protocols for investigating school related occurrences and that these protocols are reviewed on an annual basis.**

The Service just completed its third year of a dedicated School Resource Officer (SRO) pilot project in Two District and has just completed the first year of a pilot project with three SROs in One District. The SRO Program is endorsed by the International Association of Chiefs' of Police, the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education, and the Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response. Our full-time SROs are dedicated to school/youth related matters in all secondary schools within those Districts. This Program has been a tremendous success. These officers are able to be pro-active, fulfilling our crime prevention and community policing mandates, and are also able to respond quickly to enforcement issues such as dating violence, harassment and drug possession and other offences that occur within a school setting or activity. The relationships they have built are integral to issues being reported to police in a timely manner to ensure school safety and reduce offending overall "*... since in 81% of school-based violence at least one other person had some type of knowledge of the attacker's plan, 93% were peers, yet only a fraction reported their concerns*"<sup>2</sup>. This Program allows students to feel that police are approachable and will listen and protect them. These benefits also carry over into the community-at-large and are particularly important in preventing and addressing gang and drug activity. The Service is looking for ways to expand the full time SRO Program into other parts of the region.

In addition to the SRO Program, the Service also has a position known as Youth Justice Co-ordinator (YJC) who works very closely with schools and other

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<sup>1</sup> An Extrajudicial Measure is a required response under Section 6 of the Youth Criminal Justice Act; TAPP-C stand for The Arson Prevention Program for Children

<sup>2</sup> Modzeleski, W., Pollock, W., Rooney, G., (2008). Prior Knowledge of Potential School-Based Violence: Information Students Learn May Prevent A Targeted Attack; National Institute of Justice, (2005), National Assessment of School Resource Officer Programs.

community organizations to address both crime prevention and operational response issues at a regional level. Since the fall of 2010 this has included working on a new School/Police Protocol. In the past the Service has had protocols with each of the four publicly funded school boards in Niagara. Each year these protocols would require review. The new Protocol, to be launched in September 2011, will see all five organizations sign onto one document, ensuring both officers and administrators are able to provide a consistent response across schools in Niagara.

◆ **Consider the need for a multi-agency strategy to prevent or counter the activities of youth gangs in the community in accordance with the Service's procedures on crime prevention and problem-oriented policing**

Our SRO Program is one of our strongest assets in reducing the opportunities for both gang and drug activity. Due to the relationships our SROs have developed with students, staff and families, they are able to gather intelligence and offer the best opportunity for early intervention in all issues affecting school and community safety. Additionally, the YJC is involved with both schools and community agencies in early responses to behaviour associated with possible future offending behaviour including gang and drug involvement.

The Service also has several initiatives underway which address this portion of the by-law including our involvement in the *G.R.E.A.T.* (Gang Resistance Education and Training) and *SNAP®* (Stop Now and Plan®) Programs. This past school year saw the Community Services Unit deliver *G.R.E.A.T.* to 71 Grade 4 and 7 classrooms, and our Service continues to sit on the Niagara *S.N.A.P®* for Schools Community Advisory Committee. Both of these Programs are aimed at teaching youth pro-social skills and reducing their likelihood of engaging in offending behaviour, including youth gang involvement.

In addition to calls for service where police are investigating an offence, many of our calls for service involving youth are related to other issues. Our Service is aware that we cannot address youth crime and potential gang issues without also being aware of their antecedents. Calls for service, including family disturbances and violence, issues of bullying/victimization, issues related to mental health and missing person reports often offer us early opportunities to prevent future police involvement. Our Service saw an increase of almost 15% in the number of referrals we made to Family and Children's Services Niagara between the same periods in 2009/2010 and 2010/2011, and our calls for service involving youth missing persons increased approximately 12% in the same period<sup>3</sup>. If our community is not able to adequately address a youth's threat to safety or understand why a youth continues to run away from home, this same youth is more likely to end up in the justice system. Although these cases are not specifically labelled as "youth crime", they are examples of calls for service which

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<sup>3</sup> Niagara Regional Police Versadex Records, retrieved July 6, 2011

make up a large portion of our front-line youth response incidents. Recognizing these calls for service as an opportunity for early intervention, the Niagara Regional Police has been the lead agency on several initiatives to ensure school safety, including the development of a one day training module on collaborative response to high-risk youth and a regional multi-system community protocol in response to youth who may pose a risk to themselves or others.

Our Service continues to build strong inter-agency relationships. Over last year, our use of the NRPS Extrajudicial Measures Referral Program, which sees youth referred to community organizations to address factors that contributed to their offending, has increased 30%. There is a tremendous body of research that indicates community responses to youth crime are far more effective in reducing recidivism than simply processing youth through the formal justice system<sup>4</sup>. The increase in our use of these community responses is a significant achievement in Niagara and can largely be attributed to the increase in the number of dedicated SROs.

**Section 5 of the By-Law directs the Chief to make a written report to the Board that will include:**

- ◆ **A summary of the written procedures concerning youth crime investigations**

General Order 085.03 Young Persons is the primary order related to this portion of the by-law and currently meets the requirements of the Adequacy Standard; this Order is also supported by a number of other community protocols relating to police interaction with youth. General Order 085.03 includes procedures on, and processes for, complying with the Federal Youth Criminal Justice Act (S.C. 2002, c. 1) (YCJA) which provides the legislative framework for youth justice in Canada. Our procedures ensure officers take into consideration the appropriateness of pre- (extrajudicial measures) and post-charge diversion (extrajudicial sanctions) options, interviewing considerations, appropriate community collaborations, school related concerns, and specific legal requirements when responding to incidents involving youth, such as the right to consult a parent/appropriate adult and counsel. Our Service also prepares Police Services Board Reports and Annual Reports fulfilling this by-law requirement.

- ◆ **The status of the Service' compliance with these procedures**

The Service conducted a review in 2009 regarding Provincial Adequacy Standard LE-044 upon which this by-law is based. This review found our procedures and policies are in compliance with this Standard. In addition, the Niagara Regional Police Service continues to review existing programs and policies and implement new initiatives, including ways of dedicating further resources specifically focused on youth related issues.

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<sup>4</sup> Doob, A.N. & Cesaroni, C, (2004), Responding to Youth Crime in Canada, pp 249-51; Waller, I., (2006). Less law, more order: the truth about reducing crime

◆ **A summary of steps taken by the Service to monitor and evaluate youth crime**

The Service created a position, Youth Justice Co-ordinator (YJC), in order to ensure compliance with both Provincial and Federal Legislation. One of the duties of this position is to ensure that the Service is aware of current research and best-practice in addressing youth issues and also to report annual Service statistics with respect to youth crime. In addition, each District is responsible for monitoring youth investigations within their jurisdiction.

Although 2010 data is not yet available, 2009 data from a new youth Crime Severity Index (CSI), a measure of the seriousness of police-reported crime, showed that youth (12-17 year olds inclusive) crime severity has generally been declining since 2001, including a 2% drop in 2009 and the traditional youth crime rate (number of youth accused) was at virtually the same level in 2009 as it was a decade earlier<sup>5</sup>. **This is true despite the fact that far fewer youth (12% fewer) are being sentenced to custody than a decade earlier<sup>6</sup>**. It is important to note that punitive sanctions alone are found to be associated with increases in recidivism and have no deterrent effect on youth offending<sup>7</sup>. This underscores the importance of our Service's continued participation in effective crime prevention and response programs such as having dedicated police officers in schools (SRO and G.R.E.A.T programs), *S.N.A.P.*® and the *NRPS Extrajudicial Measures Referral Program*.

**Conclusion:**

Our Service understands that public protection is best achieved through prevention strategies, proactive measures that build relationships between police, our youth and the community, meaningful consequences that address factors that lead to offending and promote accountability, and rehabilitation and reintegration processes that reduce recidivism. Calls for service that involve youth, whether they are domestic, school or community related, are often very complex. The police often become the gatekeepers as to which systems become involved with a youth and family such as child welfare, justice, mental health or a combination. In order to increase community safety *"...early intervention is critical to prevent child delinquency from escalating into chronic criminality given that children (sic) between the ages of 7-12 have a two to threefold greater risk*

<sup>5</sup> Juristat: Canadian Centre for Justice, Statistics Canada, 2010, Catalogue no. 85-002-X, vol. 30, no. 2  
Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2009

<sup>6</sup> Juristat: Canadian Centre for Justice, Statistics Canada, 2010, Catalogue no. 85-002-X, vol. 30, no. 2  
Youth Court Statistics 2008/2009

<sup>7</sup> Doob, A.N. & Cesaroni, C, (2004), Responding to Youth Crime in Canada, pp 249-51; Waller, I., (2006).  
Less law, more order: the truth about reducing crime

*of becoming serious, violent and chronic offenders...<sup>8</sup>*. Decades of research and anecdotal evidence link victimization and accompanying trauma with subsequent offending behavior. Studies have consistently found that children who were physically abused were more likely to display aggression in school settings<sup>9</sup>, to present delinquent and violent behaviours as adolescents<sup>10</sup>, and to exhibit criminal behaviours as adults<sup>11</sup>. Factors including trauma, mental health, learning, developmental or addictions issues may be contributing to the youth's behaviour which in turn may lead to justice system involvement. The majority of youth grow through adolescence with little police involvement. However, youth who do come to our attention are ones to whom we need to pay particular attention, as they are often the ones who may be on a pathway towards repeat police involvement, offending and/or escalating violence. How we respond to these calls has a direct impact on future offending and future calls for service, as well as the family and community's perception of police. This underscores the importance of our strong community collaborations with mental health agencies, schools, justice, child welfare and others.

Our Service's strong community collaborations, proactive strategies, and growing SRO Program assist us in ensuring serious youth crime, such as assaults, dating violence, substance use, gang involvement, is addressed effectively in Niagara and contributes to safer schools and communities.

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<sup>8</sup> Wasserman, G., Miller, L., and Cothorn, L., (2000). *Prevention of Serious and Violent Juvenile Offending*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention); (U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Child delinquency Bulletin Series*, (March 2003), Prevalence and Development of Child Delinquency, Howard N. Snyder, Rachele C. Espiritu, David Huizinga, Rolf Loeber, and David Petechuk

<sup>9</sup> Dodge, K., Lochman, J. E., Harnish, J. D., Bates, J. E., & Pettit, G. S. (1997). Reactive and proactive aggression in school children and psychiatrically impaired chronically assaultive youth. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 106, 37–51; Tremblay, R. E. (2000). The development of aggressive behaviour during childhood: What have we learned in the past century? *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 24, 129–141

Lewis, D., Moy, E., Jackson, L., Aaronson, R., Restifo, N., Serra, S. and Simos, A., (1985). Biopsychosocial characteristics of children who later murder: A prospective study. *Am. J. Psychiat.* 142: 1161-1167; Singer, M.I., Anglin, T.M., Song, L.Y., & Lunghofer, L. (1995). Adolescents' exposure to violence and associated symptoms of psychological trauma. *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association*, 273, 477-482

<sup>10</sup> Lewis, D., Moy, E., Jackson, L., Aaronson, R., Restifo, N., Serra, S. and Simos, A., (1985). Biopsychosocial characteristics of children who later murder: A prospective study. *Am. J. Psychiat.* 142: 1161-1167; Singer, M.I., Anglin, T.M., Song, L.Y., & Lunghofer, L. (1995). Adolescents' exposure to violence and associated symptoms of psychological trauma. *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association*, 273, 477-482

<sup>11</sup> Sack, William H. and Robert Mason. (1980). Child abuse and conviction of sexual crimes: A preliminary finding. *Law and Human Behavior*, 4, (3): 211-215; Widom, C. S. (1989). Does violence beget violence? A critical examination of the literature. *Psychological Bulletin*, 106(1), 3-28; Sourander A, Jensen P, Ronning JA, Elonheimo H, Niemela S, Helenius H, et al. Childhood bullies and victims and their risk of criminality in late adolescence the Finnish From a Boy to a Man study. *Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine*. 2007; 161: 546-552

***Our Service has accomplished a number of things between the summer of 2010 and the summer of 2011, including:***

- Expansion of the *School Resource Officer Program* to One District by adding three full-time SROs and continuing to have one full-time Two District SRO. These officers cover all Secondary Schools in those Districts.
- Developing and delivering, with community partners, an inter-agency, multi-disciplinary one day training module on best-practice in responding to high-risk youth. This training will be delivered several times each year to agencies in the Niagara region working with youth including schools, FACS, NHS and police.
- Continuing the development and maintenance of the *Niagara Regional Police School Police Emergency Action Response Program (NRPS SPEAR)*. All front-line response vehicles have access to this vital information. This program is a partnership involving emergency services, publicly and privately funded schools and school boards and other service providers in the region.
- Completing work on the 5 party School/Police Protocol.
- Completing work on the *School–Community Response Protocol: A Collaborative Response to serious Risk and Threat Behaviours*.
- Working with a number of community partners on the Ministry of Education’s Student Support Leadership Initiative- working to establish/enhance local partnerships that will better meet the needs of students and families.
- Completing our seventh full year of *T.A.L.K. (Teams of Adults Listening to Kids)*. This is a secondary school based anti-victimization project involving a number of community partners and funded through the Ontario Trillium Foundation.
- Continuing to deliver the *G.R.E.A.T (Gang Resistance Education and Training) Program* within identified elementary schools.
- Participating in *Stop Now and Plan® (SNAP®) for Schools*, which helps children and youth regulate their impulsivity and anger by teaching them to stop, think and plan. This is a \$4.7 million, multi-year Niagara community project funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre.
- Participating in the *Working Together for Kids Mental Health*, a tri-Ministerial initiative aimed at earlier identification of children/youth who may be struggling with mental health issues.
- Participating on the Committee of Youth Officers for the Province of Ontario

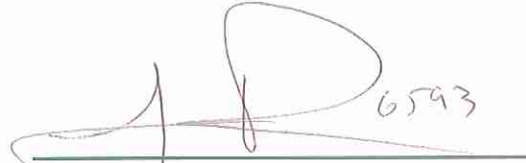
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| <b><u>Relevant Policy Considerations:</u></b> | <b>Police Services Board By-Law 236-2000- a By-Law Respecting Youth Crime.</b><br><br><b>General Order 085.03- Young Persons.</b><br><b>General Order 111.06 – Intelligence Services Unit and Technical Support Access</b><br><br><b>Policing Services Division Policing Standards Manual Adequacy Standard LE044 – Youth Crime.</b> |
| <b><u>Cost of Recommendations:</u></b>        | <b>N/A</b>   |
| <b><u>Alternative Options:</u></b>            | <b>Not to receive for information</b>  |
| <b><u>Reasons for Recommendation:</u></b>     | <b>For information purposes</b>  |

Prepared by:



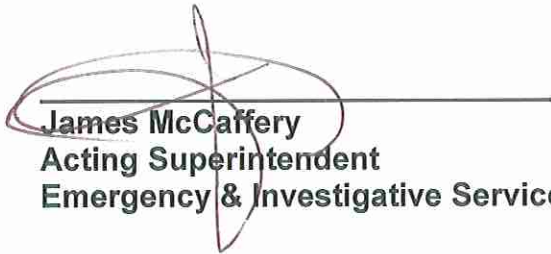
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Respectfully submitted by:

  
**Wendy E. Southall**  
Chief of Police