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Dear Police Advisory Group Members,

I write to you today to speak on behalf of the School Resource Officer position, and Dan Miner in particular, as you weigh options for that role moving forward. By way of background, I have been involved in the education field since 1977. Most recently I was the Great Falls Middle School and Turners Falls High School Peer Mediator Coordinator, beginning in 2015. In 2019 I transitioned to co-facilitate a Boys' Group with SRO Dan Miner. Additionally I am a Special Projects Intern for the NWDA office working with the Juvenile Diversion Program. I have been a Restorative Justice Board Member in Greenfield, MA since the day Lucinda Brown and Judge Tom Merrigan initiated the program. I am also a Community and Smalls Claims Court Mediator for Collaborative Resolutions Group (CRG, formerly TMTC). I am also a member of the Greenfield Mayor's Domestic Violence Taskforce. Prior to 2015 I was the Assistant Head at two schools, Dean of Students, math teacher, coach, advisor and began my education career in 1977 as a teacher/counselor at a DYS Therapeutic Community Residence in Littleton, MA.

Since I began at GMRSD, I have been immensely impressed by the spirit, community, and resilience of all who work in the schools. I have found the faculty and staff fully dedicated to the well being and education of each and every student. I met Dan Miner at a Restorative Practices Training for local school systems. We seemed to have a common bond with our educational philosophies: "every student is valued." I shared with Dan the plan that Earl McGraw and I had to start a Boys' Group, whose plan never commenced due to Earl's passing. Dan and I agreed to move forward and began the planning in early 2019 and held our first meetings in the Fall of that year. The purpose of the group was to create a space where the boys could say anything, get

honest feedback from peers and mentors, and hear from others who had overcome past roadblocks and trauma.

If we judge feedback from the group, the meetings were quite successful. So much so, that several girls requested to start a Girls' Group. The group's success is in large part due to Dan Miner's personality and professionalism. I see the admiration and trust that the boys have in him. I also see students, all genders, ducking into his office as he invites them "in" and does not push them "away." All the students feel valued. Dan is the person to drive students home if they are suspended and can't get a ride. I know that is an opportunity for student reflection and adult input of wisdom. Dan, as the SRO, is a positive presence in the hallways and in conversations with students. They know they can go to him to "let off steam" before doing something inappropriate. Dan has also been helpful with the NWDA office when a student from Turners Falls ends up in our program. He is a positive role model for policing. Students learn to trust officers in uniform, not fear or dislike them. You have the right person, in the right role, at the right time in your schools.

I would be delighted to discuss this further with any or all members of the Police Community Engagement Advisory Group. Please feel free to contact me at 413-775-3551 or s smith12154@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Scott L. Smith