



Hazelwood SRO program on hold after school board asks for additional diversity and inclusion training

Chiefs from three police departments in St. Louis County declined the district's offer for 10 additional hours of training

HAZELWOOD, Mo. — Students within the Hazelwood School District will not be seeing school resource officers at the start of this school year after school board members said the three police departments from which they draw their officers declined to send them through diversity and inclusion training the district wanted to provide.

“While SROs will not be in our schools at the start of the school year, our long-standing relationship with our local law enforcement will continue; furthermore, so will our never-ending respect for the crucial role they play in our community,” according to a statement parents received and that’s [posted on the district’s webpage](#).

St. Louis County, Florissant and Hazelwood police departments contribute officers to the district, which is the second largest in the county with about 18,000 predominantly Black students in north county.

The discussion between the police departments and school district leaders began earlier this year. [The I-Team obtained a letter](#) written June 1 by the police chiefs from the three departments.

“After our careful review and discussion regarding the request to add contract language that requires our School Resource Officers to participate in a minimum of 10 hours per contract year of professional development on diversity, equity and inclusion provided by the school district, we believe our officers receive training that is more than adequate to address the critical matters of diversity, equity and inclusion,” according to the letter signed by recently retired St. Louis County Police Chief Mary Barton, Hazelwood Chief Gregg Hall and Florissant Chief Tim Fagan.

A St. Louis County police spokeswoman said the department is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion training.

“Our officers will continue to receive specific and developed training in these critical areas that is Missouri P.O.S.T. approved. Unfortunately, Hazelwood School District’s required training does not meet that criteria. We recognize the value of the School Resource Program and hope to maintain a positive and productive relationship with the school district,” county police said in an emailed statement.

Hall was unavailable for comment Thursday.

Fagan said he “feels confident” his department and the school district will reach an agreement.

“The Florissant Police Department values our long-standing partnership with the Hazelwood School District and we look forward to continued discussions about returning our School Resource Officer to the school,” Fagan wrote in an email to 5 On Your Side.

In their letter, the chiefs also outlined how much training and continuing education the state’s [Peace Officer Standards and Training](#) commission requires for their officers to keep their peace officer licenses.

“Cultural awareness has long been part of the St. Louis County and Municipal Police Academy curriculum,” the chiefs wrote. “Missouri POST certified training instructors and subject-matter experts outside of law enforcement implement this curriculum.

“This curriculum includes training on diversity, equity and inclusion.”

School officials declined to comment beyond the written statement on the district's website.

St. Louis County police provide eight officers to the district. One is from Florissant. Three are from Hazelwood. [CLICK HERE FOR THE ENTIRE STORY](#)

Masks to be required this fall in most St. Louis area schools

Other districts including Affton, Mehlville, Hazelwood and St. Louis Public Schools have announced they will require masks for all students and staff.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker said Wednesday that all students and staff in Illinois schools and day care centers will be required to wear masks indoors this fall.

The delta variant of COVID-19 appears to be more transmissible among children, according to St. Louis County health officials.

“Our most concerning update is that the disease is fundamentally different than last year, particularly in children,” reads an alert sent Wednesday by the health department. “This is very concerning as the school year is around the corner.”

The weekly alert continued, “We are seeing outbreaks and transmission occurring in such settings as daycares and summer camps.”

That means, health officials said, “that transmission in school is not only possible, but likely, especially if the appropriate mitigation measures are not taken.”

The department pointed to several recent examples of viral transmission locally, such as an outbreak of eight cases in a day care classroom including an unvaccinated teacher.

A “large provider” of summer camps and child care has reported more cases this summer compared with the entire last year, according to the county health department.

Private schools have stayed open during the pandemic for the most part, while requiring masks and social distancing. The Archdiocese of St. Louis has not changed a mask-optional policy it recommended for its schools in July, but advises Catholic schools to follow mask mandates in their jurisdictions.

The Archdiocese promotes vaccination as “an important tool in caring for one’s own health and in being thoughtful and caring toward others,” according to an Archdiocese spokeswoman.

In St. Charles County, which has never adopted a mask mandate, school districts including Francis Howell and Wentzville have issued mask-optional policies for this fall.

Fox, the largest school district in Jefferson County, has not announced its policy on masks for this fall. But cases are surging in the area. There were 267 cases of COVID-19 in children in Jefferson County in July, compared with 59 cases in June. About 15% of teenagers in the county are fully vaccinated, according to the health department.

The CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend masks in schools for everyone 2 and older, regardless of vaccination status.

More than 450 doctors in the St. Louis region have signed a letter advocating in-person learning and extracurricular activities with precautions including masking for everyone older than 2.

Elementary School Teacher Accused of Sexually Assaulting Student



According to the KSDK 5, a former teacher has been accused of molesting a student while employed as a teacher's aid at Lusher Elementary School located at 2015 Mullanphy Rd, Florissant, MO 63031.

The Florissant Police Department has revealed that the 2nd-grade victim accused 38-year-old Deonte Taylor of sexual assault in 2015. The victim explained at that time that the abuse happened when Taylor took the child out of class during school hours. Not only did the victim report the abuse to the police but the school officials as well.

Taylor took a teaching position at Walnut Grove Elementary School in 2018. The school reports that it was not made aware of the allegation from the former school, despite the Hazelwood school district claiming they followed all state and federal requirements for reporting the abuse.

In November of 2018, Taylor was arrested for the incident. Following an outburst by the student in the classroom, the investigation began almost three years later. The police were able to match Taylor's DNA on samples that had been taken from the victim's body and underwear. He was charged with a felony sodomy charge.

While in jail awaiting his trial, Taylor allegedly hired his 68-year-old jail boyfriend to kill both the victim and his family. Taylor offered the sum of \$20,000 for the alleged conspiracy to commit the murders. However, the boyfriend had reservations due to his own child being close in age and turned to the police as an informant. Taylor is now facing charges of felony sodomy, conspiracy to commit murder, as well as recklessly risking the infection of another with HIV. His trial is set to proceed later this year.

<https://legalherald.com/florissant-mo-teacher-charged-with-sexually-assaulting-student/>

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St. Louis Community College: Meet STLCC's New Vice Presidents For Student Affairs

Fueled by a desire to enhance the student experience, St. Louis Community College recently welcomed the addition of four vice presidents to the College.

The new positions are the result of a multi-level reorganization designed to streamline processes within the student affairs department. In these new roles, the vice presidents are responsible for leading districtwide functional areas, as well as serving as the chief student affairs officer at their respective campus.

"Each vice president brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the department and the College," said Christine Davis, Ed.D., vice chancellor for student affairs. "We welcome their leadership, and we look forward to leveraging their talents to better serve our students and move STLCC forward."

Florissant Valley

Jule Massey, M.A., joined the College in June 2004 and served in several roles before advancing to her current position as vice president of student success and chief student affairs officer at STLCC-Florissant Valley.

In this role, Massey is responsible for academic advising, access disability services and career development. She has more than 17 years of experience in higher education and has held titles including academic advisor, manager of academic advising, manager of student success initiatives, and interim director of academic advising and student success.

Massey earned a master's degree in educational leadership and policy analysis with an emphasis in student affairs from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Truman State University.

A graduate of Hazelwood East High School, Massey has a passion for the College and its mission of empowering students, expanding minds and changing lives.

"There is nothing better I can think of doing than paying it forward to the students we serve at STLCC," Massey said. "This coming year, I've made it a goal to wrap my arms around the Florissant Valley campus and make sure our students are cared for and successful in their journey with us."

In addition to her work at STLCC, Massey enjoys spending time with her three daughters.

Education Alumna Melissa Bouquet was one of the 28 educators from across the country selected for the NASA Airborne Astronomy Ambassadors Program in 2020. As part of the experience, she took part in a flight in NASA's airborne observatory, dubbed the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy, or SOFIA. (Photos courtesy of Melissa Bouquet)



Just after the Fourth of July, Melissa Bouquet strapped into the cockpit of a Boeing 747 bound for the Earth's stratosphere.

After takeoff, Bouquet operated the plane's state-of-the-art telescope and conversed with mission directors and scientists while more than 40,000 feet in the air. However, she isn't an astronaut or a spy – she's a ninth-grade physical science teacher at Fort Zumwalt West High School.

"Oh my goodness, one of the best experiences of my life," Bouquet said.

The flight in NASA's airborne observatory, dubbed the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy or SOFIA, was part of the organization's Airborne Astronomy Ambassadors Program. Bouquet, a graduate of the College of Education at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, was one of the 28 educators from across the country selected for the AAA Program in 2020.

The NASA program is managed by the SETI Institute and provides multi-faceted professional development for high school science teachers with the goal of enhancing STEM education throughout the country. SOFIA, a joint effort between NASA and the German Aerospace Center, was specifically designed to support initiatives like the AAA Program.

Bouquet grew up in O'Fallon, Missouri, and loved science, particularly astronomy, as a child. When it came time to go to college, she knew teaching would be a good way to pursue that interest. She chose to attend UMSL because its proximity made it easy for her to commute from her home while she studied.

"I love science, and I wanted to share that passion with others," she said. "Teaching was the best way to do it."

Bouquet finished her degree in December 2012 and began teaching seventh grade science in the Hazelwood School District the following school year. She moved to Fort Zumwalt West in 2018.