**U.S. Department of Justice**
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

# COPS
*COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES*
*U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE*

*A Guide to Developing,
Maintaining, and Succeeding With Your*

# School Resource
# Officer Program

ENFORCEMENT · COUNSELING · TEACHING

## Practices From the Field for Law Enforcement and School Administration

*Prepared by*
Peter Finn
Meg Townsend
Michael Shively
Tom Rich

**Abt**
Abt Associates Inc.

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# *Executive Summary*

Supported by Cooperative Agreement #2003-HS-WX-K041 by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), Abt Associates Inc. conducted a study of seven components of School Resource Officer (SRO) program operations that many programs have experienced difficulty addressing:

- recruiting SROs,

- screening SROs,

- retaining SROs,

- training SROs,

- supervising SROs,

- identifying sources of program funding, and

- maintaining program funding.

Information for the report comes principally from in-depth interviews with program supervisors, SROs, law enforcement administrators, school administrators, school board members, and local government officials conducted during site visits to 28 well-regarded programs.  Additional information, was obtained from follow-up telephone calls to program participants and a review of program materials.

The report has been written for:

- first-line SRO program supervisors;

- police and sheriff's department administrators interested in improving their SRO programs;

- school administrators with SRO programs already in their schools; and

- law enforcement and school district personnel considering starting an SRO program.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

Many SRO programs have experienced difficulty recruiting, screening, retaining, training, and supervising SROs.  Many programs have also had problems maintaining funding over time.  This report documents promising methods that selected SRO programs have used to address these potential problem areas of SRO program operations. The information in the report is intended to enable other SRO programs—and jurisdictions that are thinking of starting SRO programs—*to benefit from the experiences of these selected programs by adopting or adapting some of their approaches to solving obstacles in these seven areas*.

The chapter summaries below present the policy recommendations from each  chapter.  However, *the summaries omit the detailed examples of how specific programs have implemented the recommendations* that the individual chapters—and the case studies that follow most of the chapters—provide.  As a result, while readers will find the executive summary a useful "road map" of how to address each of the seven problem areas the report focuses on, only by reading the chapters and case studies can readers find out about *the specific steps well-regarded programs have actually taken for addressing these stumbling blocks to success*.  In short, the full text of the chapters lends credibility to the recommendations in the executive summary as well as provides the particulars about how to go about putting the recommendations into practice.

## Chapter 2   Recruiting SROs

In order to recruit the best possible candidates—and have an adequate pool of applicants from which to choose—make sure that all eligible officers and deputies in the agency learn about the position and are aware not only of its attractions but also its drawbacks.

**Follow Three Basic Guidelines**

Information from the program studied suggests three principal guidelines for recruiting SROs:

(1)    Do not assign officers involuntarily to be SROs; solicit volunteers for the position.  Program participants report that *allowing officers to volunteer to serve as SROs results in a higher level of commitment to the program*.

(2)    *Use more than one approach* for posting the assignment, such as:

• e-mail;

• mailboxes;

• roll call;

• bulletin boards;

• open houses and trainings; and

• personal invitations.

> The program in Garner, North Carolina, provides candidates who qualify as SROs—but were outscored by other applicants—with their final screening results, as well as an analysis of their performance and strategies, so they can improve their scores if they reapply.

(3) Provide information about the position and screening process *with the posting*, including:

• eligibility criteria;

• attractive features of the position;

• the screening process; and

• important features of the job.

**Consider Using Incentives to Attract Candidates**

To attract the most qualified candidates and to get a large enough pool of candidates, *highlight the incentives inherent in the position*, such as being able to:

• have weekends and holidays off, and work only days;

• work with kids;

• be able to make a difference in the lives of students;

> SRO José Cuellar with the Palm Beach County, Florida, School District Police Department said, "I've always been interested in working with kids because of the opportunity to save some along the way.  On the street, it's a revolving door—the same drunks and prostitutes. In school, you can save a few kids."

• have some independence from close supervision; and

• experience new and challenging work.

Consider offering **additional** incentives, including:

• take-home cruisers;

• extra pay; and

• improved promotional opportunities.

> The Tucson Police Department found that providing a five percent increase in SRO base pay and giving SROs take-home cruisers increased the program's applicant pool.

## Neutralize Real and Perceived Disincentives to the Posting

At the same time, take steps to **neutralize the disincentives** to the position that may discourage some officers from applying, such as:

> The Maury County, Tennessee, Sheriff's Department allows SROs to build up "comp" time and then take off July and half of August.

• having to teach (tell them you will train them to teach);

• being seen as a "Kiddie Cop" (explain how many arrests SROs make, sometimes for serious offenses; reassign them to patrol duty in the summer);

• being confined to a campus (explain that SROs have responsibilities outside the schools and, while in school, experience a tremendous amount of diverse stimulation);

• working after hours (arrange for long summer breaks); and

• isolation from the department (keep SROs involved in the agency).

In summary, address disincentives in three ways:

(1)   When the disincentive reflects a misconception, **spread the truth about the program**.

(2)   When the disincentive is real but modifiable, **change it**.

(3)   When the disincentive is indisputable and unalterable, **offset the drawbacks to the position by compensating for them and by publicizing the position's significant attractive features**.

## Chapter 3   Screening SROs

As with many occupations, *the qualifications and the personality of the SRO are likely to make or break the program*.  As a result, many program participants suggest that the single most important component of an SRO program may be implementing an effective process for screening candidates for the position.

**Develop and Apply Formal Screening Criteria**

Begin by establishing written criteria for selecting candidates.  *Review and refine four essential characteristics and experience* that SROs, program supervisors, and school administrators say any officer should have in order to be considered for the position:

• *likes kids*, wants to work with kids, and is able to work with kids;

• *has the right demeanor* and "people skills," including being

> Sergeant Paul Marchand, the program supervisor with the Salem, New Hampshire, Police Department, warns that "SROs are a special breed; you have to take lot of guff. You need a temperament that doesn't get easily fired up and has patience."

    – calm,
    – approachable,
    – able to put up gracefully with guff from kids, and
    – patient;

• *has experience* as a patrol officer or road deputy; and

• *has* above average *integrity*.

There are four other criteria that, if candidates cannot meet them before they are assigned to the schools, programs can—and must—teach or instill in them shortly after the officers have been appointed:

• willingness to *work very hard*;

> According to Sergeant Richard Davies, supervisor of the Pine Bluff, Arkansas, program,  "Applicants have to have an above average attendance record—SROs have to be in school."

• exceptional *dependability*;

• teaching ability; and

• ability to work *independently*.

Consider giving "extra points" to candidates who are familiar with juvenile law, write excellent reports, have some college experience, or have ties to the local community (for example, went to school there).

**Implement a Thorough Screening Process**

Programs that have been able to assign SROs who function well in the position and remain in it happily for several years have generally used multiple screening procedures, such as the following:

- *require a memorandum of interest or letter* and identify specific topics applicants must address (e.g., experience working with youth);

- talk with current and previous *supervisors* about the applicant's suitability (is the person dependable?);

> Lieutenant Greg Harrison with the Lenoir County, North Carolina, Sheriff's Office, reported that "patrol deputies think the SRO assignment is 'a piece of cake' and are surprised when I tell them what they will have to do in the schools—which often dissuades them from applying."

- inform candidates candidly about the *job requirements—and drawbacks* (to weed out inappropriate officers);

- examine *personnel files* (e.g., for disciplinary history);

- factor in *personal experience* with the candidate; and

- check for signs of *enthusiasm* for the position.

Consider assembling an oral interview panel. *Oral boards offer significant benefits over one-on-one interviews for assessing candidates*, including examining candidates under stress, assessing their communication skills, and checking "body language." In using an oral interview panel, consider carefully:

- *who* sits on the panel (include at least one school district representative);

- what *questions* panel members will ask (e.g., is the candidate willing to work overtime? what strategies would he or she use for handling difficult school administrators?);

- requiring candidates to *respond to hypothetical—or real—situations* in the schools that are problematic for SROs (e.g., a student says there are drugs in another student's locker—what do you do?);

- *"body language"* and what it might indicate about a candidate; and

- how to *rate* or score the candidate's performance.

**Involve school administrators in the screening process**.  Program participants consistently report that including principals and assistant principals in the process helps match SROs properly with individual schools and increases acceptance of the program and the SROs among school personnel. The most common way of involving school administrators is through participation on oral interview panels.

Sergeant Patricia Heffner, who supervises the Lakewood, Colorado, Police Department's program, admitted that the police department had originally not been keen on involving school personnel in the screening process but sees the value now. "By participating, the school administrators are 'buying' into their SRO—and they have less room to complain if it does not end up working out."

*Implement several screening methods*.  Most screening approaches are not redundant—rather, they complement one another.  Individually, each one can reveal only certain things about a candidate; taken together, they improve the chances of learning as much as possible about an applicant.

## Chapter 4   Minimizing Turnover Among SROs

Many programs have problems with turnover among SROs.  Minimizing turnover is important because **replacing an SRO makes the program less effective for several months and even years** as the new officer learns how to do the job, comes to understand the school's culture and operations, and builds trust among school administrators, faculty, and students.

Become familiar with the many problems that can contribute to turnover—even among SROs who are performing well—and become knowledgeable about how to solve them.

Problem:     Being unsuitable as SROs from the beginning
*Solutions*:    **Recruit, screen, train, and supervise SROs carefully**.

Problem:     Conflict with school administrators
*Solution*:     **Work with the SRO—and with administrators—to solve the problem**.

  • involve school administrators in the SRO selection process

  • orient new SROs to working with principals and assistant principals

  • meet with administrators before problems develop

  • define each party's responsibilities in writing

  • if all else fails, allow SROs to
    transfer to another school

**Problem:** Feeling isolated from the rest of the department
***Solution:*** ***Take steps to keep SROs integrated with the rest of the department.***

- encourage or require SROs to go back to patrol during the summer

- require SROs to attend roll call at least periodically

> Program supervisors in the Chula Vista, California, Police Department require SROs to go to the day shift patrol roll call every Wednesday morning to help them stay involved with the department.

- involve SROs in departmentwide training

- encourage SROs to take the initiative to remain in touch with other officers

- single out effective SROs for department wide commendation

**Problem:** Perception of the position as a dead end
***Solution:*** ***Turn the position into an asset for gaining promotion.***

**Problem:** Lack of excitement
***Solution:*** ***Introduce strategies to keep the job stimulating.***

- allow SROs to remain—or become—members of other units—for example, the SWAT team

- give SROs new, rewarding, and challenging assignments (one program assigned a program supervisor and an SRO to work with county architects to ensure student safety in the design of new school buildings)

- encourage SROs to seek out interesting challenges on their own (e.g., conduct school safety surveys and report weaknesses to school administrators; start a Youth Crime Watch program)

- send SROs for training and other forms of professional development

**Problem:** Too much teaching
***Solutions:*** ***Train SROs in how to be effective teachers and, when necessary, encourage them to reduce the amount of time they are spending in the classroom.***

Problem:     Burnout
*Solution*:     ***Help SROs to reduce their workload***.

> • provide strategic breaks from work

> • give SROs preferred summer assignments

The Boone, North Carolina, Police Department trained two patrol officers as half-time back-ups to the single SRO in the department.

> • determine ways of lightening their workload (e.g., cover fewer after-school events)

Problem:     Losing SROs to mandatory rotation
*Solution*:     ***Make exceptions to the policy for SROs who are performing well and want to remain in the schools***.

Program supervisors and SROS alike report that ***the most effective approach to reducing turnover is to implement a number of complementary steps designed to keep the officers satisfied with the position and to provide an early warning of any discontent***.

## Chapter 5   Training SROs

A former SRO and current program supervisor said, "They [the department] put the SROs in the schools the first year with no formal training, so the first year was not productive."

SROs need training before and after they go into the schools.

*Provide Pre-Service Training*
While SROs can learn or hone certain skills only on the job, training new SROs before they go on the job is essential so that SROs do not:

• avoid certain responsibilities (e.g., teaching) and

• perform poorly or make serious mistakes that can set back their relationships with students and school administrators for months.

*Identify Topics that Pre-Service Training Needs to Address*
Typically, before they go into the schools SROs need to be trained to:

• teach;

• mentor and counsel;

• work collaboratively with school administrators;

Sergeant Richard Davies, program supervisor in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, pointed out, "You can't go into class and look stupid, so you need to develop basic lesson plans to show to the principal so you can cover yourself and so you won't fumble in class."

• manage their time; and

• apply juvenile statutes and case law.

In addition, consider training new SROs in child development and psychology; handling especially difficult students; the policies, procedures, and culture of the schools to which they will be assigned; and the preparation of safe school plans.

*Find Ways of Providing Timely Training*

When basic SRO training courses are not available from national training organizations before new SROs go into the schools, **explore other means of providing training**.

• Delay sending SROs into the schools until training is available.

• Seek timely training from other professional organizations, such as State agencies, technical schools, schools of criminal justice, and State SRO associations.

• Develop in-house training expertise.

• Send SROs to the general instructors' school at the training academy or for Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) certification.

> The Scottsdale, Arizona, Police Department, arranged for two SROs to become certified SRO instructors so they can train new SROs at almost any time.

• Provide in-house orientation on SRO roles and responsibilities.

*Arrange for New SROs to Shadow Experienced SROs*

Require every new SRO to spend at least several days shadowing an experienced SRO.  If there are no other SROs in the program, arrange for new SROs to shadow experienced SROs in another community.  Consider providing formal field training by field training officers, using checklists of what the new SROs need to learn and formal written evaluations of their progress.

*Two Final—but Important—Guidelines*

> Because his program was brand new, Robert Yant, the Marshall, Minnesota, chief of police, sent his first SRO to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to shadow that jurisdiction's experienced SRO.  According to Jim Marshall, the new SRO, "The experience was invaluable."

• **Implement as many pre-service training approaches as possible**, in particular, thorough orientation to the program and shadowing experienced SROs, because the various training strategies are not mutually exclusive but rather complement one another.

• **Involve school administrators** in the training.

*Provide In-Service Training*

Provide in-service training on issues of importance to SROs and school administrators to:

• upgrade their skills and knowledge;

• demonstrate that the position is an important one that the department values; and

• reduce department liability.

Offer SROs—or require them to take advantage of:

• regular program meetings at which supervisors or outside experts give presentations;

• semi-annual and annual training updates; and

• periodic off-site conferences and courses (often free or inexpensive).

> The Maury County program in Tennessee sends all its SROs every summer to the Tennessee School Resource Officers Association week-long conference.

## Chapter 6   Supervising SROS

Despite the misperception by a few programs that careful supervision of SROs is not necessary, most program supervisors recognize the need to monitor their SROs conscientiously.

### Exercise Careful Supervision Despite Obstacles

Many program supervisors report that supervising SROs properly can be difficult if:

• supervisors lack time because of other department commitments; and

• there are long distances between schools or a large number of participating schools.

Despite these barriers, ***find ways to adequately supervise SROs*** in order to:

• obtain information from SROs and school administrators that may point to a possible problem before it develops;

• identify signs of poor performance before school administrators have to bring it to the supervisor's attention;

• show SROs that the department values their work and they have its support;

• identify disaffection and burnout early to minimize turnover; and

• demonstrate to school administrators that the agency considers the program an important collaborative initiative.

> In a county in which supervisors trusted the SROs to be in their schools (and assumed administrators would call them if they were not), one SRO was regularly leaving school for a tryst. The discovery created very bad publicity for the department.

Even when programs assign independent, mature officers as SROs, do not assume they need little supervision. In addition, ***do not wait for school administrators to bring problems with SROs to the program's attention***.

**Develop a Plan for Supervising SRO Performance**

Effective supervision of SROs depends on a clear understanding among program participants of the officers' roles and responsibilities—typically spelled out in a memorandum of agreement or contract between the parties. Otherwise, supervisors do not know what they are supposed to be evaluating in the officers' behavior. In addition:

• do not rely on the evaluation criteria used for patrol officers; instead, tailor the evaluation criteria to what SROs do; and

• involve school administrators in the SROs' performance review—they have considerably more contact with the officers than do agency supervisors and, as a collaborative initiative, they should be involved anyway.

*Implement Several Supervisory Approaches*
Program participants suggest that no single method of supervision will be adequate; instead, they recommend implementing as many of the following methods as possible:

• review SRO activity logs on a regular basis;

• review SRO case or arrest reports;

> After a lewd and indecent incident at a school in Sarasota County, Florida, the SRO documented in his log that he had submitted a report to the school. According to the SRO, "When Captain [Tim] Carney [the supervisor] read my log, he wanted to know why I hadn't submitted a police report."

• host regular meetings with SROs as a group;

• visit the school campus;

• maintain telephone or radio communication;

- survey students;

- survey teachers; and

- formally evaluate SRO performance, preferably at least twice a year.

*Select the Supervisors Carefully*
In addition to arranging for supervisors to spend enough time monitoring the SROs effectively, select supervisors who are qualified to monitor SRO performance, or else train them in how to supervise SROs. Try to select former SROs as supervisors.

## Chapter 7   Identifying Sources of Program Funding

At one time, many law enforcement agencies provided all or most of the funding for SRO programs (often through grants from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services).  However, as Federal grants have expired and as agencies have experienced funding cutbacks, ***many agencies have increasingly been forced to seek alternative funding sources in order to maintain their programs***.

### Develop a Realistic Estimate of Program Costs

An important first decision in making or changing arrangements for funding a program is to get a firm grasp of how much the program actually costs. Costs can vary significantly depending on such considerations as SRO salary levels, fringe benefits, and stipends; time spent on the program by supervisors; and miscellaneous costs such as training, overtime pay, and equipment.

### Work With the School District to Share the Program's Costs

Negotiate—and renegotiate as needed—each party's share of the costs.  By splitting the cost, neither side feels imposed on, and the cost to each party is considerably reduced.  For example, if the school district pays for half of each SRO's nine months of duty in the schools, the law enforcement agency in effect gains an officer for about half price.

> Because of budget cuts to the agency, the Stark County, Ohio, sheriff told the five school districts that he would have to recall their SROs unless the school districts agreed to pay for most of the officers' salaries.  Four of the five school districts came up with the funds.

Furthermore, as explained in chapter 8, "Maintaining Program Funding," school district administrators (who typically present a budget to the school board for approval) often feel the program is so beneficial—and that cutting it back or dropping it would be so politically risky—that they are willing to find ways to increase their contribution.

### Be Prepared to Find New Sources of Funding

Explore getting additional support especially from local government (city council, mayor, county commissioners). Look into obtaining funding from the Federal Government, businesses, charities, and foundations, and through fund-raising events.

> Captain Mike Rogers of the West Orange Police Department asked the city council for additional funding for the program. By cutting recreation and library expenses, as well as public works, the council was able to approve the increase.

## Chapter 8   Maintaining Program Funding

Some agencies believe that, if they run a good program, its funding will never dry up. Certainly, ***having an excellent program is the first—and essential—step in ensuring program survival***. However, even many well-run programs have sooner or later experienced the threat—and even the reality—of cutbacks or dissolution. As a result, ***constantly take steps to ensure that your sources of funding maintain a strong interest in seeing the program continue***. This requires doing three things:

1. Ensure that every funding source ***gains something important from the program***.

2. Make every funding source ***aware of the program's activities and achievements***.

3. ***Identify possible new funding sources*** and court them.

This chapter addresses the first two of these necessities for program survival; chapter 7, "Identifying Sources of Program Funding," addresses the third requirement.

### Motivate the Law Enforcement Agency to Maintain Funding
Document the significant benefits the program can provide law enforcement agencies.

- *Prove how the program reduces the burden on patrol officers or road deputies.*

  – Compare how many 911 and non-emergency calls for service the schools made before the SROs went into the schools with how many are made today.

> According to Sergeant Paul Marchand, the program supervisor in Salem, New Hampshire, "We pay for the program because, by assigning officers to the schools, we free up officers on the street. Before we had SROs, we were constantly sending patrol officers to the schools. It makes sense from a deployment point of view to have officers in the schools rather than send over patrol officers whenever there is a problem."

  – Estimate how many hours the calls would have taken a patrol officer out of service compared with the time the SROs spend in the schools.

- *Show how the program has improved the image of the police among juveniles.*

- *Document how the program has improved the law enforcement agency's relationship with the school district and why this matters*. For example, it can improve collaboration in addressing juvenile crime and truancy.

- *Document how the program benefits the chief or sheriff politically*—for example, improving a chief's chances of reappointment or sheriff's chances of reelection.

**Motivate School Districts to Contribute (More) Funding to the Program**

***Support from school administrators and school board members has been crucial to keeping many programs afloat***.  But program supervisors must often document and explain how the program provides the schools with significant benefits.

- *Document how the program has increased safety—and the feeling of safety—in the schools.*

  – Calculate how many violent incidents SROs have handled—and prevented.

> According to Al Weidner, budget director for the Sarasota County, Florida, school board,  "I have never turned down funding for the program … because schools say they don't know how they would function without it.  I want to make sure we could not be spending the money on something else and getting a better return on our investment, but principals go out of their way to single out the program to me."

  – Work with the schools to survey students and teachers about how much safer they feel with an SRO in the schools.

- *Document the number of incidents SROs handle that would have required calling the dispatcher and compare the estimated time of response.*

- *Compare truancy rates at schools before and after SROs were placed in them.*

> After SROs in Stark County, Ohio, targeted the problem of truancy by counseling truant students, meeting with their parents or guardians, and, in some cases, performing home visits, graduation rates for all five districts began to improve markedly.

- *Go the extra mile for school officials.*

  – Agree to reasonable requests for help even if they are outside the contract scope of work.

  – Arrange for SROs, rather than other officers or deputies, to provide security at after-school events.

  – As much as possible, avoid pulling SROs out of the schools when classes are in session.

  – Involve school administrators in program operations, including screening candidates (see chapter 3, "Screening SROs") and evaluating SRO performance (see chapter 6, "Supervising SROs").

**Motivate Public Officials**

Typically, local public officials decide on the funding for the program either directly or by approving—or adding to—the law enforcement agency's and school district's budgets. Programs have been able to secure the support of mayors, town council members, city managers, and other local officials by making the program too attractive to cut—and too politically risky to drop—because of its ability to protect students. Program participants report that one of the best ways to convince public officials of the program's effectiveness in enhancing student safety is by developing empirical evidence that it works.

• *Examine statistical data to prove what the program has accomplished* by way of reducing crime in the schools, truancy, and discipline rates.

• *Conduct surveys* of students, school administrators, and parents to help convince funding sources to continue their support—or face the community's wrath.

• Require SROs to *document their activities* to show how productive they are.

• *Promote personal experience with the program*—invite school board members to shadow an SRO; ask the superintendent to sit in on a class taught by an SRO.

> An evaluation of the Delaware State Police program commissioned by the State Department of Education in 1998 found that schools that never had an SRO had a statistically significant increase in the number of police charges in 1997-98 compared with 1994-95, while there was no significant increase in schools with SROs. The Department of Education used the findings to support continued and expanded funding of the program by both the legislature and school districts.

Supported by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), Abt Associates Inc. conducted a study of seven areas in which many School Resource Officer (SRO) programs have struggled:

• recruitment,
• screening,
• retention,
• training,
• supervision,
• identifying sources of program funding, and
• maintaining program funding.

The report has been written for:

• first-line **SRO program supervisors**;

• **police and sheriff's department administrators** interested in improving their SRO programs;

• **school district administrators** concerned that the SROs in their schools meet their goals for the program; and

• law enforcement and school district personnel considering **starting** an SRO program.

## Background to the Report

During site visits to 19 SRO programs as part of a National Assessment of School Resource Office Programs that Abt Associates Inc. completed in 2004 for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), project staff learned that many SRO program supervisors and coordinators have experienced problems—and often continue to have difficulty—with the seven areas of programming identified above. Reports prepared by the COPS Office, the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), and the North Carolina Center for the Prevention of School Violence have also concluded that many SRO programs experience difficulty in one or more of these seven areas of program operations.

As a result, the COPS Office awarded a cooperative agreement to Abt Associates to document the approaches a number of respected SRO programs have used to address each of these troublesome areas of program operations. The information in the report is intended to enable other SRO programs—and jurisdictions that are considering starting SRO programs—**to benefit from the experiences of these selected programs by adopting, adapting, or improving on their approaches**.

## Study Methodology

We obtained information for the report from 34 programs.[1]

(1)   We collected data on the seven focuses of the report during ***site visits to nine SRO programs*** selected at the recommendation of experts and based on screening calls to the program coordinators (see the box "Selected Features of the Nine Sites" and appendix A, "How the Nine Programs Were Chosen").

(2)   As part of the process of selecting the 9 sites to visit, we screened 23 programs. The report incorporates information from ***6 of the sites that did not make the "cut" for a site visit*** (see appendix A for the names of these sites).

(3)   We used ***information we had collected previously*** in these topic areas as part of the above-mentioned National Assessment of SRO Programs con ducted for NIJ that addressed all facets of SRO programming (see appendix B, "The 19 National Assessment Sites and How They Were Chosen").

(4)    We obtained ***additional, in-depth information from the 19 National Assessment programs*** related to the present project's seven areas of interest during telephone calls with three to six program participants at each site.

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[1]*The report also provides information about a few other programs based on newspaper accounts, conversations with SROs and SRO program supervisors at conferences, and comments on the report by three anonymous reviewers.*

| Selected Features of the Nine Sites Visited Expressly to Examine the Seven Study Focuses | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Location and Sponsor** | **Population** | **Square Miles** | **Date Program Began** | **Number of Full-Time SROs** | **Number of Schools Served** |
| Delaware State Police | 600,000 | 2,000 | 1994 | 25 | 29 |
| Fontana, California, Police Department | 150,000 | 38 | 1994 | 8 | 8 |
| King County, Washington, Sheriff's Office | 1.7 million | 2,126 | 1995 | 9 | 9 |
| Marshall, Minnesota, Police Department | 13,000 | 7 | 1999 | 1 | 3 |
| Maury County, Tennessee, Sheriff's Department | 70,000 | 613 | 1998 | 20 | 19 |
| Olympia, Washington, Police Department | 42,000 | 15 | 1999 | 3 | 17 |
| Palm Beach County, Florida, School District Police Department | 1.2 million | 2,200 | 1978 | 130 | 165 |
| Salem, New Hampshire, Police Department | 40,000 | 36 | 1995 | 2 | 2 |
| Sarasota County, Florida, Sheriff's Office | 400,000 | 580 | 1980 | 27 | 36 |

## Limitations to the Study

The report does not purport to present how the "typical" SRO program or a random sample of programs has addressed the seven program components.  Instead, our goal was to include a variety of programs that appeared to have made a substantial commitment to addressing one or more of these problem areas so that other programs could benefit from their experience.  There are, of course, many other SRO programs not included in the report that have also addressed these problem areas creatively and thoroughly. Resource limitations prevented us from including all of them in the study.

Despite this limitation, the study includes a range of different types of SRO programs, including programs that:

• serve single jurisdictions and multiple jurisdictions (e.g., two or more counties, an entire State);
• serve jurisdictions with small and large populations and few and many schools;
• serve a single school district and multiple school districts;
• are sponsored by police departments, sheriff's offices, a State police department, and one or more school districts;
• serve one or more high schools, middle schools, elementary schools, or combinations of grade levels;
• involve a single SRO, several SROs, and many SROs;
• make a single SRO responsible for a single school or for multiple schools, or place more than one SRO in a school; and
• involve small, medium-sized, and large law enforcement agencies.

Such a large variety of program models suggests the range of options program planners can consider in designing a new program—and the variety of configurations that existing programs can consider adopting to enhance their efforts.

In addition, because of the tremendous variety in program design options, the specific practices this report describes may not be feasible, effective, or needed by other programs with different configurations. At the most basic level, for example, a supervisory approach that a program with 25 SROs has found useful may be completely unworkable in a program with a single SRO. As a result, ***programs need to consider whether the procedures presented in this report will be appropriate in their jurisdictions***.

| **Other Sources of Information About SRO Programs** |
| --- |

The National Institute of Justice has recently made available on its Web site (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/) three reports that Abt Associates Inc. prepared as part of the National Assessment of SRO Programs.

- The **National Survey of SRO Programs and Affiliated Schools** summarizes the results of 322 responses to a mail survey of law enforcement agencies with SRO programs and 108 responses from affiliated schools.

- **Case Studies of 19 School Resource Officer (SRO) Programs** provides in-depth descriptions of each program's history, SROs, program activities, and program monitoring and evaluation efforts.

- **Comparison of Program Activities and Lessons Learned Among 19 School Resource Officer (SRO) Programs** compares the 19 programs in terms of several key dimensions of program operation, with a focus on lessons learned.

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) has prepared a number of reports on SRO program operations. Contact: www.nasro.org. The Center for the Prevention of School Violence in the North Carolina also has several reports on SRO programs. Contact: www.ncdjjdp.org/cpsv.

## Organization of the Report/Site Profiles

A separate chapter addresses each of the seven program areas. Some readers may choose to read some chapters and not others. As a result, in order to make it possible to read each chapter independently we have at times repeated the same or similar information in more than one chapter. For the same reason, readers will find relevant appendix materials at the end of each chapter rather than collected at the end of the report.

At the end of each chapter (with the exception of the chapters on recruiting SROs and identifying sources of funding), one or more case studies provide detailed descriptions of how selected programs have made an especially comprehensive or innovative effort to deal with the chapter topic. Brief summaries of these programs follow, along with name of the chapter or chapters where the case studies may be found.

## Fontana, California, Police Department (151 sworn)

Chapter 5 Training
Chapter 7 Funding

### *SRO Program Basics*
*started 1994*
*8 SROs*
*8 middle schools*

### *Community Demographics*
*population: 150,000*
*square miles: 38*

### *Background Description*
*The Fontana Police Department promotes flexibility in program design and innovative problem solving. As a result, it assigns officers who are capable of working independently to solve the problems in their schools. It also believes that SRO performance should be based on creativity and innovation and evaluates them on these standards. The department's focus on    innovation has brought it statewide and national recognition, tributes it presents to school boards and the city council to help maintain the program's $949,000 annual funding.*

## Garner, North Carolina, Police Department (53 sworn)

Chapter 3 Screening

### *SRO Program Basics*
*started 1993*
*3 SROs*
*1 high school, 2 middle schools*

### *Community Demographics*
*population:   20,000*
*square miles: 13.53*

### *Background Description*
*The SRO program began when the town's high school principal and the president of the Parent Teacher Association approached the chief of police following a school shooting in a nearby city. The amount of crime in each school influences the ratio of time each SRO spends on law enforcement, education, and counseling. One middle school SRO spends only 20 percent of his time on law enforcement, while the other two SROs spend about 60 percent, including investigating crimes, filing petitions, going to court, and patrolling the campuses. All three SROs are involved in mentoring, including coaching sports teams. The approximate cost for the SRO program is $180,000 per year.*

## Marshall, Minnesota, Police Department (21 sworn)
Chapter 5 Training
Chapter 8 Maintaining Funding

*SRO Program Basics*
*started 1999*
*1 SRO*
*1 high school, 1 alternative school, 1 junior high school*

*Community Demographics*
*population: 13,000*
*square miles: 6.5*

*Background Description*
*The school district started the program with a COPS in Schools grant as a relatively painless way of getting going and as a method of getting both parties committed to the program—the first year the police department contributed $26,000 and the school district $14,000 to the program's $80,000 cost. The program's one SRO—who turned down a promotion so he could remain in the position—spends about 40 percent time each on law enforcement and mentoring and 20 percent on teaching.*


## Maury County, Tennessee, Sheriff's Department (61 sworn)
Chapter 6 Supervision

*SRO Program Basics*
*started 1998*
*20 SROs*
*19 high schools*

*Community Demographics*
*population: 70,000*
*square miles: 613*

*Background Description*
*The Maury County Sheriff's Department began its program in 1998 with 20 SROs serving all 19 high schools in the county. One SRO is assigned to each school, and one "floats," substituting for the other SROs and providing back-up as needed. One-third of all sworn deputies in the department are SROs. The distribution of officers' activities among the components of the triad model varies considerably among schools depending on each school's needs. The program's annual budget is $800,000.*

## Palm Beach County, Florida, School District Police Department

(148 sworn):
Chapter 5 Training
Chapter 6 Supervision

### SRO Program Basics
*started 1978*
*130 SROs in the schools*
*165 schools, K-12, 1-2 SROs per school*

### Community Demographics
*population: 1.2 million*
*square miles: 2,200*

### Background Description
*The Palm Beach County School District Police Department consists entirely of certified SROs, but 18 of the department's 148 sworn officers perform non-school related functions, including supervising the SROs. The department's $5.5 million budget, which also pays for the dispatch center and other activities, comes primarily from the school district, although the COPS Office has funded 63 SROs whom the school district has absorbed into the department's budget as Federal funding ends.*

## Sarasota County, Florida, Sheriff's Department (500 sworn)

Chapter 6 Supervision
Chapter 7 Identifying Sources of Program Funding
Chapter 8 Maintaining Funding

### SRO Program Basics
*started 1980*
*27 SROs*
*36 schools, K-12*

### Community Demographics
*population: 400,000*
*square miles: 580*

### Background Description
*The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has a written contract with the school district to provide two SROs at each high school, one at each middle school, and one for every two elementary schools. At the high school level, SROs engage first in law enforcement, then counseling, and then teaching. At the middle school level, they do more counseling, less law enforcement, and some teaching. At the elementary*

level, they primarily teach and mentor. The school district administration provides the bureau free space and furniture in its district headquarters building. The sheriff's office and school district share almost equally the program's annual $2.4 million cost.

## Schaumburg, Illinois, School District 54 (140 sworn)
Chapter 8 Maintaining Funding

### SRO Program Basics
started 1995
5 SROs
5 junior high schools

### Community Demographics
population: 75,000
square miles: 19

### Background Description
The Schaumburg Police Department has a written contract with School District 54 to provide one SRO at each of the district's five junior high schools. Until recently, the school district paid for three-quarters of the officers' salaries.  A school principal has always been the program coordinator. From the start, the SROs' focus has been primarily on teaching and mentoring, and only secondarily on law enforcement. The program's budget is $200,000.

## Stark County, Ohio, Sheriff's Office (100 sworn officers)
Chapter 8 Maintaining Funding

### SRO Program Basics
started 1999
5 SROs
5 high schools

### Community Demographics
population: 400,000
square miles: 600

### Background Description
The sheriff's office received COPS in Schools funding for five full-time officers beginning in 1999. The SROs work in five separate school districts that vary in size and degree of urbanization and socioeconomic development. Each school district's SRO and high school administrator have collaborated to tailor the program to the needs of their particular campus. As a result, the SROs vary in the degree to which they perform activities suggested by the SRO triad model.

The following individuals from among the many persons who provided information for this report have said that readers may contact them by telephone or e-mail for advice related to starting or enhancing an SRO program. In general, chiefs and school district administrators will have information about funding; SROs and SRO supervisors will be knowledgeable about recruiting, screening, training, and supervising SROs; and principals will have experience screening and supervising SROs.

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Chief James P. Kelly
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West Palm Beach FL 33406
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Kelly@palmbeach.k12.fl.us

Chief Robert A. Yant
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Captain Tim Carney
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Captain Terry Holderness
Commander, Special Operations
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Fontana CA 92335
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Sergeant Richard Davies
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Wade Nelson
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Jane Addams Junior High School
700 South Springinsguth Road
Schaumburg IL 60193
(847) 301-2110
WardNelson@sd54.k12.il.us

Assistant Principal Cynthia Celander
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Marshall MN 56258
(507) 537-6210
Cynthia.Celander@marshall.k12.mn.us

# Appendix A
## How the Nine Programs Were Selected for Site Visits

We started with an initial pool of 130 possible sites suggested by the COPS Office, staff of the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) and Corbin & Associates, and State SRO Association officers. We also included in the pool program runners-up in the selection of sites for inclusion in the National Assessment of School Resource Officer Programs (see appendix B).

From these programs, we developed a list of 23 programs that we telephoned for basic program information in order to screen them as possible site visit candidates. We selected the 23 programs for one or more of the following reasons:

(1)  One or more knowledgeable individuals recommended them.
(2)  We talked with the program coordinators and secured enough initial informa tion to decide they should be included in the screening.
(3)  The COPS Office suggested the programs might have comprehensive practices.
(4)  The programs provided diversity in terms of number of SROs, agency type, and geographic location and size.

We used three criteria for deciding which 9 programs and alternatives to recommend to the COPS Office for site visits:

(1)  The site appeared to have made a comprehensive and determined effort to implement procedures in at least several of the seven topic areas.
(2)  The site had written documentation in each area in which it appeared to have comprehensive procedures.
(3)  The site provided diversity in terms of:

   • number of SROs,
   • when the program began,
   • geographic location, and
   • type of participating law enforcement agency (municipal, county, school district, State).

The report incorporates information from the following six additional programs:

Broken Arrow, Oklahoma
Jefferson City, Missouri
Lakewood, Colorado
Scottsdale, Arizona
Virginia Beach, Virginia
Whittier, California.

## Appendix B
### The 19 National Assessment Sites and
### How They Were Selected

Abt Associates conducted a National Assessment of School Resource Officer (SRO) Programs ("National Assessment") through a cooperative agreement with the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) supported by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (the COPS Office).

The purpose of the National Assessment was to identify what program "models" had been implemented, how programs had been implemented, and what lessons they might have for other programs. To obtain the information, Abt Associates and three subcontractors visited and telephoned participants from 19 SRO programs.

We selected the 19 programs through a rigorous screening process designed to include four different types of programs in terms of size of sponsoring law enforcement agency and how long the program had been in operation.

| The 19 Programs Included in the National Assessment | |
|---|---|
| **Large Established Programs (5)**<br>Chula Vista, California<br>Pine Bluff, Arkansas<br>Schaumburg, Illinois<br>Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana<br>Tucson, Arizona | **Large New Programs (4)**<br>Albuquerque, New Mexico<br>Oklahoma County, Oklahoma<br>Stark County, Ohio<br>West Orange, New Jersey |
| **Small Established Programs (5)**<br>all in North Carolina<br>Boone<br>Garner<br>Lenoir County<br>Montgomery County<br>Pasquotank County | **Small New Programs (5)**<br>all in Kentucky<br>names not identified to preserve<br>confidentiality |

Additional information about the National Assessment, including the process for selecting the sites, may be found in "National Assessment of School Resource Officer Programs: Final Project History," available from the National Institute of Justice Web site, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/.

A program's first step after signing a memorandum of understanding or contract between the law enforcement agency and school district is to recruit candidates for the SRO position(s).

## Approaches to Recruitment

Different law enforcement agencies in the study have used different approaches to recruiting candidates, but three principal guidelines stand out:

(1)     Do not assign officers involuntarily to be SROs; instead, **solicit volunteers** for the position.

(2)     Choose approaches for posting the assignment carefully, generally **using more than one method**.

(3)     **Provide information** about the position and screening process **with the posting**.

### Make the Position Voluntary

Not all patrol officers and road deputies can be effective as SROs because programs have found that officers working in the schools need a number of skills and personality characteristics that are very different than those required for patrol duty (chapter 3, "Screening SROs," identifies the abilities and personality traits that SROs need). As a result, programs that have assigned officers to be SROs involuntarily have typically found that, although a few officers assigned to the position grow to enjoy and become good at it, most of them do a poor job because they do not have the ability or desire for the position. By contrast, programs report that **allowing officers to volunteer to serve as SROs results in a higher level of commitment to the position**. As John Morella, an SRO in West Orange, New Jersey, said, "It should be a volunteer position—the officers should want to be there [in the schools]."

### Choose Posting Options Carefully—and Use More Than One Approach

The programs studied for this report use one or more of six methods for recruiting candidates:

• e-mail;
• mailboxes;
• roll call;
• bulletin boards;
• open houses and trainings; and
• personal invitations.

Each of these approaches has its advantages and disadvantages, but obviously departments should choose the methods that are most likely to reach all eligible officers in their particular agencies.

*E-Mail*

When officers have in-cruiser computers, sending an e-mail can reach every patrol officer. For example, the Delaware State Police (as it does for all new positions for which it is recruiting internally) e-mails a position announcement prepared by the SRO program's administrative sergeant to every trooper's in-car laptop computer. The Garner, North Carolina, Police Department also e-mails the entire department. However, e-mail is effective only if it is the primary method of communication within the department. For example, because patrol officers in one department have access to e-mail only at the station house, they seldom read their e-mails. As a result, the department relies on other methods of notifying officers when an SRO position opens up.

*Mailboxes*

Mailboxes are often the most effective approach in departments that distribute paychecks and important agency news that way. The Lakewood, Colorado, Police Department distributes an official hard-copy memo to supervisors and officers when it is seeking an SRO for a specific school assignment.

*Roll Call*

A significant benefit to announcing position openings at roll call is that current SROs or program supervisors can make informal brief presentations describing the program and then answer questions. However, **departments should not rely exclusively on roll calls to recruit for the program**.

• There is often limited time at roll call to ask questions. In addition, according to one program supervisor, "During roll call, the information is buried with other announcements and gets lost." Furthermore, according to Sergeant William "Joe" Cline, a supervisor of the Chula Vista program, "Many officers will be hesitant to ask about the program for fear that other officers will kid them for expressing interest about becoming 'Kiddie Cops'—there is no privacy at roll call. However, I'm hopeful that this sentiment will continue to diminish as everyone continues to recognize the huge benefits the program has proven to be for our communities and the kids."

• Some officers may miss the announcement because they are sick, at training, in court, or on vacation at the time the opening is announced.

*Bulletin Boards*

Because many departments advertise all new positions on their internal bulletin boards, their personnel regularly scan everything that is posted there. As a result, although the Tucson, Arizona, program e-mails notices of openings, bulletin board postings are more effective because it is easier for officers to walk by and take a look at them than to get on the computer and take the time to find the job openings website.

*Open Houses and Trainings*

One program conducts an open house during different times of the year and arranges for school officials, as well as SROs, to explain to interested officers the nature of the SRO position and its importance to the agency, school, and local community. Agencies can also take advantage of times when patrol and other officers are a "captive audience" to promote the program.

• Programs can arrange to have a separate block of instruction during the entry-level police academy training on the SRO position and its importance.

• Agencies can set aside an hour during annual in-service training to describe the program—including inviting an enthusiastic SRO to discuss why he or she finds the position so rewarding and to answer questions.

• Captain Curtis Main of the Boone, North Carolina, Police Department changed the agency's field training officer program so that all new recruits spend 2 weeks of the 14-week program shadowing the SRO in the high school.

*Personal Invitations to Apply*

Some programs invite specific officers or deputies who are thought to be appropriate for the position to apply.

• Supervisors in the Sarasota County, Florida, program use personal relationships to actively recruit candidates who they think might be good SROs because the supervisors feel the officers have the right personality or because they know the officers have children at home or are involved in youth activities.

• In Salem, New Hampshire, SRO Steve Malisos reported that "Kevin Nolan [the first SRO] recruited me. He said, 'Would you be interested?' I had been on patrol for 10 years, and Kevin had a hunch that I was ready to make a change [and felt sure Malisos would be the right person for the job]."

- The program supervisor in Jefferson City, Missouri, meets informally with carefully selected officers in hallways or luncheonettes to encourage them to apply, asking, "Have you ever thought about coming to our unit? If so, are you interested in working with our youth?"

- In Lakewood, Colorado, Sergeant Patricia Heffner asks the SROs to suggest other officers who might be good for the position and then invites them to apply.

- Captain Curtis Main reviews the daily logs maintained by trainees during the field training block when new recruits shadow an SRO (see above) to identify rookies who might be interested in and appropriate for the position in the future.

The Whittier, California, Police Department, started its recruitment efforts for its program with officers who were already providing school security either by moonlighting as security guards or working overtime for the police department through a contract with the schools. Similarly, some program supervisors ask their Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) officers, who are already teaching in the schools, if they would like to apply.

In contrast, Sergeant Jerry Thommes, the police supervisor of the Schaumburg, Illinois, program, deliberately does not invite particular officers to apply because he feels that could discourage other candidates who may feel they are at a disadvantage. ***To avoid the perception and reality of being unfair, programs should not rely on personal invitations as their only recruitment approach***. While many very small departments understandably rely heavily on word of mouth to advertise, in addition to being unreliable the approach can result in some officers deciding that the selection process was unfair.

In a variation of the personal invitation approach, some departments contact officers who applied for the position previously but, although qualified, were not selected (see the box "Keep a Pool of Qualified Candidates").

## Keep a Pool of Qualified Candidates

A few programs keep a list of candidates who, after screening for a previous SRO opening, were found to be qualified but were not selected. When positions open up again, program supervisors contact these officers to encourage them to reapply.

- The Schaumburg Police Department keeps screened and eligible candidates who were not selected in an eligibility pool for six months.

- Candidates for SRO positions in the Garner, North Carolina, Police Department who qualified but were not selected are placed on an eligibility list for the following year and given first choice if a position opens up.

Some departments help rejected but qualified candidates prepare for the next cycle of applications.

- The program coordinator in Lakewood asks the supervisors of candidates who are ineligible because they do not have sufficient experience on the force to permit the officers to observe an SRO in the schools so they can decide whether to reapply in the future and, if so, to have a better idea about how to be successful candidates.

- For qualified applicants who were not selected, Captain Curtis Main of the Boone, North Carolina, Police Department organizes training on topics such as crime prevention. He also arranges for them to work ball games or other extracurricular events so they have a better feel for the job, will be more desirable candidates in the future, and will be better prepared, if they get the assignment, for going into the schools.

- The Garner Police Department's program provides candidates who qualify as SROs, but were outscored by other applicants, with their final screening results, as well as an analysis of their performance and strategies, so they can improve their scores if they reapply.

*Using Multiple Approaches*

In general, except in very small departments, **using more than one recruitment approach is most likely to ensure that all potential candidates learn about the opportunity to apply**. For example, the Chula Vista program supervisors announce each opening through e-mail and hard copy in every eligible officer's mailbox, and they also ask patrol sergeants to read and distribute copies of the announcement at roll calls. The West Orange Police Department announces openings using mailboxes and line-ups; the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office uses bulletin boards and line-ups; and the Fontana, California, Police Department relies on bulletin boards and e-mails.

**Provide Information With the Posting**

To reduce the number of inappropriate candidates, position announcements should:

• provide basic eligibility criteria (see chapter 3, "Screening SROs");
• describe the screening process applicants will have to undergo; and
• identify important features of the job (e.g., teaching, after-hours work).

For example, the Garner Police Department posting lists the following requirements for the position:

• two years of service;
• no disciplinary actions in the past 12 months before applying;
• above average score on the department's previous performance review;
• a certain number of training points (e.g.,1 point for public speaking, 1 point for health and wellness activities, 3 points for community policing); and
• one self-study research project of at least 30 hours completed.

The Schaumburg Police Department's announcement identifies 14 responsibilities officers will be expected to fulfill, beginning not with law enforcement but with education, such as "Teach lessons in gang/violence resistance and drug and alcohol resistance to all Junior High students." The Chula Vista position announcement makes clear that applicants need to be willing to "[p]rovide gang awareness training to upper grades and 911 training to lower grades, as well as possess, among other skills:

• ability to prioritize workload,
• ability to interact with school officials, and
• knowledge of mentoring principles.

## Incentives

There are two types of incentives for becoming an SRO: those that are inherent in the position and those that the law enforcement agency can offer to "sweeten the pot."

**Publicize the Incentives Provided by the Nature of the Position**

SROs and supervisors report there are four features of being an SRO that are particularly attractive to some officers.

(1) *Having weekends and holidays off, and working only days*. According to one SRO, "So many officers applied [in his department] because it is an opportunity to get away from rotating shifts and to get on the day shift permanently." In the Palm Beach School District Police Department, "A major incentive to recruitment is the reduced duty year SROs have [compared with other officers]—only 202 work days," according to chief James Kelly.

(2) *Working with kids.* Time and again, SROs report they always wanted to work with kids as the major reason they sought the position.

(3) *Being able to make a difference in the lives of kids* by helping them to stay out of trouble or turn their lives around. SRO José Cuellar with the Palm Beach County, Florida, School District Police Department said, "I've always been interested in working with kids because of the opportunity to save some along the way. On the street, it's a revolving door—the same drunks and prostitutes. In school, you can save a few kids. At the first graduation I went to as an SRO, three kids who'd I'd arrested thanked me for helping them out."

(4) *Being independent*, free from excessively close supervision. For James Wilkerson, an SRO with the Palm Beach County program, "One of the biggest advantages of the position is not being micromanaged—you're left alone but not abandoned."

Several other features of the SRO position also motivate some officers to apply for the position.

(1) *Receiving constant reinforcement from many administrators and faculty* who, as one SRO supervisor said, "roll out the red carpet for the officers in terms of welcoming them warmly."

(2) ***Experiencing new and challenging work***. "Patrol officers are locked into a beat and radio; SROs have more flexibility and can be more creative," one supervisor said.

(3) ***Handling cases from start to finish***. According to SRO Steve Malisos in Salem, "Unlike a patrolman, you get to follow up on every case. When I heard that there were kids in the [school] building who were producing and selling fake New Hampshire driver licenses, I found the suspects, drew up search warrants for their homes, seized a computer in their houses, and testified in court."

(4) ***Gaining opportunities for extra training***. Some officers are attracted to the extra training SROs receive in many departments—for example, the Scottsdale, Arizona, Police Department provides training to its SROs beyond what a patrol officer would receive because they need to be able to conduct investigations from start to finish on their own. When recruiting for SRO positions, the department's program supervisor said he highlights the fact that SROs receive more training than any other assignment in the department because other positions are more specialized and the training, therefore, is more targeted.

(5) ***Becoming detectives***. In some departments, officers automatically become detectives in the agencies' juvenile bureau when they become SROs. "Some officers," Detective John Jameson, a former Schaumburg SRO, reported, "like detective status."

(6) ***Gaining an advantage in getting promoted***.

— According to Jim Marshall, the only SRO in the Marshall, Minnesota, Police Department, "Being an SRO can be a positive for promotion because it shows how you can implement programs on your own and not be super vised every day.  This is also a high visibility position with the media and parents—so you're on the chief's radar. I thought about all this before I applied for the position and felt it would help my career."

— According to SRO Steve Malisos, "As a means of career advancement, some officers want to experience working in several positions in the department. In addition, it can help you because you have to multi-task and wear lots of hats. So you can show people [in the department] you have different abilities. You develop skills in community relations, public speaking with PTAs and in the classroom, giving advice to principals, and dealing with every crime here that you see on the street—assault, theft, drugs, alcohol."

| The Fontana, California, Program Builds a Better Mousetrap |
| --- |
| Fontana's program supervisor, along with several SROs, believe that the well-run nature of the program, the respect it is accorded in the schools and the community, and its multiple local and national awards for excellence are the best incentives for attracting candidates—an example of the cliché, "build a better mousetrap and people will beat a path to your door." As a command staff person said, "If we do an excellent job and make sure people know about it, everything else [recruitment and funding] will take care of itself." |

Departments are likely to attract more candidates to the positions *if they describe these benefits to becoming an SRO in their postings.* For example, in order to attract candidates, the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Police Department's posting of the position (see the appendix) notes that the position offers:

- daytime hours;
- weekends and holidays off;
- bidding the patrol shift SROs want to work during the summer;
- training opportunities;
- working in an environment in which they are welcomed and held in high esteem;
- working independently;
- being proactive; and
- investigating and following through with cases the same way a detective does.

## Consider Offering Additional Incentives

In some departments, few officers have responded to postings. No one at all volunteered for the position in one small program. In another jurisdiction, the number of candidates declined from 18 to 4 after patrol officers saw that SROs were required to teach and work one-on-one with students. As a result, while not a common practice,[2] a few of the 34 programs in the study provide additional incentives to attract applicants.

(1) **Take-home cruisers**. In the Tucson Police Department, only SROs get to take their cruisers home every night. Although all deputies in the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office have take-home cruisers, SROs get an unmarked take-home car. The experience of the Scottsdale Police Department suggests the motivating power of offering take-home cruisers: when the agency stopped the practice, it noticed a decline in the number of officers applying for SRO vacancies.

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[2] *Among the 658 SROs and SRO supervisors polled in the 2002 National Association of School Resource Officer (NASRO) School Resource Officer Survey, only 19 percent reported receiving additional benefits. See www.nasro.com.*

Taking their vehicles home benefits SROs in two ways:

• SROs save time by not having to travel to the stationhouse to pick up and return a vehicle at the beginning and end of each day.

• SROs save money by not having to use their personal vehicles to commute to work. One SRO estimated that a take-home car could save an officer between $3,000-$5,000 a year on gas, repairs, and liability insurance.

(2)    **Extra pay**. A number of programs provide a salary stipend for SROs. In Sarasota County and Schaumburg the officers receive an automatic $1,300 and $1,600 bonus, respectively, because they become detectives. Four other programs offer a bonus of five percent of the SRO's base pay.

Other programs have made use of still other incentives.

• A consultant hired by one SRO program suggested that providing the SROs with mountain bikes would attract officers to the position. As a result, the program bought several bikes and then sent one SRO for training in how to use them so he could in turn train the other SROs in their proper use.

• In Tennessee, Captain Nathan Johns, the Maury County program supervisor, emphasizes the "team" element of the SRO program to potential candidates. Many of the current SROs have been with the program since it began in 1998, which has helped create a bond within the group. The department deliberately fosters this esprit de corps by sending all the SROs each year to the annual Tennessee School Resource Officers conference and by hosting required weekly meetings for all SROs, supervisors, and the sheriff.

Some programs provide a package of incentives. The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office offers candidates:

• a stepping stone to promotion in the department since the program is one of its most prized assignments (the current sheriff was the agency's second SRO);
• detective status;

• $1,300 extra in detective pay;
• an unmarked take-home cruiser;
• increased opportunities for paid overtime; and
• opportunities for extra training.

When programs do not have enough applicants, it makes sense to offer incentives to avoid the alternative of assigning officers to be SROs involuntarily. The Tucson Police Department's program found that introducing two common incentives was effective in increasing its applicant pool (see the box "Tucson's Incentives Resulted in More Applicants").

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### Tucson's Incentives Resulted in More Applicants

Several years ago, very few officers were applying to be SROs in the Tucson Police Department—first established in 1962—because of the stigma associated with being a "Kiddie Cop" and the need to learn "nonpolice" information (e.g., child development) and new skills (especially, teaching). When the rest of the department went to four 10-hour days, it became even more difficult to recruit SROs, who had to work five days a week. As a result, the department instituted two incentives:

• providing a five percent increase in SRO base pay; and
• giving SROs take-home cruisers.

At the same time, the department extended its four 10-hours-a-day week for patrol officers to SROs, giving them either every Monday or Friday off—a long weekend.

According to supervisor Sergeant Steve Belda, "All three are [effective] incentives. I have heard it said that 'If it were not for the benefits—golden handcuffs—I'd leave this unit.' They have a lot to do with getting officers interested. The take-homes save them money having to maintain and buy gas for their personal cars. SROs also receive a five percent salary increase when coming into the SRO Unit."

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## Neutralizing Disincentives

Many officers are discouraged from applying to become SROs because they feel the position has disadvantages. Agencies can try to increase the number of applicants by *eliminating or softening what officers feel are disincentives to becoming SROs*. The discussion below identifies the most commonly perceived disincentives and methods of counteracting them.

**Teaching**. Many officers *feel anxious—even terrified—about teaching in front of a class*.  As a result, according to Detective John Jameson, a former SRO in Schaumburg, "Having to manage a classroom scares people from applying." Jim Marshall agreed: "Some cops are afraid to teach—that's a big part of the problem [of officers not wanting to be SROs]."

• *Neutralize:* Tell officers they will be trained to teach before they go into the schools, or shortly afterwards. Have an experienced SRO explain how he or she was nervous initially about teaching but came to be good at it and enjoy it.

*"Kiddie Cop" image*. Some officers are concerned that other officers—or they themselves—see SROs as a not doing "real" police work.

• *Neutralize:* Three departments have taken steps to eliminate the "babysitter" myth.

—Captain Curtis Main of the Boone Police Department tells officers about the number of felony arrests SROs make. In addition, as noted above, Main arranged for every new recruit to the department to shadow the SRO in the high school to see how much real police work they do.

—The Lakewood Police Department periodically distributes a bulletin (see chapter 4, "Minimizing Turnover") designed in part to educate patrol officers to the serious crimes SROs address in the schools.

—A police department in Kentucky reassigns its SROs to regular patrol during the summer to help prevent other officers from misperceiving the SROs as "not real cops."

**Lack of mobility**. While SROs have more independence than most patrol officers and considerable flexibility in how they schedule their day, *the job can be confining*. According to Captain Curtis Main, "Some officers get claustrophobic focusing only on a school building and parking lot."

• *Neutralize.* Explain that many SROs end up leaving campus several times during the week to transport kids to the juvenile detention center, attend court, back up another SRO in an emergency, visit homes where there is a truancy problem, or travel to their feeder schools. Point out that, while confined to the campus, SROs experience a tremendous amount of varied stimulation, including counseling kids, coordinating with administrators, handling parents, breaking up fights, investigating crimes, making arrests, and participating in volunteer endeavors such as coaching.

**Hard work**. Sergeant Dennis Bogdan, a program supervisor in West Orange, says that the hard work involved—the demands and expectations of the job—can be a disincentive. For example, "You can't just tell war stories in class; you need meaningful instruction with an organized lesson plan." Lieutenant Greg Harrison of the Lenoir County Sheriff's Office in North Carolina warns candidates that "working in the schools is hard work—you're not sitting in a car for eight hours like in patrol."

• *Neutralize:* Agree that SROs work very hard, but point out how stimulating, varied, and challenging the work is dealing with all kinds of people in all kinds of situations, resulting in satisfaction in doing a good job on so many fronts. Explain how supervisors will be flexible about providing time off. For example, if SROs in Sarasota County need to take care of a sick child, Captain Tim Carney, who supervises program, lets them go home.

*Working after hours*. According to Captain Curtis Main, some officers are discouraged from applying "because the extracurricular activities [SROs must participate in, such as athletic events, dances] make the days long." Captain Nathan Johns in Maury County said, "Particularly if they have children, the SROs' schedule can be a disincentive because the extracurricular activities make the schedule during the school year very hectic and prevent SROs from attending their own families' events."

• *Neutralize*. Find ways of compensating SROs for their long hours.

—To allow some flexibility in SRO schedules, Maury County assigns each SRO a back-up SRO to cover events and activities that conflict with important personal commitments.

—Captain Curtis Main counters the long days by allowing officers to build up compensatory time and then, combined with their regular vacation, take off July and half of August. The chief agreed to the policy as long as the SROs would come into the department periodically to check for messages.

***Isolation from the department***. Some potential candidates anticipate—or have been told—that, as SROs, they may get disconnected from the rest of the agency and ***miss the squad camaraderie and knowing what is going on in the department***.

- ***Neutralize:*** While SROs who go back to being beat officers during the summer can renew their contacts with other officers, programs have found other ways to reduce SROs' feelings of isolation.

  —As noted above, Captain Johns in Maury County emphasizes the "team" element of the SRO program to potential candidates, pointing out that the unit has developed an internal esprit de corps—including weekly meetings with the sheriff—that helps reduce their sense of separation from the rest of the department.

  —Program supervisors in the Chula Vista Police Department require SROs to go to the day shift patrol roll call every Wednesday morning. In addition, SROs supplement patrol on critical calls and are encouraged to work patrol shifts on overtime when there are shortages on patrol.

  —Jim Marshall reported that "I decided to come to the office at the beginning and end of every day" to stay in touch with other officers. SRO Kiel Higgins in Albuquerque, New Mexico, works off-duty with patrol officers every Friday and Saturday from 9:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. to target parties. A few SROs stay with— or join—the SWAT team to keep in touch with other officers.

  —The Lakewood Police Department's in-house SRO program bulletin has prompted discussions between the SROs and other department officers about at-risk youth and trends in student misconduct.

***Dead-end position***. Some SROs feel the position will stall their careers because it involves working with kids and is isolating. In some departments, this may be the case.

- ***Neutralize:*** Make sure department administrators realize why the program should be considered a plus for SROs seeking promotion—for example, as one police chief said, "More than being a representative of the chief during a traffic stop, these officers *really* make an impact on the chief's or sheriff's tenure." High ranking administrators should make clear that the position is a valued assignment in the department by bringing it up as a qualification when SROs apply for promotions (the grapevine will take care of making sure other officers find this out).

> ## Some Disincentives Are Unique to Specific Departments
>
> Programs need to find out whether features *of their particular law enforcement agency* discourage officers from applying to become SROs and then eliminate these features.
>
> • As every police officer and sheriff's deputy knows, in some departments there are units run by commanders whom no one gets along with. When one police department had to appoint officers to become SROs because no one applied, it discovered that the program supervisors had a reputation for being difficult to work for. When the department replaced the supervisors, the unit became known as a good place to work and received more than enough applicants for each SRO position.
>
> • In Fontana, because SROs must investigate allegations of sexual abuse and molestation that occur in schools, some officers who anticipate being uncomfortable handling these cases will not apply for openings in the program. One response is to explain to potential applicants how infrequently these cases may occur.

In summary, programs can address disincentives in three ways.

(1) When the disincentive reflects a misconception, *spread the truth about the program*. As noted above, the Lakewood Police Department distributes a bulletin describing some of the dicey and interesting arrests SROs make in order to dispel the myth that the officers are "Kiddie Cops."

(2) When the disincentive is real but modifiable, *change it*. For example, the Tucson Police Department extended patrol officers' 4-10s schedule to the SROs.

(3) When the disincentive is indisputable and unalterable, *offset the drawbacks to the position by offering incentives and by publicizing the position's numerous significant attractions*.

Once the program has recruited candidates, it then has to carefully screen them to ensure that only highly qualified officers are assigned as SROs—the subject of the following chapter.

Appendix

**Sioux Falls Police Department SRO Position Announcement**

# Police Department Interoffice
# MEMORANDUM

Date:        2/7/2002

To:          All Shifts

From:        Sgt. Lyon

Subject:     Information about SRO Position

We are still taking applications for the 2 Middle School SRO positions. These positions will be available in Fall 2003. Training for these positions will be offered this summer. One of the training commitments is the COPS grant training. The COPS training seminars are being held in 4 different locations., Phoenix AZ, Pittsburgh, PA, Salt Lake City, UT , and New Orleans, LA. Whoever is selected as an SRO will need to attend one of these 3 day schools. This is completely funded by the federal government. People who attended this training have told me it is one of the best schools they have attended.

Training opportunities are only one of the positive aspects of becoming an SRO. SRO's work daytime hours, with some flexibility depending upon the needs of the school and the officer assigned. SRO's during the school year have weekends and holidays off. For the summer of 2003, SRO's were allowed to bid the shift they wanted to work. All SRO's are assigned to the shift they wanted to work for the summer. They are assigned days off by their seniority on the shift. This is a different practice than in past years and hopefully will become permanent.

SRO's are busy and working in an environment where they are welcomed and held in high esteem. SRO's work independently throughout the day and have the ability to do pro-active police work instead of just reactive, call-driven police work. SRO's are assigned cases and have the opportunity to investigate and follow through with a case in the same way a detective does.

# Chapter 3: Screening SROs

As with many occupations, *the qualifications and the personality of the SRO are likely to make or break the program* according to most of the program participants interviewed for this report. As a result, they say, the single most important component of an SRO program may be staffing it properly by *(1) developing written criteria for selecting qualified officers* and *then (2) carefully screening applicants using these criteria*.

## Screening Criteria

There are two types of criteria for selecting SROs: essential criteria that all programs should apply to all candidates and optional criteria that some programs may wish to adopt.

### Apply Eight Essential Criteria to Every Candidate

Program personnel largely agree that only officers who meet the following eight criteria should be selected as SROs:

(1)    *likes kids*, cares about and wants to work with kids, and is able to work with kids;

(2)    has the *right demeanor and "people skills*," including good communication skills;

(3)    *has experience* as a patrol officer or road deputy;

(4)    is able to work *independently* with little supervision;

(5)    is exceptionally *dependable*;

(6)    is willing to *work very hard*;

(7)    is—or can become—*an effective teacher*; and

(8)    has above average *integrity*.

Programs should apply these criteria to each candidate for every SRO position regardless of the school's grade level, size, student body, and culture, or other considerations.

That said, when no one or only one or two eligible officers apply for the position (for example, in very small agencies), departments may not be able to require candidates to meet all these criteria because the applicant pool is too small. For example, one program supervisor said that, when there are not a lot of applicants for the opening, he accepts a young officer without the required patrol experience if the officer really wants to work with kids.

In other cases, officers who do not meet all the criteria can still become effective SROs *if the program trains them thoroughly before (or shortly after) they go on the job*—and then supervises them closely. The matrix below indicates the characteristics every SRO should have *before* being accepted for the position and those characteristics that are also necessary but which training *before (or shortly after) going on the job*, followed by close supervision, *may* be able to instill in them. However, a better approach is to improve the recruitment process, as discussed in the previous chapter, so that additional officers who have all these qualifications apply for the position.

| Criteria Applicants Must Meet Before They Are Selected as SROs Versus Criteria They Can Meet Afterwards With Training and Supervision | |
| --- | --- |
| **Absolute Requirements** | **Attitudes and Skills That Can Be Taught or Instilled** |
| • wants to work with kids<br>• has the right demeanor and "people skills"<br>• has experience as a patrol officer<br>• has above average integrity | • is able to work independently<br>• is exceptionally dependable<br>• is willing to work very hard<br>• is able to teach |

The text below discusses the rationale for applying these eight screening criteria.

(1)  ***Likes kids, cares about and wants to work with kids, and is able to work with kids***

Not surprisingly, everyone we interviewed agreed that this is the single most essential qualification for becoming an SRO. However, some program participants emphasized that wanting to work with kids is not good enough—SROs have to be able to work with kids. John Morella, an SRO with the West Orange, New Jersey, Police Department, tied the need to be able to work with kids back to one of his department's objectives for the program: "You have to like and care about kids—the whole idea of the program is to break down barriers between cops and kids."

Some supervisors take into consideration whether a candidate has children of his or her own because they consider this an indication that the person may be "child centered" and because parents have presumably learned how to communicate with kids.  As Kiel Higgins, an SRO in Albuquerque, New Mexico, said, "It's a plus [in being an effective SRO] if you have kids of your own."

(2)     *Has the right demeanor and "people skills," and good communication skills*

Program participants agree that SROs need three types of related personality traits and skills in terms of to how they interact with other people. First, SROs need **the right demeanor**, including being:

- **calm** or having an even temperament (not yelling or overreacting);
- **approachable** (not intimidating or aloof—see the box "SROs Have to Be Approachable");
- **able to put up gracefully with kids' foolish talk and nonsense** (not getting defensive); and
- **patient** (not getting exasperated and annoyed).

At times, having the right demeanor requires SROs to exercise a great deal of self restraint:

- Cynthia Celander, an assistant principal in Marshall, Minnesota: "SROs need a sense of humor and should not take kids' comments personally. SROs can't overreact to every little thing kids say; SROs need a sense of balance."

- Sergeant Paul Marchand, the program supervisor with the Salem, New Hampshire, Police Department: "SROs are a special breed; you have to take a lot of guff. You need a temperament that doesn't get easily fired up and has patience."

SROs need to have the proper demeanor not only to accomplish their mission with kids but also because the officers are highly visible when they perform their jobs: "Demeanor—this is important," the Oklahoma County program supervisor in the sheriff's office, Sergeant Rochelle Thompson, said, "because SROs are constantly in the community's eyes in dealing with their kids."

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### SROs Have to Be Approachable

Many program participants make clear that SROs who maintain the stereotypical authoritarian "cop" demeanor in dealing with the public will not succeed as SROs unless they change their behavior.

- Kiel Higgins, SRO, Albuquerque, New Mexico: "A lot of cops are stern and abrupt and harsh; SROs need to be caring to work with kids."
- Steve Malisos, Salem, New Hampshire, SRO: "They can't act like a cop—you can't be Mr. Authority. The students will not open up to you, thereby jeopardizing a valuable information resource."

One reason SROs need to avoid being distant or harsh with students is that the officers' encounters with kids are typically not one-time occurrences. SRO Derrick Berry with the Palm Beach County, Florida, School District Police Department said, "The most common problem with new SROs is that, on the road, they deal with a situation and leave and never see the person again. But kids come back to school the next day, so SROs need to talk and carry through with them on an ongoing basis. They have to be delicate, not blunt."

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A major complement to having the right demeanor to work with kids is the ability to work with school administrators. Why?

- Most principals consider their schools to be their domain.

- School administrators generally see their role as one of ensuring the education of their students and tend to regard the police officer role as one of punishment.

- SROs work on a daily, even hourly, basis with school administrators.

As a result, SROs need (1) tact, (2) persistence, and (3) flexibility to be able to work with principals and assistant principals who may be reluctant to share authority with anyone or simply concerned initially about sharing control with "a cop."

Closely related to being able to work well with administrators is the importance of functioning as a team player rather than—as SROs were used to doing on patrol—"running the show" by themselves. As Detective John Jameson, a former SRO in Schaumburg, Illinois, said, "You have to be a team player. You have to be comfortable with school administrators and teachers and support staff. Cops usually deal with things on the street entirely on their own; in schools, you have to work with other people."

| Being a Team Player Does Not Mean Always Giving In |
|---|
| Being a team player does not mean the SRO must always accede to the wishes of others. SROs must also be able to be firm when the need arises. As Glenn Brunet, an SRO in Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, made clear, "The SRO needs to be kind but will stand his ground when he needs to."  Brunet, after obtaining his supervisor's approval, once had to threaten to arrest a principal for interfering with a police officer in the performance of his duty when the administrator was physically barring Brunet from arresting a student. |

SROs also need to be able to **deal with parents** in a variety of situations. Cynthia Celander, assistant principal in Marshall, pointed out several types of interactions SROs need to be able to have with parents:

- "Being able to communicate with parents to diffuse tense situations and present sensitive issues that can mortify them." (Her SRO found two students having sex in a car on a side street and called their parents after bringing the students to Celander.)

- "Explaining how parents can cope with legal consequences of their kids' behavior, and knowing what programs and other resources are available to help them and their children."

### (3) Has experience as a patrol officer or road deputy

Almost every program assigns as SROs only officers who have spent at least a few years on the road. For example, the Tucson, Arizona, Police Department requires SROs to have three years of continuous service with the department. This experience is important for a number of reasons.

- Glenn Brunet, an SRO in Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, said, "You can't assign rookies as SROs because the kids will test you, and SROs need answers. You need at least 2-3 years' experience on patrol handling calls on the street because . . . you get experience dealing with people in crisis."

- According to a former Tucson program supervisor, SRO applicants need patrol experience in part "so that they've seen what it's like to get hassled by the public and be able to respond appropriately."

- John Morella, an SRO in West Orange, added that SROs "need a few years' experience on the road so they understand the workings of the police department, because kids inquire about what it's like to be a cop or ask for advice."

Programs should not only require SROs to have spent time in patrol but ***to have done well*** on patrol—as Sergeant Jerry Thommes, the program supervisor in Schaumburg, Illinois, said, "You want SROs who were *good* cops. For example, they know how to investigate a case and write a good report."

One program supervisor believes that correctional officers with no policing experience can make excellent SROs and can perform even better than experienced patrol officers or road deputies (see the box "A Dissenting Opinion About the Need for Policing Experience"). While this was a minority view and applies of course only to programs run by sheriff's departments that operate a jail, in some respects seasoned correctional officers have had important relevant experience that patrol officers have not gone through, including taking constant guff day in and day out, learning to live and communicate with the same people every shift, and working cooped up all day in the same building.

### (4) Is able to work independently

While most patrol officers function largely without direct supervision and separated from other patrol officers, ***SROs are particularly isolated***. In part, they are out of sight (literally-inside the school building) and therefore out of mind. Usually, they do not even appear for roll call. They are also isolated from the department inasmuch as their direct (if unofficial) supervisor for day-by-day activity is a principal or assistant principal, not the police or sheriff's department SRO supervisor. As a result, ***SROs must be capable of—and comfortable with—working alone, with minimal contact with the department***.

Program participants used different terminology to describe this needed trait, including being "proactive," "self-motivated," and a "self-starter," and "taking the initiative" to do what is needed.

• Sergeant Richard Davies, former SRO, Pine Bluff, Arkansas: "[You need] someone who needs little supervision—not someone who is going to pick up the phone all the time to ask the sergeant, 'I have a suicidal kid, should I call in mental health?' Of course you do."

• Sergeant Dennis Bogdan, program supervisor, West Orange: "They need maturity and reliability, because they receive less supervision than patrol officers do; they need to be able to handle tasks on their own. They must also be self-starters. Supervisors can't monitor them every hour of the day."

## A Dissenting Opinion About the Need for Policing Experience

Sergeant Rochelle Thompson, supervisor of the Oklahoma County program, argues that correctional officers with no police experience make better SROs than do seasoned patrol officers. Indeed, most SROs in the Oklahoma County program have had no experience on the streets but have been hired directly from the jail where they have been correctional officers (or, in a few cases, from the court where they have provided security).

"This has worked wonders," Thompson said. "A lot of seasoned patrol officers are reactive to 911 and dispatch, and have been trained that way, but we want proactive SROs who prevent misconduct. The new cop is more open to change because he doesn't have the ingrained reactive mentality from the street; instead, he will bend more with administrators, be more flexible, and strive to understand the education system. In fact, when a position opens up, no road deputies apply, perhaps because they see it as being a 'Kiddie Cop' position."

"Correctional officers also make better SROs than road deputies," Thompson continues, "because they have learned how to communicate with inmates; outnumbered and unarmed, they can't simply force inmates to behave. As a result, they have to fall back on persuasion, mediation, and 'verbal judo' rather than what most police officers resort to on the streets when there is trouble—force."

During the summer and Christmas break, the former correctional officers, now new SROs, go on patrol with experienced road deputies to get trained. They are also scheduled to attend the 16-week Council of Law Enforcement and Education Training (CLEET) academy to become sworn officers.

Coincidentally, Maury County Sheriff Enoch George in Tennessee voiced a similar perspective. Enoch said that he sees a difference in the new SROs who are coming off the street as patrol deputies compared with new SROs who have been correctional officers because "patrol officers have a more difficult time adapting to the school environment."

### (5) Is exceptionally dependable

The principal aspect to being dependable is always showing up at school. One of the top 2 of 17 "important characteristics of an SRO" that planners of the Stark County, Ohio, program identified is dependability—for example, "not taking too many sick days." Other program participants confirm the importance of this trait.

- Christopher Renouf, principal, Sarasota County, Florida: "Kids want to see that the SRO will be there [in school] regularly."

- Sergeant Richard Davies: Applicants have to have "an above average attendance record—SROs have to be in school."

A second aspect to "dependability" is that SROs need to **follow through with what they say they will do**, especially with kids. According to Sergeant Richard Davies, "SROs have to take kids' concerns seriously and follow up on them."

### (6) Is willing to work very hard

If SROs are not working very hard—even in schools with very few crimes—they are not doing their job. As one supervisor said, "They have to be willing to work hard—cops are lazy, but you have to spend time on this job."

Because they have to work so hard, **SROs need good organizational skills**—they need to be able to manage their time well. Lieutenant Chris Hagwood of the Garner Police Department in North Carolina pointed out that "the multiple demands placed on SROs from teachers, principals, and the department can be difficult for some officers to manage." A program administrator with the Palm Beach County School District Police Department said his most difficult supervisory responsibility is stressing time management to SROs. For example, one SRO's only weakness is not getting memos done on time. Because the SRO failed to submit a report on time, the chief was uninformed about an incident when the media questioned him. As a result, SROs need to be able to "multi-task", but also establish priorities for what they will do first, what they will leave until later, and what they will have to tell people they cannot get to at all.

As a result of these competing demands, being an effective SRO requires **being flexible—having the ability to "switch gears" quickly from one thing to another**. As Christopher Renouf, an elementary school principal in Sarasota County, said, "Especially at the elementary level, you have to keep stopping what you're doing to attend to something else."

### (7) Is—or can become—an effective teacher

The Delaware State Police program requires candidates to already be certified as instructors in order to become an SRO. Officers who have been teaching the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) or Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) curriculum before they become SROs have a significant head start in becoming effective teachers.

However, most SROs in the study began working in the schools knowing little or nothing about how to teach. Fortunately, some SROs report, this is a skill they can learn with little permanent damage to the program after they have begun working in the schools *if not too many weeks go by before they receive training* (see chapter 5, "Training SROs").

### (8) Has above average integrity

All law enforcement officers should have above average integrity. However, several program participants suggested that *SROs have to have even higher ethical standards than other police officers* because they are mentoring kids.

- Christopher Renouf, elementary school principal, Sarasota County: "You have to walk the walk—if you preach to kids, you have to role model what you preach to them and to parents—you have to be a very ethical, moral person."

- Sergeant Richard Davies, former SRO in Pine Bluff: "An SRO has to have above average morals because of the potential for complicated relationships with kids. Kids are very vulnerable to innuendo; little girls love attention. So you have to be on automatic pilot to make sure that nothing suggestive is said or done and that any advances are firmly and immediately rejected."

Another aspect of having integrity is treating students in a consistent manner. Patrol officers enjoy tremendous discretion in terms of whether and how they sanction offenders. For example, depending on a number of factors, when a driver runs a red light an officer can ignore it, give a verbal reprimand, give a written warning, issue a citation, or arrest the person for reckless endangerment. However, SROs effectiveness' will be impaired if they treat students in an apparently inconsistent manner. As SRO Jim Marshall said, "SROs have to have the ability to be fair and consistent. Marshall is a small community, so I know a lot of parents. Some ask for favors—for example, 'Cut my kid some slack.' But I tell them I have to be consistent [in how I treat the kids]."

**Additional Criteria Some Programs Use**

Several programs use additional criteria for selecting SROs (see the box "Optional Criteria for Selecting SROs"), the most common of which are familiarity with juvenile law, good report writing skills, some college experience, and ties to the local community.

Finally, a few programs make a point of preferring SROs who are relatively young—typically, in their twenties or early thirties—under the assumption that they and the students will be able to relate to each other better than older SROs can. However, SROs in their forties and even fifties were observed interacting very effectively with kids. Furthermore, while SROs and students who are closer in age may have more rapport, older SROs have developed a maturity that in many ways makes them superior to younger SROs in terms of their roles as enforcers of the law, counselors, and mentors. Sergeant Richard Davies in Pine Bluff remarked, "You need maturity [to be an SRO]. You can't throw a 21-year old cop into the schools—he's still in the dating pool."

In addition, older SROs have often been through the stresses and rewards of raising children—and discovered first hand the best ways of handling kids. They also understand how children with apparently serious problem behaviors often "outgrow" or overcome them with proper parenting and mentoring. Finally, most older officers have outgrown the "John Wayne syndrome" of resorting initially to the use of force and getting excited about sirens and flashing lights.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, a few programs appoint officers who are nearing retirement or have already retired. In most cases, programs have found that this is not a wise choice. On the one hand, officers who are about to retire may simply go through the motions of being SROs because they want a "cushy" position until they qualify for their pension. On the other hand, retired officers often lack the motivation to fulfill the strenuous responsibilitie because they often want the money that goes with being rehired.

## Optional Criteria for Selecting SROs

Some programs use additional criteria for selecting SROs, but typically these criteria are more of a "wish list" that departments add to the essential criteria.

**Knows the law as it relates to juveniles and schools**

SROs need to have a firm grasp of their legal authority and the schools' powers in dealing with students, especially in such areas as search and seizure on school grounds and questioning students without parents present. As a result, the Scottsdale, Arizona, Police Department requires applicants to take a written examination on juvenile crime and investigations. However, many program supervisors and SROs in the study feel that applicants already know the law or can learn it before or just after going on the job.

**Has good report writing skills**

According to James Kelly, chief of the Palm Beach County School District Police Department, "Writing skills are especially important in an educational environment where people know what good writing is and the first thing they look at is format, writing ability, etc., not content. Most people see what you wrote, not who you are." In addition, supervisors do not want to keep asking SROs to rewrite their incident reports.

**Has some college experience**

A few programs favor candidates with at least some college experience. According to Chief Robert Yant in Marshall, "If you're dealing with a school environment, it's a help. In an educational environment dealing with school personnel who have B.A. degrees, the SRO needs excellent written and verbal skills. So we treated it like a 'veteran's preference' and offered five extra points to candidates who had a bachelor's degree." The Tucson program gives preference to candidates with some college education because, according to a former supervisor, "that means they are connected to education, and the SROs' work is prevention more than anything else."

**Has ties to the local community**

In some programs, the SROs were students of the principals in whose schools they are currently working. In others, they went to school with many of the students' parents. This familiarity with the school and community facilitated the officers' efforts to establish credibility and rapport—and secure in-kind contributions to the program.

- While administrators and teachers in a small program in Kentucky opposed having an armed officer in their school, their familiarity with and respect for the SRO—who had attended the school—helped allay their concerns.

- Glenn Brunet, who grew up in Terrebonne Parish, calls on friends in the local media to give the school positive publicity by taking and publishing photos of the cheerleaders and writing favorable articles about the school.

| **Commit Selection Criteria to Paper** |
|---|
| Most of the 34 programs included in the study do not have written criteria for who can qualify as an SRO. Several program participants report that this is a mistake. Without written criteria, different people involved in deciding whom to approve as SROs may apply different—even contradictory—criteria.<br><br>In addition, *candidates* need to have the criteria provided to them in writing, not just verbally. For the program's pilot year in Schaumburg, Illinois, some candidates volunteered because they expected the job to be easy and liked the hours. Since then, fewer officers have applied for the assignment because they now know not only by word of mouth but also from the written selection criteria that SROs are required to do extensive teaching and work one-on-one with students—responsibilities some of them do not want to assume. As a result, only four officers applied when one SRO's tour expired in 2002. |

## The Screening Process

Screening is an attempt to determine whether applicants for a position meet the criteria for successful job performance. ***Without careful screening, departments may assign inappropriate officers to the schools who may not only be ineffective but also***, several programs reported, ***hamper or set back the program for months and even years to come***.

However, it is not always easy to determine whether applicants meet the job criteria. The matrix below suggests which parts of the screening process SRO programs can use to help determine whether candidates meet each criterion.

| Screening Approaches That Target Each Criterion | |
|---|---|
| **Criterion** | **Applicable Screening Approaches** |
| (1) Likes kids, cares about and wants to work with kids, and is able to work with kids | • memorandum or letter of interest<br>• explanation of expectations of the position<br>• personnel files<br>• personal experience with the candidate<br>• oral interview panel |
| (2) Has the right demeanor and people skills, including good communication skills | • memorandum or letter of interest<br>• personal experience with the candidate<br>• oral interview panel<br>• conversation with candidate's supervisor |
| (3) Has experience as a patrol officer or road deputy | • conversation with candidate's supervisor<br>• personnel records |
| (4) Is able to work independently | • conversation with candidate's supervisor<br>• explanation of expectations for the position<br>• oral interview panel |
| (5) Is exceptionally dependable | • conversation with candidate's supervisor<br>• explanation of expectations for the position<br>• personnel files (history of sick time usage) |
| (6) Is willing to work very hard | • memorandum or letter of interest<br>• explanation of expectations for the position<br>• personnel files<br>• conversation with candidate's supervisor<br>• oral interview panel<br>• report of having shadowed an SRO to learn the nature of the work |
| (7) Is—or can become—an effective teacher | • memorandum or letter of interest<br>• explanation of expectations for the position<br>• personnel files<br>• personal experience with the candidate<br>• oral interview panel |
| (8) Has above average integrity | • personnel files: record of citizen and internal complaints<br>• explanation of expectations for the position<br>• conversation with candidate's supervisor |

**Use Multiple Screening Procedures**

Some programs rely on just one step to screen applicants, but most programs use two or more of the following approaches:

• require a memorandum of interest;
• talk with current and previous supervisors;
• inform candidates of the expectations for—and drawbacks to—the position;
• examine personnel files; and
• factor in personal experience with the candidate.

In general, **the more procedures a program implements, the more likely it will identify well-qualified candidates**.

*Require a Memorandum of Interest*

Most programs require applicants to submit a memorandum or letter of interest when applying for the position. Applicants to the Tucson program must submit a memo of interest that addresses their:

• interest in working with youth;
• previous assignments or experiences that demonstrate their suitability for the assignment;
• public speaking experience;
• willingness to work flexible hours; and
• knowledge of the SRO program.

The Fontana, California, program requires a memo of interest that includes:

• number of years the candidate has been in law enforcement;
• number of years with the department;
• any noteworthy achievements as a law enforcement officer;
• prior work history with children;
• volunteer work with the community; and
• letters of recommendation from community members.

*Talk With Current and Previous Supervisors*

Most programs contact each applicant's current and sometimes previous supervisor. In most departments, especially smaller ones, supervisors get to know which officers have at least some of the characteristics needed to become an effective SRO.

*Inform Candidates of the Expectations for—and Drawbacks to—the Position*

An SRO with the Delaware State Police program pointed out that "it is important that the department be clear about the job expectations when selecting SROs so that applicants know what they will be responsible for before they come on board." This includes informing them about work conditions that they may find objectionable, for example, he says, telling them if they will be required frequently to cover after-school activities.

The following are among the other important drawbacks that programs should warn applicants about:

• the need to overcome fears about standing in front of a classroom;

• having to adjust to the personality and wishes of the school principal and assistant principal;

• working harder than they ever thought they would;

• living with the jokes and even scorn from some beat officers who consider them "Kiddie Cops"; and

• being isolated from the rest of the department.

Few programs provide all of this information. However, ***informing candidates about these potential drawbacks can help weed out inappropriate officers***. Lieutenant Greg Harrison of Lenoir County, North Carolina, reported that "patrol deputies think the SRO assignment is 'a piece of cake' and are surprised when I tell them what they will have to do in the schools which often dissuades them from applying."

*Examine Personnel and Other Files*

A candidate's personnel files can tell a great deal about an officer's or deputy's suitability to be an SRO.

• Sergeant Lowell Rademacher, program supervisor (now retired), Marshall: "I looked at whether candidates added to their mandatory training on their own. Jim [Marshall, the SRO] had been to other courses at his own request and it wasn't a one-time flash in the pan."

• Sergeant Jerry Thommes, program supervisor, Schaumburg: "I check on whether they took courses in juvenile law on their own or were involved with kids on their own in Explorer Post or coaching, or have been a D.A.R.E. officer."

Supervisors in most programs verify whether the candidate has had any disciplinary actions over a specified period of time.

• The Jefferson City, Missouri, program guide specifies that "The officer shall not have any disciplinary action resulting in at least a minimum suspension during the previous twelve (12) months."

• The Boone Police Department in North Carolina requires that candidates have no suspensions or disciplinary actions within the past two years, and no written reprimands within the past six months.

*Factor in Personal Experience With the Candidates*

Sometimes personal experience plays a legitimate part in an SRO's selection. A school board member and former classroom teacher in one site had seen one of the candidates teach a D.A.R.E. class that her daughter was in. "I saw ------------ work with kids and saw the rapport he has with them." As a result, she suggested to the superintendent of schools that this applicant be picked as the SRO.

*Check for Signs of Enthusiasm for the Position*

Finally, a common unstated criterion for the position is the candidate's enthusiasm for the job. Program personnel usually look for this trait during the individual or panel interview (see below). But another measure of candidates' seriousness that the Sarasota County program uses is whether applicants have gone to the trouble to shadow an SRO to gain an understanding of the position. Some candidates on their own also make an appointment to talk with program supervisors about the job. Precisely "to get a leg up on the interview process." When (now) Major Skip Rossi with the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office applied for the position, he made an appointment in advance to meet with the assistant superintendent who would be on

his review panel. (For a dissenting view on this approach, see the Garner, North Carolina, case study at the end of the chapter.)

**Convene an Oral Interview Board or Panel**

A number of programs assemble a panel of individuals to interview each candidate. Proponents of oral boards say the panels can usually reveal more than one-on-one interviews because they provide an opportunity to assess the candidate's oral communication skills, motivation, and composure under pressure. Kathleen Weigel, a high school principal in Palm Beach County, also points out that "there is some advantage to having several people participating in the interview because they pick up on different things applicants say or do—body language."

The discussion below addresses the issues involved in using an oral interview board. The case studies of the Garner, North Carolina, and Sarasota County, Florida, programs at the end of the chapter describe in detail how two programs make use of panels.

*Who Sits on the Board*

At a minimum, boards include one or more program first-line supervisors and another member of the department, such as the commander of the unit in which the program is housed. Because the program was new, the interview panel in Marshall included not only the sergeant who would become responsible for supervising the new SRO but also the sergeant who coordinated the SRO program in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Including a current SRO on the board can be especially helpful if none of the other panelists has ever been an SRO. As an SRO with the Delaware State Police said, "an SRO on the board knows what it takes to do the job" and can evaluate candidates with this in mind. When its program was just beginning in 1988, the Maury County Sheriff's Department in Tennessee included an SRO from a neighboring county on its panel.

A few programs expand the types of individuals who participate in the screening process. In Garner, officers who apply for a position are interviewed by a community panel that includes a parent of a child at the school. To gain community support for the program, Marshall Police Chief Robert Yant included a paralegal with the city attorney's office who was also a graduate of the citizen's academy; a business professor from the local state university; and a mid-manager from the town's largest employer. Finally, interview panels in most programs include school administrators (see the discussion below, "Involve School Administrators").

*Questions Board Members Ask*

Most programs that use oral panels rely on previously prepared written questions. As the box "Sample Oral Panel Interview Questions" suggests, questions commonly focus on the following areas:

• motivations for applying for the position;
• understanding the role and responsibilities of an SRO;
• an explanation of why the candidate would be effective in the position;
• previous experience relevant to the position, including working with youngsters and having given verbal presentations or taught classes;
• understanding community policing and its application in the school setting;
• experience working with little direct supervision;
• willingness to work overtime, including some evenings and weekends; and
• strategies for handling difficult school administrators.

The Schaumburg program asks a number of targeted questions about how the candidate would behave as an SRO, such as:

• How do you want students to perceive you, and how will that impact their feelings about police officers in general?

• In what ways do you think you can make yourself visible and available to students?

• As a teacher . . . , what techniques will you use to keep students interested?

• It is very difficult to get students to come to you; what would you do to build trust?

• What would you say to a staff member who came to you about a discipline issue, not a legal issue?

The Scottsdale, Arizona, Police Department requires candidates to **give a brief presentation** during the panel interview so members can assess the applicants' teaching ability. A chief of police in another department suggests that the presentation replicate a class for students and points out that the requirement not only provides a opportunity for screeners to see a candidate "in the raw" but to see if the applicant took the time to prepare for the presentation.

| Sample Oral Panel Interview Questions |
|---|

**Marshall, Minnesota**

*Job Related Skills/Work Experience*
1. Describe your education and training for this position.
2. How has your previous experience prepared you for this position?

*Interpersonal Relations*
3. Briefly describe an incident or project where you have had to work with others and explain how you contributed to the success of the incident or project.
4. As a School Resource Officer, how do you deal with High School aged people who are uncooperative or even argumentative?

*Communications*
5. Explain your experience in making verbal presentations to groups or individuals.
6. You're the first police officer permanently assigned to work within the Marshall School District. Some people aren't comfortable with the idea of having a police officer in the schools. How would you try to allay those concerns?

*Information Analysis and Decision Making*
7. A teacher believes that a student has committed a theft on school grounds and directs you to arrest the student. What would you do? Explain why.
8. Describe one of the more difficult work-related decisions that you have had to make and explain how you did it.

*Community Policing*
9. Describe Community Policing as you understand it.
10. Explain ways that community policing could be applied in the school environment.

*Work Orientation*
11. As a School Resource Officer, you will be working with little direct supervision. Discuss your experience working with little direct supervision.
12. As a School Resource Officer, your schedule will require you to work evenings and some weekends. Discuss your views on flexing your schedule.

**Sioux Fall, South Dakota**
1. Please discuss what you believe to be the duties and functions of the School Resource Officer.
2. Please discuss why you believe you would be a good School Resource Officer, particularly with middle school aged youth, and speak briefly about what you view your strengths and weaknesses to be.
3. How has your previous training, education and/or experiences prepared you for this position . . . ?
4. As a School Resource Officer, there are a lot of demands placed on your time both on-duty and off . . . You will be attending parent/teacher conferences, multiple organizational meetings, working sporting events, dances, concerts, proms, etc. Discuss how this might negatively impact you and/or your family personally.
5. As a School Resource Officer, there will be occasions where public presentations before large groups of people will be necessary. What experience or training have you had in the area of public speaking?
6. What do you feel are the major problems confronting our youth today?
7. Based on the previous question, what solutions might you have to offer and what direction should the schools, the police and the community be headed in to confront these problems that our youth are faced with?
8. Describe the concept of "Community Policing" as you understand it and how it could be applied to the school environment.
9. Some people (teachers, administration, parents, students) are not comfortable with the idea of having police officers in the schools. How would you try to ease those concerns?
10. The principal of your school, who you have an excellent working relationship with, advises you that a student has committed a theft on school grounds and directs you to arrest the student. What action would you take?

Several boards ask candidates ***how they would respond to typical but problematic scenarios*** (see the box "Sample Scenarios Oral Boards Present to Candidates)." The board in Palm Beach County uses "targeted selection"—asking candidates not to suggest how they would respond to hypothetical scenarios but to report how they did respond to real life situations—for example, "Tell me about a time when you had a serious problem with a supervisor. What action did you take, and what happened as a result?"

Board members typically look beyond the candidate's answers to ***examine closely how the person behaved during the panel interview***. For example, written instructions to board members in Marshall require panelists to assess each candidate's behavior in terms of:

- Oral Communication Skills (e.g., poor articulation, easily understood),
- Displayed Motivation (e.g., mainly looking for "day job"),
- Composure (e.g., fidgety, very calm and collected), and
- Appearance (e.g., underdressed, neat and well groomed).

| **Sample Scenarios Some Oral Boards Present to Candidates** |
|---|

John Morella, an SRO in West Orange, uses several scenarios when he serves on a panel, such as the following:

- A senior female student walks into your office and says that she is pregnant with her 25-year-old boyfriend's baby, wants an abortion, but does not want to tell her parents.

- A student comes up to you and says, "Jimmy is selling drugs out of his locker, and there are drugs in there right now."

The Oklahoma County Sheriff's Department has used the following scenarios:

- A child approaches you and tells you of a crime against them that implicates a school official. What is your response?

- An assault and battery occurs in your presence, but a school official intervenes and tells you that they will handle the situation in house. What is your response?

- You are contacted by a teacher who advises you that a student is making allegations of abuse against his or her parents. What are your responsibilities as the school resource officer, and what actions will you take?

| Oral Boards Are Not Foolproof |
|---|
| A few supervisors expressed concerns about using oral boards.<br><br>• Captain Tim Carney, who oversees the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office's program, warns that "some officers do poorly on the oral board but end up as good SROs—and vice versa. One quiet candidate was overlooked twice, but the next time I talked in depth with his patrol supervisor, who said, 'This guy will run through a wall for you.' As a result, the panel accepted the officer and today principals love him—he's a local guy and dedicated."<br><br>• Similarly, Sergeant Roger Willey, who runs the Delaware State Police program, is not sure the oral board process is always effective because "some officers don't do well in this setting. It's similar to a promotion board, which is very nerve-wracking, so we may end up eliminating good candidates. To avoid this, we try to keep it relaxed and less stressful." |

*Coming to a Decision*

Many programs use a formal scoring system for rating each candidate. For example, Chief Robert Yant in Marshall developed a detailed "School Resource Officer Oral Interview Rater's Guide" (see appendix A) for evaluating candidates' performance based on a 1-7 rating for each of 12 dimensions of the oral examination and a 1-4 rating for each of 4 dimensions of observed behavior (see above), for a total of 100 possible points.

The case studies at the end of the chapter describe the structured scoring systems that the Garner Police Department and the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office use. Appendix B provides the complete Sarasota County Sheriff's Office scoring guidelines.

*Assigning New SROs to Specific Schools*

In many programs, because there is only one opening for an SRO at a given time, deciding which school a new SRO should be assigned to is not an issue. However, in some programs several new SROs must be placed among several schools. When there are openings available at more than one school in Sarasota County, panel members discuss which applicants would be best suited for each school and, in particular, for which grade level. In Stark County, after the panel interviews are complete and the SROs selected, the school superintendents represented on the panel discuss which candidates would be best for their schools. For example, some superintendents request deputies who live in their communities or have children in their schools because they feel these SROs will have "instant buy-in" from community members.

*Training Panel Members*

A few panel members reported that orienting board members to some of the subtleties of participating on an oral board could improve the screening process, especially for first-time panelists. Two sergeants in Sioux Falls attended a National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) training for program supervisors at which "we had the opportunity to do a 'mock' interview using as 'applicants' three people who were attending a NASRO basic course."

**Involve Schools in Screening Candidates**
Many programs have demonstrated the value of making sure that school administrators are active participants in the screening process.

*Why Involve School Administrators*

Police administrators and school administrators in programs that have involved school district and school-level administrators in the screening process report that ***the administrators' participation helps (1) match SROs properly with individual schools and (2) increase acceptance of the program and the SROs among school personnel***.

• In Lakewood, Colorado, Sergeant Patricia Heffner admitted that the police department had originally not been keen on inviting school personnel but sees the value now. "By participating, the school administrators are 'buying' into their SRO—and they have less room to complain if it does not end up working out."

• The memorandum of agreement signed by each local school board and the Stark County Sheriff's Office calls for "joint selection" of the SROs. The sheriff offered the school districts a significant role because the administrators had suspicions about the program—they were not sure they wanted a deputy in the schools because they were concerned it could be a negative experience. As a result, the sheriff wanted to take the initiative in giving them the opportunity to participate in decision making related to the program rather than dictate to them. A group of school administrators, alongside officials from the sheriff's department, interviewed each of the 14 candidates who applied for the newly created positions.

• Captain Curtis Main of the Boone Police Department said that school representatives involved in the screening process have raised issues the department representatives on the board did not consider. For example, they drew out from one candidate that he had refused to teach the D.A.R.E. curriculum because he did not believe in the program.

Ward Nelson, a middle school principal and coordinator of the Schaumburg program, believes that "It is critical to involve the schools in the screening because, if the department sends us someone, we still worry [after several years of working with well-qualified SROs] whether it will be the right type of person."

As suggested above, **school administrators frequently want SROs with specific characteristics that they feel will make the officers most effective in their particular schools**.

• In collaboration with Major Rick Perez of the sheriff's office, each school superintendent in Stark County prepared his or her own written job description for the SRO for his or her schools. Perez keeps the descriptions on file in his office.

• The Plain View School District superintendent of schools in Oklahoma County who served as the school representative for officer screening and selection interviewed between 10-20 officers for the initial five slots. With so few adult role models for minority students in her district, she wanted at least one African-American or Hispanic officer placed there. She also believed it best to have one male and one female SRO available to her students.

*Ways of Involving School Administrators*

**The most common way school administrators participate in the screening process is through the oral interview panel**. A case study at the end of the chapter describes the Sarasota County's procedure for involving the school district in the panels' work. In a few programs, administrators also participate in developing the panels' screening criteria.

A sometimes contentious issue is **whether schools should have veto power over which candidates are chosen**. In most sites, the chief or sheriff maintains ultimate power over which officers or deputies will be accepted into the program. A West Orange high school principal contends, however, that, if the SRO program has goals beyond police suppression, principals should hold some veto power in hiring decisions. After all, he points out, the principal has daily responsibility for the welfare of all students with whom the officer will interact. Reflecting this position, school district panelists in Sarasota County may veto the appointment of a candidate. Similarly, school administrators in King County, Washington, can reject an officer whom the sheriff's department recommends because, according to the program coordinator, "If there is bad chemistry between an SRO and school staff, the program is doomed. We don't want to force an SRO down anyone's throat, so if a school doesn't want a particular officer, we find another candidate until we get one everyone agrees is a good fit." Occupying a middle ground, another program allows individual school principals to reject candidates for their schools but not for the program as a whole.

### *Implement Several Screening Methods*

Some programs use multiple screening methods in an attempt to select the most qualified candidates as SROs. For example, the Boone Police Department requires the following steps:

    (1) a letter of intent to apply to the captain in charge of the program;

    (2) a review of the officer's past performance review;

    (3) a psychological exam if it has been more than three years since the last exam;

    (4) a discussion with the officer's current supervisor;

    (5) a review of this information by a management team member;

    (6) an interview with a management team;

    (7) a discussion about the candidate between the captain and the school super intendent and principals; and

    (8) an interview with the captain and school representatives during which any issues raised by the school representatives are addressed.

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

As illustrated in the case studies below, both the Garner, North Carolina, and Sarasota County, Florida, programs use multiple screening procedures.

—The Garner Police Department uses a four-stage process that includes a physical examination, written examination, oral interview panel, and the applicant's score on his or her two previous department appraisal periods.

—The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office's screening approach includes a highly structured oral interview panel with written questions and an established scoring procedure.

## Case Study: Garner, North Carolina, Police Department (53 sworn)

The experience of the Garner Police Department, with only 53 sworn officers in a town of 20,000, suggests that even relatively small law enforcement agencies and jurisdictions can develop, document in writing, and implement a thorough screening process. The department also takes an unusual approach that requires applicants and screeners to avoid any contact before the oral interview.

The screening process in Garner begins with a memo of interest from the applicant and a letter of recommendation from his or her current supervisor. Applicants then go through a four-part screening process, each of which contributes a certain number of points to an applicant's score for a total of up to 325 points. As described below, the program gives each candidate a three-page set of instructions for how to prepare for each step in the screening process.

### (1) Police Officer Physical Abilities Test (possible 25 points)

The preparation instructions given to candidates for the physical test informs them to start drinking at least 64 ounces of water per day two or three days before the test day and to warm up at least 3-5 minutes immediately before the test begins. Candidates earn points according to the total time it takes them to complete the test (based on standards established by the North Carolina Training and Standards Division), with final times in minutes and seconds subtracted from the maximum possible 25 points. For example, if the tests take them 8 minutes to complete, they earn 17 points (25-8). The tests—the same ones required for department applicants—range from running up stairs, to catching someone upright to prevent injury, to subduing a person resisting arrest.

### (2) Written Exercise (possible 100 points)

Applicants review a 2-3-minute video depicting law enforcement dilemmas and are given a fixed amount of time to provide a hand-written narrative "story" solving them. An outside education consultant grades the papers based on 11 criteria, including proper punctuation and vocabulary, correct spelling and grammar, appropriate support and elaboration of the points being made, and logical presentation of ideas.

**(3)      Oral Interview Panel (possible 100 points)**

Instructions to candidates tell them to be prepared to answer questions on some or all of seven topics, ranging from juvenile arrest, detention, and investigation procedures, to department policy and procedures related to SRO duties, to conflict management. A community panel consisting of the program supervisor, SROs, the principal of the school to which the new SRO will be assigned, and a parent of a child at the school interviews each candidate. The department's public information officer briefs the panelists beforehand and provides them with a list of questions to ask and instructions for scoring responses (see the box "The Garner Police Department's Interview Panel Questions"). Panel members rotate asking the questions.

Before a candidate appears before the panel, the program supervisor requires the applicant to sign a statement attesting that he or she has read the nine "Interview Guidelines" that explain the panel interview process, such as:

• Panel members may NOT [emphasis in the original] elaborate, provide clarification for or outline examples related to any question.

• Panel members may only repeat questions verbatim and <u>only when asked by you</u>. [emphasis in the original]

• The same answer cannot be given for more than one question.

• The interview is being recorded on video (to review candidate answers if necessary for scoring).

(1)     Can you provide us with an example, while employed as a police officer, in which you worked to improve the quality of life for those in our community? (1) What was the situation, (2) what did you do, and (3) what was the outcome? (25 possible points)

(2)     Can you provide us with any life situation that illustrates your ability to resolve conflict effectively? (1) What was the situation, (2) what did you do, (3) what was the outcome? (25 points)

(3)     Can you tell us about a life situation you encountered which illustrates your ability to receive criticism constructively? (1) Why were you criticized? (2) What did you do about it? (3) What was the outcome? (25 points)

(4)     What have you done, if anything, to prepare for this assignment and why? (10 points)

(5)     Can you provide one example, as a police officer, that demonstrates your creativity in locating or providing needed resources? (15 points)

**(4)     Average of Previous Two Performance Appraisal Periods (possible 100 points)**

**Prior performance evaluations constitute nearly one-third of the total points a candidate can score.** Garner police officers are evaluated annually on a point scale, with 100 a perfect score. The program   averages the applicant's previous two evaluations so that, for example, if an officer scored an 80 and a 90, he or should would get 85 points toward the total SRO screening score.

The program uses the total scores to rank candidates. The chief makes the final selection. Candidates who earn more than 162 points and are not selected are placed on an eligibility list for the following year. The program provides applicants with their final screening results, as well as an analysis of their performance and strategies, so they can improve their performance in the future if they reapply.

| Applicants and Panelists in Garner Are Not Allowed to Contact Each Other |
| --- |
| The instructions for the screening process that the police department gives to all candidates prohibits them from seeking advice from anyone currently involved in the selection process, including program supervisors and the principal of the school with the vacancy. The department has candidates and panelists sign a statement confirming that the parties do not know each other. The department's purpose in making this requirement is to maintain the integrity and objectivity of the selection process. |

## Case Study: Sarasota County, Florida, Sheriff's Department (500 sworn)

While the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office SRO program does not use written criteria for screening SRO candidates, in other respects the program uses a comprehensive procedure for making sure that it selects well-qualified officers as SROs.

**Screening Criteria**

According to the contract between the sheriff's office and the school district, SRO applicants must volunteer for the position, preferably have at least three years of law enforcement experience, and have an Associate of Arts or Science degree or the equivalent in credit hours. ***A Bachelor of Arts degree is preferred***. (In the 1980s, the program required candidates to have a B.A. degree so they could be on an equal footing with teachers and administrators, but the requirement was dropped because not enough candidates had the degree.)

Panelists who serve on the oral board that screens candidates (see below) apply their own individual (and unwritten) criteria to the selection process.

- Captain Tim Carney, the youth services bureau commander, who serves on all panels, looks especially for the following characteristics:

  —ability to work with kids;
  —personality—adaptability to the principal, ability to be diplomatic—"you're working for two bosses"; and
  —understanding the triad concept—counseling and teaching as well as law enforcement.

- A high school principal, Daniel Parrett, who has served on several panels, uses the following criteria:

  —can get along with students—"not Sergeant Rock who stays in his office or on a pedestal looking down on people";
  —someone who will participate with kids and go into classes; and
  —someone who can help him "like a locker room lawyer."

- An elementary school principal, Christopher Renouf, who has served on two panels looks for:

  —flexibility—the ability to switch from doing one thing to another, "especially at the elementary level where you have to keep stopping what you're doing to attend to something else";
  —integrity/honesty/trustworthiness—"walking the walk—if you preach to kids, you have to role model what you preach with them and with parents—you have to be a very ethical, moral person"; and
  —dependability—"kids want to see that the SRO will be there regularly."

***Panel members also consider whether applicants took the initiative to shadow any SROs on their own.*** According to one of the three program supervisors, Detective Sergeant Tim Enos, "I check to see if applicants asked if they might spend a half day or day before the oral board shadowing an SRO to see what the job entails—if they did, this suggests a level of commitment to the position." On one occasion, after the last candidate had been interviewed, Enos reported that one applicant had taken the initiative to visit three schools to shadow their SROs. The candidate also came to the office to talk about the position with the captain. Shadowing turns out to be a useful screening method. "Some applicants," Enos says, "drop their application after shadowing shows them the job isn't for them." Enos calls the applicants' supervisors to confirm that they have a good record and would be effective as SROs, and reports what he learns to the panel.

## Screening Process

The agreement between the sheriff's office and the school board ***requires the superintendent of schools and the sheriff's office to appoint two members each to a School Resource Officer Personnel Board*** "which shall have as its sole function the recruitment, interviewing and evaluation of School Resource Officers." As openings occur, the bureau assembles a board that includes the principal or assistant principal of the school with the vacancy, the superintendent of student services, one or more of the three program supervisors, and the youth services bureau commander, Captain Tim Carney.

Before each interview, one of the sergeants provides an overview of the candidate's history with the department. Then the applicant comes in. One panelist asks the applicant the first of ten written questions (see the box "Panel Members in Sarasota County Ask Candidates 10 Questions") and the applicant answers; another panelist asks the second question—and the applicant answers that question; and so on until all the questions have been asked. (Occasionally, a panel member asks a question not on the written list, usually as a follow-up to something the candidate has said.) The applicant is then asked if he or she has anything else to contribute and leaves. Panel members take three or four minutes to rate in writing the candidate's answer to each question on a scale from one to four (appendix B provides a copy of the Evaluation & Scoring Guidelines). The entire process takes about 25 minutes. Then the sergeant gives a brief overview of the second candidate, and the process is repeated.

| **Panel Members in Sarasota County Ask Candidates 10 Questions** |
|---|

1. Why are you interested in a Youth Service Bureau [i.e., SRO] position?

2. What do you think the role of a School Resource Officer is?

3. What are you looking for in a job?

4. The Youth Service Bureau receives many after hours and weekend assignments. Would you be willing to schedule your time to assist with these events?*

5. How were you different than most of your co-workers?

6. What words or phrase would your last supervisor use to describe you?

7. Describe your best achievement and how you accomplished it.

   • What was the achievement?

   • How did you go about it?

   • How much effort did you put in?

   • What obstacles did you encounter?

   • How did you overcome them?

   • What was the result?

8. Describe the biggest project that you had to see through from beginning to end

   • How did you coordinate the necessary activities?

   • How did you monitor progress?

   • What obstacles did you encounter?

   • How did you overcome them?

9. What is your experience in regard to teaching or lecturing in front of children and adults?

10. Please give us a brief overview of yourself and your career.

\* A few years ago, the program changed some of the questions. In the past, the board focused on the applicants' interest in kids, but supervisors saw the need to make sure they accepted only applicants who were willing to work overtime for the program.  To revise the questions, the supervisors worked with the sheriff's office human resources department, which had recently improved the questions asked of people applying to be correctional officers with the department.

Panel members do not vote but instead read their ratings and then discuss the applicants' qualifications. They usually reach a consensus on the best candidate(s). At the end of one board meeting, panelists concluded that some candidates:

• were objectively more qualified than others, for example:

  —they had been working with kids in some fashion even though they were patrol deputies, or
  —they had taught school in a previous career;

• appeared more motivated and enthusiastic than the others, for example:

  —they did not appear to simply want to get out of their current posting, or
  —they seemed to express a genuine interest in the work of an SRO;

• had a better demeanor than the others, for example:

  —they did not take for granted that they would get the position, or
  —they made a strong effort to try to present themselves as highly qualified;

• answered the questions better than the others, for example:

  —Question: "What do you think the role of a School Resource Officer is? Answer: "You have to check your macho image at the door [of the school] and do whatever it takes [to help the kids—which the candidate then followed —by giving examples of what SROs need to do for kids]."

When there are openings available at more than one school, panel members discuss which applicants are best suited for which grade level.

***Both the sheriff's office and school district panelists may veto the selection of a candidate.*** According to Robyn Marinelli, the school district supervisor of student services who has attended almost every oral panel, "School representatives have veto power because otherwise the program would not work." There have been instances in which a principal has vetoed an SRO for his or her school. On one occasion a high school principal did not have a good feeling about an officer, but there were always other acceptable candidates competing for the position.

Appendix A

Marshall, Minnesota, Police Department Oral Interview Rater's Guide

# Marshall Police Department

# School Resource Officer Oral Interview Rater's Guide - 1999

# MPD Oral Interview Rater's Guide – 1999
## SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

## Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide instructions and general rating guidelines for the completion of an oral interview for the assignment as School Resource Officer

The oral interview process is designed to assess job-related skills necessary to perform successfully in the position of School Resource Officer

The Oral Interview panel is responsible for assessing each candidate's expertise pertinent to the duties and responsibilities of a Police Officer assigned to the position of School Resource Officer. The responsibility involves coordinating the participation of the applicant in the interview situation, objectively presenting question and/ or follow-up questions, and fairly evaluating each candidate's performance in comparison to the rating areas identified as important for successful job performance.

During an interview session, you should present a question and/or follow-up questions to an applicant, listen to the applicant's responses, and take notes, which will assist you in evaluating the applicant's overall performance. The evaluation process will be based on a set of personal characteristics dimensions that have been developed based on the duties of a School Resource Officer.

Evaluating the performance of candidates during this interview consists of several related areas. It is suggested that you look at the following areas:

1.  **Observe the behavior of the candidate** – This activity includes:
    *   Watching the actions of the candidate;
    *   interacting with the candidate; and
    *   listening to the candidate.

2.  **Record critical behaviors** – Take notes in the space provided on the interview form concerning the behavior you observe, including:
    *   what and how the candidate acts, or fails to act, during the examination session; and
    *   what the candidate says, or fails to say, during the session.

3.  **Connect behavior to dimensions** – Connect critical behaviors to one or more of the personal dimensions included in this document. This activity includes:
    *   Sorting your observations by relevant dimension(s), and
    *   relating each observation to the descriptive information contained in the rating scale for a given dimension.

4.  **Evaluate the candidate's performance** – based on your assessment of the candidate's behavior, assign a rating of 1 to 7 on each dimension of the oral examination. This comes to a maximum of 84 points. Assign a rating of 1 to 4 for each of the four observed dimensions of the examination. This comes to a maximum of 16 points. The maximum number of points available per candidate is 100 points.

## Page 2 - MPD Oral Interview Rater's Guide – 1999
### SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

The information presented by the applicant <u>and</u> his/her responses to your follow-up questions will provide the basis for your evaluation of a given applicant's skills and the potential success as a School Resource Officer.

The evaluation dimensions relevant to the assignment as School Resource Officer are presented in the following pages. Included in each dimension is a descriptive rating scale which has a range of one (1) to seven (7) possible points with rating information presented for high (7-6), medium (5-3), and low (2-1) point groupings. Within each of these groupings specific point values should be considered based the chart provided at the end of these instructions.

### Summary

As you observe and evaluate the performance of each applicant, remember these important points:

1. It isn't unusual for an applicant to do well on one portion of the examination and poorly on another. You must be careful not to rate a candidate too high or too low overall based on his or her performance related to one specific situation or question. Observe the applicant's responses to each situation independently, but **synthesize your observations to rate overall performance on a particular dimension**.

2. Candidate responses should be rated objectively. Do not allow for subjective factors (i.e. past association, appearance, attempts to infer or perceive job motivations, etc.) to influence your job ratings.

Each rater will provide an individual assessment of the applicant's performance on all dimensions. Individual assessments will then be averaged across the panel to provide an overall rating for each dimension.

There will be a discussion of the ratings of each candidate at the end of the oral examinations.

If there is a difference of more than 2 points between raters on a given dimension, panel members may compare their ratings and then arrive at a consensus rating. A total rating will then be calculated by adding all average/consensus ratings. Individual and overall ratings will be recorded on the forms provided.

## Rating Scale Information

Each dimension rating scale has a range of one (1) to seven (7) possible points with rating information presented for high (7-6), medium (5-3), and low (2-1) point categories. Within each category, specific point values should be considered in accordance with the descriptions presented below.

### High Range

7    (Excellent) Candidate appears to possess a **very high level** of expertise on the overall dimension and all associated job behaviors and characteristics.

6    (Highly Preferred) Candidate appears to possess a **high level** of expertise on the overall dimension, or a very high level on a moderate portion of the associated job behaviors and characteristics.

### Medium Range

5    (Good) Candidate appears to possess a **more than adequate** level of expertise on the overall dimensions or a high level on a moderate portion of the associated job behaviors and characteristics.

4    (Acceptable) Candidate appears to possess an **adequate level** of expertise on the overall dimensions or a more than adequate level on a moderate portion of the associated job behaviors and characteristics.

3    (Marginal) Candidate appears to possess **minimal** expertise on the overall dimension, or an adequate level of very few of the associated job behaviors and characteristics.

### Low Range

2    (Poor) Candidate appears to be **deficient** with respect to many of the job behaviors and characteristics associated with this dimension.

1    (Unacceptable) Candidate appears to be **totally unacceptable** on this dimension or there is **no observable performance** which applies to this dimension.

## MPD School Resource Officer Oral Interview Questions – 1999
**Applicant's Name** _____ **Rater's Initials** _____

### CATEGORY A -- Job Related Skills/Work Experience

This dimension focuses on demonstrated knowledge, skills and/or abilities relevant to the technical areas of job responsibility. This dimension includes the skill in applying such knowledge to operational situations. Indication of such knowledge, skills and abilities include: Has similar work been done in the past. Shows knowledge of tasks/skills relevant to the assignment of School Resource Officer.

1. Describe your education and training for this position.      ( 1  2  3  4  5  6  7 )

2. How has your previous experience prepared your for this position.

     ( 1  2  3  4  5  6  7 )

### CATEGORY B -- Interpersonal Relations

This dimension focuses on skills in developing and maintaining positive and cooperative relationships with others. Indications of this include: Describes effective working relationships and cooperation with others. Describes consideration for the needs and concerns of others.

3. Briefly describe an incident or project where you have had to work with others and explain how you contributed to the success of the incident or project.      ( 1  2  3  4  5  6  7 )

4. As a School Resource Officer, how do you deal with High School aged people who are uncooperative or even argumentative?      ( 1  2  3  4  5  6  7 )

### CATEGORY C -- Communications

This dimension focuses on oral communication skills and experience. Examples of relevant skill descriptions are provided below.

EXAMPLES OF LOW RATED RESPONSES:
+ demonstrated difficulty understanding the
   questions
+ gave consistently vague answers
+ have had little public speaking experiences

EXAMPLES OF HIGH RATED RESPONSES:
+ readily understood the questions
+ responses were logically organized
+ has had public speaking experience

5. Explain your experience in making verbal presentations to groups or individuals?      ( 1  2  3  4  5  6  7 )

6. You're the first police officer permanently assigned to work within the Marshall School District. Some people aren't comfortable with the idea of having a police officer in the schools. How would you try to allay those concerns?      ( 1  2  3  4  5  6  7 )

# MPD School Resource Officer Oral Interview Questions – 1999

Applicant's Name _____ Rater's Initials _____

## CATEGORY D -- Information Analysis & Decision-Making

This dimension focuses on processing and analyzing information to effectively identify and define problems, establish and maintain work priorities, or make decisions. Indications of such skills include: Recognizing and responding appropriately to problems and making timely, sound decisions even under pressure and uncertainty. Considering problem alternatives and making logical decisions.

7. A teacher believes that a student has committed a theft on school grounds and directs you to arrest the student. What would you do? Explain why.      ( 1  2  3  4  5  6  7 )

8. Describe one of the more difficult work-related decisions that you have had to make and explain how you did it.      ( 1  2  3  4  5  6  7 )

## CATEGORY E -- Community Policing

Policing today increasingly involves a community-policing framework, such as problem solving and interaction with broad elements of the community. However community policing does not eliminated enforcement as a significant tool for accomplishing police goals. Indications of such skills and understandings include: Setting priorities and handling tasks in order of priority. Working with elements of the community outside of law enforcement to accomplish policing goals.

9. Describe Community Policing as you understand it.      ( 1  2  3  4  5  6  7 )

10. Explain ways that community policing could be applied in the school environment.
      ( 1  2  3  4  5  6  7 )

## CATEGORY F -- Work Orientation

This dimension focuses on characteristics that are important for effective job performance. Indications of these characteristics include: Being receptive to personally maintain a strong work ethic. Checking work for errors and making necessary corrections. Willingness to work evenings and weekends without overtime.

11. As a School Resource Officer you will be working with little direct supervision. Discuss your experience working with little direct supervision.      ( 1  2  3  4  5  6  7 )

12. As a School Resource Officer your schedule will require you to works evenings and some weekends. Discuss your views on flexing your schedule.      ( 1  2  3  4  5  6  7 )

## MPD School Resource Officer Oral Interview Questions – 1999
Applicant's Name _____ Rater's Initials _____

### CATEGORY G -- OBSERVED CANDIDATES BEHAVIOR AND APPEARANCE

Rate each candidate accordingly to the following characteristics on a 1 to 4 scale.

ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

1 _____ Vague, brief responses. Communication is poorly articulated.

2 _____ Adequate articulation, comprehension and fluency.

3 _____ Easily understood, speaks clearly and concisely

4 _____ Excellent verbal communications, very well-organized

DISPLAYED MOTIVATION

1 _____ Minimal interest in the assignment as School Resource Officer

2 _____ Good desire to work, but mainly looking for a "day-job"

3 _____ Solid interest in the position demonstrated, ask questions

4 _____ Excellent motivation, very much indicates wanting to be a School Resource Officer

COMPOSURE

1 _____ Nervous, "fidgety" and appears ill at ease

2 _____ Normal composure for a stressful situation

3 _____ Very good composure; may have been slightly nervous at the beginning

4 _____ Very calm and collected, demonstrated no visible nervousness and may have used humor appropriately

APPEARANCE

1 _____ Careless about personal appearance

2 _____ Acceptable personal appearance, somewhat "under-dressed" for an interview

3 _____ Very good personal appearance, appropriate for an interview

4 _____ Very neat and well groomed, "professional" appearance

# MPD Oral Interview Summary Rating – 1999
## SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

INTERVIEW PANEL MEMBERS

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

APPLICANT: _____

DATE: _____

## Appendix B

## Sarasota County, Florida, Sheriff's Office Guidelines for Scoring Candidates

### SARASOTA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
### YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU ORAL BOARDS

**APPLICANT NAME:**

**DATE OF ORAL BOARD:**

**CERTIFIED:** YES ☐ NO ☐     **EXPERIENCED:** YES ☐ NO ☐

### EVALUATION & SCORING GUIDELINES & QUESTIONS
Revised August 15, 2003

| | |
|---|---|
| **UNACCEPTABLE** (1-6) | Unable to communicate in an organized, concise manner. Avoided the main aspect of the question and gave a very general answer. Displayed little interest and appeared threatened or significantly uncomfortable during the oral board. |
| **ACCEPTABLE** (7-8) | Communicated in a logical manner. Addressed the specific issue of the questions in an acceptable manner. Displayed interest appeared comfortable relating to the oral board. |
| **SUPERIOR** (9-10) | Communicated in a clear, concise, courteous and professional manner. Addressed questions specifically with sincerity and credibility. Displayed active interest and confidence while relating to the oral board. |

**Interviewer Instructions:** Each interviewer chooses **3** questions. All applicants must be asked to respond to the same questions. Score the applicant following the above guidelines by circling the appropriate score. Include any notes related to the applicants answer on the lines provided.

1.    Why are you interested in a Youth Services Bureau position?

**SCORE:**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **6**    **7**    **8**    **9**    **10**

_____
_____
_____


2.    What do you think the role of a School Resource Officer is?

**SCORE:**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **6**    **7**    **8**    **9**    **10**

_____
_____
_____


3.    What are you looking for in a job?

**SCORE:**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **6**    **7**    **8**    **9**    **10**

_____
_____
_____


4.    The Youth Service Bureau receives many after hours and weekend assignments. Would you be willing to schedule your time to assist with these events?

**SCORE:**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **6**    **7**    **8**    **9**    **10**

_____
_____
_____


5.    How were you different than most of your co-workers?

**SCORE:**    **1**    **2**    **3**    **4**    **5**    **6**    **7**    **8**    **9**    **10**

_____
_____
_____

6.      What words or phrase would your last supervisor use to describe you? Why?

**SCORE:**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

_____
_____
_____

7.      Describe your best achievement and how you accomplished it.

- What was the achievement?
- How did you go about it?
- How much effort did you put in?
- What obstacles did you encounter?
- How did you overcome them?
- What was the result?

**SCORE:**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

_____
_____
_____

8.      Describe the biggest project that you had to see through from beginning to end.

- How did you coordinate necessary activities?
- How did you monitor progress?
- What obstacles did you encounter?
- How did you overcome them?

**SCORE:**      **1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**      **8**      **9**      **10**

_____
_____
_____
_____

9.  What is you experience in regard to teaching or lecturing in front of children and adults?

**SCORE:**  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

_____
_____
_____

10.  Please give us a brief overview of your self and your career?

**SCORE:**  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

_____
_____
_____

TOTAL SCORE:_____

_____
SIGNATURE OF INTERVIEWER    DATE

# Chapter 4: Minimizing Turnover Among SROs

Many SROs have remained in their positions for years-over 10 years in some sites. Several middle-aged SROs report they hope to stay in the schools until they retire.

However, many programs have experienced problems with turnover. One school district had five different SROs in less than three years. Of course, unavoidable circumstances sometimes result in turnover, including promotions and retirements. In one site, four different SROs in four years all quit the same school because of an unbearably authoritarian principal. However, high turnover may also reflect officer "burnout" or disenchantment with the position that programs can often prevent or resolve.

## Methods of Keeping Effective SROs on the Job

Minimizing turnover among SROs is important because *replacing an SRO makes the program less effective for several months and even years as the new officer learns how to do the job*. Sergeant Richard Davies, a former SRO in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, said, "The first year [as an SRO], all I did was break up fights and arrest students; the second, I did a lot of teaching; and the third, everything fell into place." In addition, school staff and students must begin the process all over again of learning to trust and rely on a new SRO. Coping with a new—and possibly inadequately trained—SRO may also "sour" administrators on the entire program based on that one poor relationship.

The discussion below identifies common reasons program supervisors and SROs give for why SROs lose interest in the position followed by approaches some programs have implemented to address the problem. However, the most effective approach to retaining good SROs is to *take a variety of complementary steps that, in combination, are much more likely to encourage qualified SROs to remain in the position than any single step aimed at retention can achieve*.

**THE PROBLEM:** *The officers were misfits from the outset*. Many SROs quit because they were poorly suited for the job from the beginning. They may not have understood the true nature of the job or they may have applied for the wrong reasons—typically, just to be able to work daytime weekday hours.

**SOLUTIONS:** *Recruit, screen, train, and supervise SROs carefully.*

(1)     *Inform officers during recruitment about the drawbacks to the position* they may not have considered (see the box on next page and chapter 2, "Recruiting SROs").

(2)     *Implement thorough screening procedures* to help make sure that only officers who are likely to succeed in the position are selected as SROs. Chapter 3, "Screening SROs," provides a variety of suggestions for helping

to ensure that only officers who are likely to enjoy and be good in the position are assigned to it. For example, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office and the Delaware State Police encourage would be SROs to shadow existing SROs. According to Tim Enos, an SRO supervisor with the Sarasota County program, "some applicants drop their application after shadowing shows them the job isn't for them."

---

### Drawbacks to Being an SRO That Programs Should Explain to Candidates

To help avoid assigning officers to the schools who are ill equipped to remain in the job, tell them during the screening process that they will need to:

- serve multiple constituencies—school administrators, faculty, students, parents, and the police or sheriff's department—with different backgrounds and relationships to the SRO
- perform many—even a majority of—duties not traditionally associated with being a law enforcement officer, such as monitoring the cafeteria during lunch or counseling troubled kids
- live with the fact that their "beat" is reduced from a precinct or county to a school and its parking lot
- overcome fears about standing in front of a classroom
- attend after-school and (in some cases) weekend events that on occasion may prevent them from attending their own families' events
- be willing to work harder than they ever thought the position would require—or harder than they ever worked as patrol officers
- accept being isolated in many respects from the rest of the department

---

(3) ***Provide timely and adequate training and supervision.*** Some SROs who apply for the position for the wrong reasons and start out as misfits can still be "salvaged" if the department trains them before they go into the schools and then supervises them carefully. Even SROs who apply for the position for all the "right" reasons can become disillusioned and decide to quit if they, too, are not adequately trained and supervised from the beginning. The lack of training and supervision can create stressful uncertainty about how to do the job, while poor performance can result in negative reactions from administrators, faculty, students, and parents that will discourage almost any SRO from continuing in the position. Chapter 5, "Training SROs," and chapter 6, "Supervising SROs," suggest how programs have been able to train and monitor SROs effectively so the officers feel confident they can do a good job.

**THE PROBLEM:** *Conflict with school administrators.* There will almost inevitably be some initial conflicts between SROs and school administrators, but usually these problems get ironed out and both parties settle into a comfortable working relationship. However, in some cases the conflicts do not subside and even escalate. For example, in Stark County, Ohio, two SROs wanted to go back to regular patrol in part because the administrators persistently tried to deal with criminal matters by themselves and excluded the deputies from the process.

**SOLUTIONS:** *Take steps to prevent and reduce SRO-administrator disputes.*

(1)     **Get administrator cooperation early.** As Sergeant Patricia Heffner, the supervisor of the Lakewood, Colorado, Police Department's SRO program pointed out, "including school officials in the screening process creates 'buy— in' to the individual officer . . . " as well as understanding and increased acceptance of the program concept. In addition, provide a formal orientation    to the program for principals and assistant principals—all the SROs in one program reported that "We needed more orientation for administrators"— because many administrators know little about what the program's goals are, what legal responsibilities and limitations police operate under, or how schools can make the best use of an officer in their schools. During the orientation, explain the program's benefits to principals and assistant principals, including:

•an immediate response to incidents requiring police intervention;
•an increase in everyone's sense of security and actual safety;
•having reduced burden for handling serious student misconduct; and
•help with preparing security assessments and emergency plans.

(2)     *Train SROs to work with administrators.* A few SROs report that officers cannot be taught how to work with administrators— that is something they can learn only on the job. However, most SROs feel that some training in advance can reduce at least some of the conflict and is definitely better than "throwing the SROs to the wolves" with no orientation at all. Chapter 5, "Training SROs," describes how several programs have been able to train SROs before they go into the schools. One principal suggested having an experienced SRO and administrator team up to give a presentation to new SROs about how to develop an effective partnership.

(3)   ***Arrange for each new SRO to meet before the school year begins or shortly thereafter with his or her school administrators to discuss their mutual roles and expectations*** in an effort to avoid unnecessary frustrations—and job dissatisfaction on the part of the officer—related to lack of clarity about their respective rights and responsibilities. For example, a number of school administrators cited SRO time away from the school as a cause of frustration. In some cases, the administrator was not aware of the SRO's competing demands, such as court appearances and covering other schools in a crisis.

(4)   Make sure the memorandum of agreement between the law enforcement agency and the school district spells out in detail the respective responsibilities of the SRO and the school. ***Without this clarity, school administrators and faculty may overburden the SRO or express frustration when the officer cannot meet their every request.*** To avoid such misunderstandings, the contract between the Sarasota County, Florida, Sheriff's Office and the school district, for example, states that "The SRO is not to be used for regularly assigned lunchroom duties, hall monitors, bus duties or other monitoring duties." The box "Areas of SRO and School Responsibility That Need Addressing" lists most of the most important areas of responsibility that programs need to spell out in an effort to minimize future conflict. To supplement its contracts with school districts, the King County Sheriff's Office developed an informational memo for school administrators and SROs specifically describing the program's goals and expectations, such as specifying that:

• A typical SRO shift is an eight-hour day, Monday through Friday, 0730-1530 hours . . . . . The SRO will be required to obtain prior approval from a supervisor for any overtime where exigent circumstances do not exist  . . . .

• Beginning and ending shift times can be flexed up to four hours; anything outside these hours requires time and a half overtime pay.

## Areas of SRO and School Responsibility That Need Addressing

- the role various parties will play in **screening and selecting candidates** for SRO positions (e.g., will school administrators participate in the screening process? be allowed to veto a candidate?)

- providing **office space and materials** for SROs at the schools (e.g., computer, secure filing cabinets, telephone, refrigerator)

- **training** that the SROs will attend before going on the job (e.g., juvenile law), soon after going on the job (e.g., teaching), and later on as part of in-service training (e.g., dealing with bullying), and who will pay for it

- specific **hours and days of the week** SROs are expected to be on campus

- occasions when SROs will be **excused** from being on campus (e.g., to appear in court) and who will excuse them

- the **notification process** when an SRO cannot come to work (e.g., due to illness or family emergency)

- providing a **substitute officer** when the regular SRO cannot be on campus

- activities that are considered to be **overtime** (e.g., providing security at after-school athletic events), who may request and approve the overtime, who will pay for it, the officers' options for refusing it, and the option of providing "flex time" (e.g., SRO comes in late to work the next morning)

- in instances when an officer has legal discretion, who makes the **decision to arrest** (or cite) or not arrest (or cite) a student who has broken the law, what the procedure will be for making the decision, and what happens if the officer and school administrator disagree (e.g., over a school rule violation that is also minor criminal or civil infraction, such as possession of cigarettes or verbal bullying)

- under what circumstances SROs will or may **handcuff students** whom they arrest and allow other students to see the handcuffed students being escorted off campus

- beyond what the law requires (e.g., need for a parent to be present if the student is underage), under what circumstances SROs may **question students** under both noncustodial conditions and pursuant to an arrest, conduct pat downs and searches, and detain individuals

- **contacting parents** directly (e.g., after an arrest, to discuss an at-risk student)

- access to confidential **student records**

- **transporting students** (e.g., take them home to pick up forgotten medication, bring a truant student to school)

## Areas of SRO and School Responsibility That Need Addressing (cont.)

- *disciplining students* for breaking school rules (e.g., for not adhering to the dress code, swearing) and the procedures to be followed

- acting regularly, as needed, or only in an emergency *as monitors or security staff* (e.g., during lunch, class breaks, assemblies, bus arrivals and departures)

- *traffic control* responsibilities

- *teaching responsibilities*, required and permitted topics (e.g., drug education, bullying, gang involvement), and procedures for arranging to teach a class (e.g., SRO may arrange directly with teachers)

- *addressing truancy* and, if so, the procedure (e.g., call parents? go to the student's home to encourage him or her to come to school?)

- engaging only in law-related *counseling* or also helping students with personal problems

- the procedure if an SRO believes *a student is a danger* to him— or herself or to others in the school or community (e.g., a student expresses suicidal thoughts)

- providing law-related counseling *to school personnel* (e.g., victims of domestic violence)

- investigating possible *criminal behavior on the part of school personnel* (e.g., sexual harassment)

- developing, revising, and implementing *safe school plans* (e.g., conduct a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design [CPTED] survey) and *critical incident response strategies* (e.g., who can order a lock down?)

- *meetings and events*, if any, SROs will be required, allowed, or forbidden to attend (e.g., PTA meetings, faculty meetings, school assemblies, band practice)

- *working in uniform* or civilian clothes and carrying a sidearm while on campus

- written weekly or monthly *reports or logs* and their distribution

- contacts SROs may have *with the media* (e.g., after a critical incident, to solicit a newspaper article on students' using "Fatal Vision" goggles to simulate alcohol impairment)

- engaging in *fund raising* and, if so, what kinds (e.g., selling pizzas or doing a car wash to raise money to send students to a Youth Crime Watch conference)

- Evaluating SRO Performance by whom, how often, following what procedures, and using what criteria

Program supervisors and SROs should keep these agreed-upon duties and responsibilities readily available to show to people who expect them to perform tasks that are outside their responsibility. For example, when a principal in Sarasota County wanted his SRO to be on campus every day from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., a supervising sergeant referred the administrator to the contract, which identifies the hours as 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Programs also need to recirculate the description of SRO responsibilities at least annually to school administrators and to each new principal or assistant principal.

(5) **_Make sure school administrators and faculty tell SROs what a good job they are doing._** Some SROs report they find enough job satisfaction when school administrators treat them as valued members of their "team."

 • According to Major Skip Rossi, now Administrative Division commander with the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office, "I turned down a promotion to corporal [which would have required him to stop being an SRO] because my status on campus was that of an assistant principal, and that fed my ego enough [for several years]."

 • According to chief James Kelly in Palm Beach County, Florida, SROs "don't get burned out the way some teachers do because, unlike faculty, SROs are in control and get rewards from seeing kids improve. Also, _SROs get constant positive feedback from staff_."

The point is not to leave these compliments from administrators and teachers to chance; program coordinators need to explain to administrators and faculty about how important it is for them to tell their SROs how much they are appreciated. For example, the schools in Virginia Beach, Virginia, have SRO appreciation days and host an appreciation brunch each year to honor the SROs.

(6) **_Allow SROs who do not get along with their school administrators to transfer to another school at the end of the academic year._** SRO José Cuellar in Palm Beach County said that his police chief has been very fair in accommodating officers requesting a change to be closer to home or to work in a different school. However, Kelly says that he will switch SROs who dis like their schools only two times; "the third time," he notes, "it's the SRO's problem"—that is, the fault lies not with the school or its administrators but with the officer. The Jefferson City, Missouri, program guide specifically allows for SROs to transfer when a vacancy occurs provided that school administrators, the superintendent of schools, the administrative captain, and the chief of police all agree.

**THE PROBLEM:** *Feeling isolated from the rest of the department.* Confined to their schools all day, some SROs express frustration at having little or no contact any more with other department personnel, eventually coming to feel that they are no longer a part of the force. SRO Kiel Higgins with the Albuquerque, New Mexico, Police Department, said, "You can get to feel left out of the department with no contact with regular officers." An SRO in the West Orange, New Jersey, Police Department sees his irregular contact with the departmentwide as "the one negative" to his assignment. He regrets the loss of rapport with the troops that he maintained more easily around the station house. "It's in your blood—that's why you became a cop. SROs have to switch gears and become someone else." In rural areas, the remote location of a program's participating schools can limit the SROs' interaction with other police personnel even further.

**SOLUTIONS:** *Take steps to keep SROs integrated with the rest of the department.*

(1)     Encourage or require SROs to *go back to patrol during the summer.* In addition to preventing SROs from losing their street skills, this enables SROs to interact again with other patrol officers. However, if SROs have to spend the summer on the swing or night shift, are given rotating shifts, or are assigned to work weekends, they may feel that losing their highly desirable weekday schedule is not worth the opportunity to regain contact with patrol officers. Furthermore, school administrators may want the officers at their schools year round.

(2)     Require SROs to *attend roll call* at least periodically. Program supervisors in the Chula Vista Police Department require SROs to go to the day shift patrol  roll call every Wednesday morning (although one police chief suggests periodically changing the day of the week so that students do not know in advance when their schools will be uncovered). In addition, on Fridays two SROs on a rotating basis work together in teams with regular patrol officers. Program supervisors in the Boone, North Carolina, Police Department require SROs to come to the police department at some point each day to check their messages to help ensure they remain a part of patrol.

(3)     Require SROs to *participate in all departmentwide training.* However, programs need to weigh the drawbacks of taking the SROs out of their schools to attend the training against the advantages of making them feel a part of the department, giving them the opportunity to resume contact with patrol officers, and offering the benefits of the training itself.

(4)     Encourage SROs to **take the initiative to remain in touch with other officers.**

   • One SRO said he decided [on his own] "to come to the office at the beginning and end of every day and sometimes during the day."

   • To avoid feeling left out, if something "goes down" near his school such as a traffic accident, SRO Kiel Higgins in Albuquerque deliberately races over to help handle it in part so he can interact with the sector officers. Higgins also works overtime with patrol officers every Friday and Saturday night to help them respond to calls regarding loud parties.

   • A few SROs stay with, or join, the SWAT team to keep in touch with other officers. One SRO reported he remains on the SWAT team in part because "It's an elite group with a great esprit de corps" (see below).

(5)     **Explain the program to patrol officers to dispel myths associated with the position.** The Lakewood Police Department developed an internal SRO program bulletin—"Calls from the Halls"—in part to address a communication breakdown that was occurring between SROs and other officers (see the box "Excerpts From a Lakewood Police Department . . . . Bulletin"). The program supervisor believes the bulletin has helped dispel some of the stereotypes about the SROs' work as well as prompted discussions between the SROs and patrol officers about at-risk youth and trends in student misconduct.

(6)     **Single out effective SROs for public commendation.** Many law enforcement officers complain that the only time their supervisors single them out is to criticize their mistakes. Some programs buck this trend by regularly ensuring that the entire department knows about SROs who are doing a good job.

   • The Lakewood program's "Calls from the Halls" bulletin not only dispels myths about SRO work but also helps ensure that other personnel are aware of the officers' success stories.

   • The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office StarTrac meetings, where commanders report on their units' progress and problems and top administrators ask follow-up questions (see the case study at the end of chapter 6, "Supervising SROs"), are not only an accountability tool, they also provide an opportunity for line officers to have their work recognized and complimented. At one meeting, after Captain Tim Carney, the program supervisor, read letters praising the work of three SROs who attended the meeting, the sheriff got up and walked over to shake their hands in front of every major in the agency.

• An elementary school principal sent Frank Scialdone, chief of the Fontana, California, Police Department, a letter commending "on behalf of myself, the students and the staff" an SRO's performance at an assembly. Scialdone sent a copy of the letter to the SRO with the notation, "Outstanding job. Thanks for all you do for our kids. You are making a difference. Frank Scialdone."

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**Excerpts From a Lakewood Police Department SRO Bulletin, "Calls from the Halls"**

The Lakewood Police Department distributes an occasional bulletin, "Calls from the Halls," to all patrol officers to:

• inform the officers of the arrests SROs have made,
• provide updates about the program, and
• share important information about problem juveniles.

Excerpts from typical bulletins follow (all of which—although deleted in the excerpts below—provide the offending students' names, dates of birth, and home addresses, and sometimes their photographs).

*In December _____ ,[the SRO] made use of his computer internet education by seeking out information on how to build bombs . . . . Some of the information he was seeking included: Making plastic explosives from bleach, how to pick locks . . . . , letter bombs . . . . , napalm, exploding light bulbs among others. _____ has been diagnosed as bi-polar, but he refuses to take his medication. On _____, Agent [the SRO] had a second encounter with _____ [who had] violated his school contract by arguing with a teacher and subsequently punching and kicking lockers . . . . While escorting _____ off of school grounds, ___ was very argumentative and hostile to Agent _____. [The SRO] feels that _____ is the most dangerous and volatile student has had contact with . . . . Please use caution when dealing with _____.*

*Spring time either brings out love or brawls. The kids were back in school after spring break all of 20 minutes when the first fight broke out. There have been numerous fights and assaults ever since. Please don't hesitate to call Agent _____ [the SRO] with information regarding any evening or weekend disturbances involving _____ [name of school] students.*

*Patrol responded to a reported fight in progress. They arrested _____ for 2nd degree assault after he struck the victim in the back several times with a bat.*

**Be alert and aware of:**
*_____ is a registered sex offender. _____ was 'hanging around' the kids at _____ Middle School after school let out. He was wearing a trench coat in 95 degree weather. . . . [T]here is concern he is preying upon the students. He speaks with a South African accent, although he states he was born and raised in Colorado. He is very short and blends in with the kids. If _____ is contacted on or near school grounds, or if he is with a younger teenager or child, please investigate, document and notify his case worker.*

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(7)  ***Create esprit within the unit***. In Maury County, Tennessee, where most SROs have been part of the program since its inception, the department has worked hard to establish camaraderie among the officers by hosting weekly meetings with all the SROs and sending them every year to the state SRO association's annual conference. One of the SROs reported that he attributes the low turnover in his unit to "the fact that the SROs enjoy their work and have gotten to know each other real well, which helps increase job satisfaction."

**THE PROBLEM:** *The position is seen as a dead end job.*

**SOLUTIONS:** *Ensure that the department values the program and the position, and treats it as a stepping stone for career advancement.*

(1)  Several departments make clear that officers and deputies who have been SROs are better candidates for promotion if they continue in the position long enough to demonstrate their capabilities to do it well.

• According to Captain Curtis Main, supervisor of the Boone, North Carolina, program, "The position can be part of one's professional development because it increases your qualifications and aptitudes."

• SROs consider the program in the Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, Police Department to be "a good way to jump start a career" because it includes so many benchmarks for career advancement in the department, such as experience as an instructor and involvement with juveniles.

(2)  Many programs provide resources to the program that demonstrate how much they value its efforts. A sergeant from the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office in North Carolina believes his department's low turnover in part reflects his efforts to accommodate SRO requests for training and equipment (e.g., laptop computers), "which demonstrates that the department is 100 percent behind the SRO program."

**THE PROBLEM:** *Lack of excitement.* As Major Skip Rossi with the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office and a former SRO said, "Being an SRO doesn't provide the same excitement as being on patrol."

**SOLUTIONS:** *Take specific steps to keep the job stimulating.*

(1)  ***Allow SROs to remain members of other units in the department—or encourage them to join one.***

- The SRO cited above who continues as a member of the SWAT team because it keeps him feeling "like I'm a cop" added that, if he had to choose between remaining an SRO and giving up the SWAT team (which primarily entails day—long trainings two Mondays a month-call-outs are rare and usually at night), he would give up being an SRO. Steve Malisos, an SRO in Salem, New Hampshire, is also on the SWAT team because "I like keeping my hand in traditional law enforcement—and the schools love it, knowing that I am highly trained in dealing with a critical incident." Of course, SROs, program supervisors, and school administrators must balance the disadvantage of these officers not being on campus a few extra days of the year (even if a substitute SRO is provided) against getting SWAT skills in the school.

- The Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office allows its SROs during the summer to attend patrol training, serve warrants, serve in the courthouse, or attend training as hostage negotiators or public information officers. One SRO was trying out for the tactical team.

- The Scottsdale, Arizona, Police Department assigns its SROs to work with detectives during the summer to help clear cases and provide an opportunity to hone their interviewing and investigation skills.

(2)    ***Give SROs assignments that involve new and rewarding challenges, meeting interesting people, and learning new skills—even if they entail additional work.***

- The Palm Beach County, Salem, and Scottsdale programs require SROs to follow each case through from initial investigation to court appearance.

- Chief James Kelly in Palm Beach County assigned a supervisor and an officer to work with the school's construction committee to help ensure that architectural plans for new school buildings would be consistent with providing a safe school environment (see the box "Giving SROs Special Assignments").

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**Giving SROs Special Assignments to Keep Them Motivated**

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Chief James Kelly in Palm Beach County assigned Lieutenant Larry Leon, a program supervisor, and Don Thrasher, an SRO, to work with school building architects and the manager of new construction to ensure that the plans provide a safe and secure environment—for example:

• Is there fencing, and is it appropriate?

• Are the security systems adequate, including magnetic card access into the buildings, intrusion alarms, and video cameras?

• Is the planned reception area secure?

Leon also serves on the committee that selects the architects for each new school building and participates in scoring the bidders. While another lieutenant covers for him when he goes to daytime meetings, he does the remaining work at home, often on his own time.

After a captain introduced him to using CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles of securing school campuses, Leon became a CPTED practitioner. He has also completed a construction management course that was offered by a major construction company at no cost to the department.

At times, Leon has changed school architectural designs on the spot. When facility architects balk at his suggestions, he goes to the county's director of buildings and facilities and reports that what he wants done "is a safety issue." The school district supports him because it wants to ensure student safety and to reduce its liability in the event a preventable tragedy occurs.

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(3)   ***Encourage SROs to seek out interesting challenges on their own and support them when they do.***

• Dan Genest, a middle school SRO in Salem, learned how to conduct school safety surveys at an advanced National Association of School Resource Officer (NASRO) training. Based on what he learned, the next summer Genest surveyed every room in his school, documenting safety hazards such as windows that did not lock, rooms that were not clearly marked with a number, and lack of coverings on door windows that were needed if there was a lockdown. He reported his findings to school administrators, who fixed some of the deficiencies, including installing shades on all door windows. He also learned at the training how to run a lockdown at a school. As a result, he identified deficiencies in his school's lockdown procedures. For example, the procedure did not address what to do if there were students in the gym or cafeteria. He brought this information to the attention of the assistant principal, who changed the school's procedures. As a result, Genest not only participated in an interesting endeavor, he also increased his school administrators' appreciation for his work.

- The SROs in the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office perform annual security assessments of their schools. They have designed complete emergency response manuals in collaboration with school officials and other deputies, including diagrams of school buildings and photographs, and developed procedures for various types of emergencies. The SROs regularly practice different types of preparedness drills with students and staff.

- An SRO in the Lenoir Sheriff's Office in North Carolina organized a Youth Crime Watch (YCW) program in the school. By providing student members with radios to use while "on patrol," the officer finds that the members report numerous cases of student misconduct ranging from attempts to skip school to arson in the bathrooms.

(4) ***Send SROs for training and other forms of professional development.***

- Captain Tim Carney, supervisor of the Sarasota County program, took 30 SROs—and their families—to an annual national NASRO conference held in Orlando, Florida. Carney sent six SROs to an SRO conference in Palm Beach County, California.

- Programs in two Florida counties arranged for Youth Crime Watch of America to host a two-day conference on successful Youth Crime Watch programs and sent all their SROs to attend.

**THE PROBLEM:** *Too much teaching.* According to a former SRO with the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office, "Teaching is a big reason for burnout because it's hard to teach kids—they'll eat you up if you don't know what you're doing. Some officers say that, if it weren't for the teaching, they'd love being SROs. And there's a problem with repeating the same lecture over and over again."

**SOLUTIONS:** *Train officers to teach and, when necessary, arrange for them to reduce their teaching load.*

(1) As a former SRO said, "We could reduce the burnout from teaching ***if we trained officers in how to teach before they went on the job***." Perhaps nothing frightens SROs more about their new assignment than getting up in front of a class of 25 mistrustful—even hostile—kids just looking to find flaws in the officer. Without training, many SROs take months, even years, to become effective in the classroom. Others become so discouraged they quit.

(2) ***Allow SROs to transfer to schools that require less teaching.*** The Sarasota County program allows SROs to transfer to other schools when openings become available. If an SRO leaves, the remaining SROs can bid for the opening, which is filled on the basis of seniority. There are usually one or two openings every year or two. If there is an opening at the high school level, there are always SROs who want to transfer, in part because of the reduced teaching load compared with the demands at middle and, especially, elementary schools.

(3) ***Make teaching easier.*** One difficult aspect of teaching is finding or developing curriculum materials and lesson plans. As a result, a supervising sergeant in Maury County started a library of teaching aids that SROs can use to develop their own lesson plans and handouts. The Tucson Police Department program houses teaching materials in its office that SROs can use, and its Procedures Manual distributed to all new SROs provides detailed curriculum outlines for teaching several topics. Sheryl Nosbish, in her tenth year as an SRO in Tucson, gives copies of her lesson plans and materials to each new SRO who shadows her. She also warns new SROs, "Don't overbook for teaching, don't agree to teach 5-7 classes a day."

**THE PROBLEM: *Burnout.*** SROs can get burned out after a few years because the job, if done properly, can involve non-stop work, after-hours work, and intense work. As Major Skip Rossi with the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office said, "An officer who has been an SRO for eight years may want out; you can get tired. It's demanding—you have a lot of bosses." Irrespective of the long work hours, the lack of flexibility (for illness, personal appointments, childcare issues) can also cause burnout.

**SOLUTIONS: *Find ways to lighten the SROs' schedule.***

(1) ***Support some flexibility in the SROs' schedules.*** While recognizing the wishes of the schools (and often the SROs' own desires) to have the officer always present in the schools, some programs have arranged for SROs to take breaks from their non-stop schedules.

• The Maury County Sheriff's Department assigns each SRO a back-up SRO to help cover after-hour events and allow time off when there is a pressing daytime personal commitment.

• The Boone Police Department trained a patrol officer in the department as an SRO to serve as a back-up to the single SRO in the department.

• If an SRO needs a day off for personal reasons (e.g., his wife had a baby, her husband's father died), Captain Tim Carney in Sarasota County grants it. "If SROs need to run home to take care of a sick child, or a training ends an hour before their regular end of day, I let them go home early."

• The Tucson program allows SROs to take a day off any time during the month in which their birthdays fall. If they do not take a day off, they receive 10 hours' extra pay for that pay period.

• Departments can include limits in the contract or MOU with the schools on how many extracurricular activities the SROs will be required to attend—for example, mandating attendance only for popular events like home football games where security is of concern or limiting the number of events to one every other week.

(2)    As needed, *give SROs extended periods of time off if they are feeling too stressed out*.

• One SRO's supervisor who suspected the officer was overworked by the inflection of his voice asked him, "Are you burned out?" The SRO said he was stressed out because of too much work and the time of year (spring time) "when kids become a little wild." As a result, the supervisor reduced the SRO's responsibilities with the Explorers Program.

• The supervisor of the Boone Police Department, noticing that the SROs were burned out by the end of the school year, asked the chief to agree to allow them to build compensatory time during the school year so they could take July and half of August off. The chief agreed, as long as officers came to the department periodically to check their messages.

• The Jefferson City, Missouri, program attempts to train all SROs as Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) officers so it can rotate them in case they burn out. This dual qualification has helped the department to prevent officer burnout, one officer requested to leave D.A.R.E. for SRO duty. (The dual certification also makes it possible to have a trained substitute to step in if an SRO or D.A.R.E. officer gets sick.)

(3) ***Try to give SROs preferred summer assignments so (like regular teachers) they have a chance to catch their breath and be ready for the next school year.***

- Enable SROs to **work the same daytime, weekday hours during the summer** rather than put them back on swing or night shifts, or, worse, rotating shifts. One of the steps the Lakewood Police Department has taken to promote retention is to establish a summer youth academy and other youth—related activities run by the SROs so they can maintain the same schedule they work during the school year.

- ***Work with the department to ensure summer assignments are acceptable to the SROs.*** In many cases, SROs are officers who have been members of the agency for many years and therefore get frustrated when their summer assignment is inconsistent with their tenure. For example, assigning SROs in Virginia Beach to beachfront duty in the summer—a disliked posting—was causing some SROs to quit. As a result, the program supervisor worked with patrol commanders to get SROs, who typically have more seniority than other patrol officers, to get the SROs the shift and assignments they prefer.

(4) ***Encourage SROs to lighten their work load on their own.***

- Sheryl Nosbish in Tucson tells new SROs who shadow her, "Lots of people make demands on your time, so learn how to say 'no.' " She advises each new SRO to "educate administrators and teachers to what they can do and not dump everything on the SRO—for example, little fights. You don't have to handle every broken law or school rule."

## Dealing With Mandatory Turnover

In some agencies, *department policies require SROs to leave the schools prematurely*.

>*Promotions.* SROs who get promoted to sergeant typically have to return to patrol for a specified period of time. According to Daniel Parrett, a high school principal in Sarasota County, "SROs often last no more than four years in part because they have to go back to the road after getting promoted. That's my only complaint with the program—why make SROs go back on the road after a promotion?" That happened to a few of his SROs who wanted to remain in the position. "One SRO was almost crying because he had to leave."

>*Mandatory rotation.* Many departments require officers in specialty positions to rotate out of the assignment after a fixed number of years. In some cases, the collective bargaining agreement requires rotation for all specialty assignments. The box "Should SROs Be Rotated Out of the Position?" presents some of the advantages and disadvantages of mandatory rotation.

Several departments have reduced turnover due to promotions and mandatory rotation by changing the policy or allowing exceptions.

• Speaking about a newly promoted SRO, Sergeant Tim Enos, a supervisor with the Sarasota County program, said, "It didn't make sense to put a 10-year SRO back on patrol as a sergeant for two years and then let him go back to being an SRO." As a result, the department relaxed the policy so that SROs can apply for promotions and remain in the program.

• In 2003, Richard Casler, chief of the Schaumburg Police Department, changed his four-year mandatory rotation policy (see the box) to five and even six years, in part because the schools objected to losing good SROs. (In addition, the program would have lost several experienced SROs all at the same time, leaving too many schools simultaneously with novice SROs, all of whom the program supervisor would have had to monitor and support at the same time.) The department also agreed to allow SROs who serve five years to spend one year in another position and then return to the schools if there is an opening.

• Program supervisors in Tucson decided to allow current SROs to put their names on a secondary list if they wish to rejoin the program for another five years, although new applicants who meet the qualifications are placed on a primary eligibility list and have first choice. As a result, when Sheryl Nosbish's time as an SRO was coming to an end, she was able to sign up for another tour of duty because there were no applicants on the primary list at the time.

• Robert Yant, chief of the Marshall Police Department, rescinded his two-year rotation requirement "because the SRO turned out to be such a good fit with the schools."

| Should SROs Be Rotated Out of the Position? |
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While the collective bargaining agreement in some programs requires the department to rotate SROs, in many law enforcement agencies it is the chief's or sheriff's choice to rotate them. A sheriff who sponsors a program insists on rotating SROs every three years. There is mandatory rotation every five years in another department because the chief wants well-rounded officers. An SRO from the Boone Police Department agreed with his agency's policy of rotating officers every four or five years arguing that it is "good to bring in new blood because SROs can fall into a routine, so it is important to get someone who brings renewed enthusiasm to the position."

Richard Casler, the Schaumburg police chief, offered three reasons he rotates SROs out of the position:

• When officers who have rotated through various assignments are promoted, their experience with various aspects of police work makes them better supervisors.

• Having periodic SRO openings enables him to reward patrol officers with a desirable posting.

• SROs can "recycle their experience by being a great mentor for new officers" on how to work with youth.

By contrast, most SROs, and most school administrators, see important benefits to allowing the officers to remain in the schools indefinitely as long as they are performing well.

• A principal in Tucson said, "The whole benefit is the SRO's knowing the kids. For example, the SRO will know when a student who says something inappropriate is just venting or is a danger. The SRO knows when it is not appropriate to arrest a student because of the pupil's past history and should write instead a report that justifies a more lenient response to the incident than would be warranted if another student had committed the same offense."

• Program supervisors in the Olympia, Washington, Police Department, report that, unlike other specialty positions (e.g., traffic), a successful SRO depends on relationships [with school administrators and teachers] that take time to build.

This chapter provides no case studies because no one program included in the study implemented enough activities designed to minimize turnover to warrant a separate discussion. However, ***the most effective approach to reducing turnover is precisely to implement a number of steps that, taken together, are much more likely to encourage qualified SROs to remain in the position than any one retention strategy***.

SROs point out that much of what they need to know can only be learned on the job—"trial by fire," "trial and error," "sink or swim," and "by the seat of your pants" are how many of them describe how they learned to be good SROs. As SRO Steve Malisos in Salem, New Hampshire, said, "You fall back on your training 40 percent of the time, but 60 percent you have to rely on trial and error." However, while certain things can be learned or honed only on the job, SROs in the study report that *training before new SROs go into the schools is essential*.

## Importance of Training

Many SROs, SRO supervisors, and school administrators in the study report that untrained SROs generally serve their schools poorly for several months and even years. As one former SRO and current program supervisor said, "They [the department] put SROs in the schools the first year with no formal training, so the first year was not productive."

A number of SROs report *they either did things poorly or avoided doing them at all until they had been trained*. A high school assistant principal recalled that "the two SROs I had worked with in the high school did their job but did not do enough with the kids because they were fearful of making an error and getting into legal trouble." Several SROs regretted that only after receiving training in classroom management did they really begin to teach.

*SROs have good reason to be nervous going into schools without training because they can make serious mistakes* related to their relationships with students, school administrators, and parents that at best cause short-term embarrassment and at worst jeopardize the entire program in the school. Glenn Brunet, an SRO in Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, reported:

> I learned what to do by trial and error, playing it by ear—for example, bringing parents in with their children to talk with me. When students began to challenge my authority to tell them to tuck in their shirts ("You can't make me do that"), to enforce my authority I filled out and turned in a discipline slip form not knowing whether the school administrators would honor it. But the student was suspended. But I could have made serious errors without the training. I could have been overzealous or apathetic, doing too much or not enough. Plus, you need training to cover you in court [if you are sued], training *is* policy in court.

Despite its importance, few programs in the study train SROs adequately before they go on the job—some provide absolutely no training while others do not make it available until SROs have been on the job for as long as a year or more. In addition to the expense, programs often fail to provide timely training because courses are often not available locally during the period between the selection of the new SROs and their first day in the schools. However, as discussed below, *a number of programs have solved the problem of poor timing*.

## Topics Pre-Service Training Needs to Address

Program supervisors, SROs, and school administrators generally agree that pre-service training should focus on helping SROs to:

(1)　　teach;
(2)　　mentor and counsel;
(3)　　work collaboratively with school administrators;
(4)　　manage their time; and
(5)　　apply juvenile laws and case law.

In their curriculum materials, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (the COPS Office) and many private training organizations have developed detailed syllabuses addressing the training needs of new SROs (see the box "A Number of Organizations Provide Training for SROs"). As a result, the discussion below does not provide course training outlines. Instead, the discussion provides the rationale for providing training in each topic area. The text then addresses the chapter's principal focus—***how to go about arranging the training***.

### How to Teach

Along with law enforcement and mentoring, teaching is one of the three components of the accepted model for School Resource Officers. For some SROs and school administrators, ***teaching is the key SRO role***: Ward Nelson, a middle school principal and program coordinator in Schaumburg, Illinois, says that "SROs need to know how to teach kids—being a good teacher is the hallmark of a good SRO."

However, unless they have taught school, taught the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) or Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T) curriculums, or been an instructor at the academy, ***SROs cannot walk into a classroom of kids and be an effective instructor***. As Glenn Brunet in Terrebonne Parish said, "Teaching a group of teenagers can be intimidating—they're just waiting for you to make a mistake and laugh at you. The first time a teacher asked me to run a class, I panicked—'I'm not a teacher.' [Without any training], it took me more than two years to teach well."

The benefits of teacher training can be immediate and significant: an SRO with the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office explained that he wanted to teach law-related topics more regularly in the middle school during his second year because he had learned a great deal about the potential for classroom teaching at a National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) training he had just attended. He spoke about his plans with the middle school principal, who approved.
In addition to needing training in classroom management, ***SROs also need to learn how to develop lesson plans***. SRO Dan Genest in Salem had attended an

instructor development class at the police academy long before he became an SRO. As part of the course, he had had to put together lesson plans, which "helped me tremendously to develop them for teaching here [at the middle school]." Sergeant Richard Davies, a former SRO for eight years and now program supervisor in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, said:

> You can't go into class and look stupid, so you need to develop basic lesson plans to show to the principal so you can cover yourself and so you won't fumble in class. SROs also need to be able to document what they say in class in case a student claims the officers said something inappropriate. A lot of cops shoot from the hip in the classroom; make them develop lesson plans during training and then present them.

This is exactly what Davies did. After he became a certified NASRO instructor, he offered a 40-hour course during the summer of 2001 for about a dozen prospective SROs in the area, including a half dozen from his own police department, that included training the participants to develop lesson plans.

**How to Mentor and Counsel**

Mentoring or counseling is also one of the three universally accepted SRO roles.

• According to Glenn Brunet, "Counseling is the essence of what an SRO does in the schools. Kids come for help, and you can't turn them away. The biggest thing is that kids want someone they can talk to other than counselors, who are busy with scheduling; kids need someone who is accessible on a casual basis."

• According to Sergeant Rochelle Thompson, the program supervisor with the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office, "An essential training focus is preparing SROs to counsel students—how to do it, how deeply to get involved, and when to go elsewhere for help. They need to develop relationships with kids, but some students use the SROs to get out of class or as a crutch, or develop "crushes" on SROs, so SROs need training in how to avoid getting sucked into problems they can't handle and get help [for the students] instead."

However, as with teaching, few people are "natural born" mentors—***they need guidance in how to engage in mentoring kids***. Furthermore, without training, few officers realize in advance the central role mentoring plays in being an SRO until later. As a result, they are poorly prepared for the onslaught of kids who want help, the time needed to address their problems, and effective methods of meeting their needs.

One SRO reported that "It was specialized training I received at a COPS Office—sponsored training that was a key to my development of the current version of officers in schools that differentiates it from the previous work of D.A.R.E. or G.R.E.A.T. in terms of mentoring and counseling." In Marshall, Minnesota, NASRO training helped Jim Marshall, the SRO, to anticipate what to expect by way of kids coming to him with problems—"The counseling component hit me hard because of the number of kids who wanted to talk, and I needed to be ready for that."

**How to Work Collaboratively With School Administrators**

"The biggest area in which SROs need training," according to SRO Steve Malisos in Salem, "is working with administrators." As Detective John Jameson, the first SRO in Schaumburg, said:

> You need to train SROs before they go on the job because they're dealing with two bosses—the police department and the school. They [school administrators] do things totally differently, so you need to understand the boundaries for what you can do in the schools. For example, the law says one thing but the school says no—that's too harsh. A kid is sexually assaulted, and the counselor wants to keep it confidential. How does an SRO handle this? Don't immediately go and charge and arrest the offender; participate as a team with school personnel. You need to know how to work with school administrators.

Kiel Higgins, an SRO with the Albuquerque, New Mexico, Police Department, reported that the basic NASRO training course provided him for the first time with a clear understanding of how SROs and administrators were meant to work together.

**How to Manage Time**

As noted in chapter 3, "Screening SROs," SROs typically have multiple—and often simultaneous—demands placed on their time from students, administrators, teachers, parents, police supervisors, and even patrol officers (who sometime want to transfer their juvenile cases to the SRO). As a result, they need training in how to "multi-task"—but also in how to establish priorities for what they will do first and what they will leave until later or even ignore.

## How to Apply Juvenile Law and Case Law

***There are complex issues associated with enforcing the law in a school that many SROs are not initially ready to handle***, including legislation and case law related to:

• search and seizure involving minors in schools (e.g., responding to a school administrator's request to conduct a search);

• interrogating minor students (e.g., without their parents present);

• confidentiality related to what students tell SROs (e.g., domestic violence in the home); and

• privacy issues related to student school and police records.

Few officers before becoming SROs—even if they have worked as juvenile detectives—have acquired all this information. SRO Jim Marshall admitted that "I was nervous dealing with juveniles and schools—things are done differently in schools [than on the road]. As a patrol officer, 98 percent of your cases are adults, so you don't get to know much about juvenile law or the juvenile court system." This is why Ward Nelson, a middle school principal and program coordinator in Schaumburg, Illinois, stressed that training in juvenile law and dealing the juveniles is "incredibly important."

SROs also need to be familiar with statutes related to juvenile crime, from status offenses to curfew violations. As a middle school assistant principal in Tucson, Arizona, said, SROs need to know the laws about juvenile behavior "because they will be a consultant to students and staff on legal issues."

### Other Topics

A number of SROs, SRO supervisors, and school administrators feel that SROs should be trained in five other areas before taking on the position (see the box, "Five Other Topics Pre-Service Training Should Address").

## Five Other Topics Pre-Service Training Should Address

A number of SROs, program supervisors, and school administrators recommend that new SROs be trained in five other areas before taking on the position.

**Child Development and Psychology**
Sergeant Steve Belda, a program supervisor with the Tucson Police Department, said that SROs need "an understanding of kids' needs and the psychological and physiological changes kids are going through."

**Working With Kids in Schools**
Training can help SROs to "unlearn" some of the techniques they became accustomed to using on patrol duty that are not appropriate in dealing with students—for example, resorting too quickly to using handcuffs or treating misconduct as part of a person's criminal make-up when in a student the behavior may be an example of youthful ebullience, indiscretion, immaturity, or risk taking.

Training can also help SROs anticipate how to handle the close student proximity and physical contact the officers are faced with in the typical school. James Wilkerson, an SRO in Palm Beach County, explained that "police officers are used to having 'defensible space' around them, but kids crowd around the SROs, so the officers need to lose their nervousness over that and get used to being around large groups of kids."

In addition, SROs need to be on the alert for students who may develop "crushes" on them and be able to deflect such attention, including attempts at hugging that students may try to engage in. For example, one sheriff's deputy tries to "train" her kids to do a "side" hug to avoid suggestive physical contact. SROs also need tips on how to make sure that they do not engage in any inappropriate behavior that impressionable youngsters may misconstrue.

**Handling Especially Difficult Students**
SROs encounter unusually difficult students infrequently but, when they do, without training the situation may become serious. Dan Genest, an SRO in Salem, recounted how "a teacher could not get a kid who was acting up to leave her class, so she called on me. I saw the kid was mentally disturbed and I wondered, 'How come no one told me how to deal with mentally ill kids?' I'd had no training to deal with this situation."

**Learning School Policies and Procedures**
Former Salem superintendent of schools, Henry LaBranche, said, "It would be helpful for new SROs to spend time during the summer before starting in the schools to learn their schools' policies and procedures . . . . that is, learn how things are done in the school and what's been done in the past." SROs agree: Kiel Higgins in Albuquerque said, "You need to learn the school's policies and guidelines—what its discipline policies are, especially with special education kids."

**Preparing Safe School Plans**
School administrators want and need expert help in making sure that an effective crisis prevention and management system is in place in their schools and that their campuses are as environmentally secure as possible. For example, a middle school principal in Tucson said he wants an SRO who "is able to assess deficiencies in lockdown procedures during dry runs, such as identifying locks that need to be fixed." Other training for SROs can focus on student and terrorist threat assessments. Agencies can also train SROs in what is known as CPTED—Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design—a standardized approach to identifying ways of altering aspects of the physical environment that represent safety threats.

Law enforcement agencies can consider opening up these and other school safety and security trainings to all officers or deputies in the agency so that they, too, can benefit from the information as well as increase their understanding of the SROs' responsibilities.

Finally, programs may wish to consider providing training in other areas addressed in COPS in School trainings, including:

• community policing in the schools (e.g., the SRO as a community liaison and problem solver),
• youth culture and diversity (e.g., the challenge of school bullying), and
• promoting mental health in schools, including intervening with at-risk students (e.g., detecting early signs of trouble).

## Approaches to Pre-Service Training

The programs in the study use as many as four different approaches—often in combination—to providing pre-service training:

(1) formal classroom training;
(2) shadowing experienced SROs;
(3) formal field training; and
(4) written materials and guidelines.

**Provide Formal Classroom Training**

Many programs send their SROs to the 40-hour basic SRO training course offered by national organizations such as NASRO and Corbin & Associates, or to the 3-day COPS Office trainings (required of all COPS in Schools grantees). However, these organizations and agencies may not offer training during the interval between when officers have been selected as SROs and when they go into the schools—typically, during the summer—or may not offer the training within an acceptable driving distance of the law enforcement agency. Nevertheless, some programs have solved these timing and travel barriers.

*Delay Sending New SROs Into the Schools*

Robert Yant, chief of the Marshall Police Department, delayed posting Jim Marshall, the new SRO, in the schools until the fall after he could arrange for the officer to attend a NASRO training. However, some SROs feel there are advantages to providing training shortly after new SROs have been on the job because it allows officers to bring some experience, concerns, and questions to the training.

• Jim Marshall spent the last two weeks of the school year in the schools before he was sent for training with NASRO that summer. "I found this short-term immersion useful because it helped focus my attention on what I needed to get out of the training."

• According to an SRO with the Maury County, Tennessee, Sheriff's Department, "attending basic training after school started was more beneficial [than attending before he began work in the school], because it would not have made sense to me if I had not been working in the school for a little while."

*Seek Timely Training From Other Professional Organizations*
Some programs are able to **find other organizations that offer courses at the time the program needs it**. For example, for pre-service training, before new SROs go into the schools and, for in-service training, during the summer (see the box "A Number of Organizations Provide Training for SROs").

## A Number of Organizations Provide Training for SROs

NASRO and Corbin & Associates, two national organizations that are devoted exclusively to training and professional development of SROs, may be contacted at www.nasro.org and www.copsite.com/corbin/main.html, respectively.

Other organizations also provide SRO training. The list below represents a few of these other sources of training based on an incomplete Internet search.*

- **Other national training organizations**
  — The Youth for Justice National Coordinated Law-Related Education Program, supported by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), hosts seminars for SROs. Contact: www.youthforjustice.org.
  — RJK & Associates, Inc., provides teaching, training, and consultation in the area of SRO performance and evaluation, including basic and advanced SRO training. Contact: www.rjkassoc.com.

- **State agencies**
  — The North Carolina Justice Academy, a division of the North Carolina Department of Justice, provides a 40-hour course for new SROs throughout the State. Contact: www.jus.state.nc.us/NCJA.
  — The Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy has provided basic SRO training. Contact: www.WLEAcademy.com.
  — The Florida Crime Prevention Training Institute, through the State Attorney General's Office, provides public education and training programs for SROs. Contact: www.nal.usda.gov/pavnet/cj/cjflorid.htm
  — Some state Commissions on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POSTs), such as those in California and Idaho, provide training, sometimes using training vendors such as NASRO and Corbin & Associates. The New Hampshire Police Standards and Training Council uses Primex, a public entity risk pool organized and operating as a trust on behalf of over 500 member governmental entities. Contact: www.nhprimex.com/tc/school_resources_officer_training.htm.

- **Post-secondary schools**
  — Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton, Wisconsin, with COPS Office funding and in conjunction with OJJPD, provides training in its School Resource Officer Leadership Program. Contact: www.foxvalley.tec.wi.us.
  — The Division of Public Safety at Walters State University, a community college in Morristown, Tennessee, provides basic and intermediate SRO training. Contact: www.ws.edu.
  — At least two Regional Community Policing Institutes, one housed at Michigan State University, and one a partnership between the University of Illinois, Illinois State Police, and Illinois Violence Prevention Authority and Center, both supported by the COPS Office, provide 5-day schools for SROs. Contact: www.cj.msu.edu/~outreach/rcpi/train.html and www.online.uillinois.edu/oakley/presentations/RICP_Links.html.

- ***State SRO associations.*** Some State associations of School Resource Officers provide SRO training, such as those in Colorado (CASRO), Florida (FASRO), Kansas (KASRO), Washington (WASRO), and Alberta, Canada.

*\* The inclusion of these organizations here does not imply anything about the quality of their training programs, which have not been evaluated for this report. In addition, the list is not the result of an exhaustive search for organizations that provide SRO training but rather an incomplete search designed to illustrate the variety of organizations that provide training that may be timely, inexpensive, and near-by.*

*Develop In-House Training Expertise*

A few departments have solved the timing problem (and saved in travel expenses and registration fees) by **arranging for one of their own SROs to become certified as an SRO trainer**.

- In Pine Bluff, Sergeant Richard Davies took the initiative to take a course offered by Corbin & Associates to become a certified SRO trainer. He then offered a 40-hour course himself during the summer of 2001 for about a dozen officers in the area, including a half dozen from his own police department, who volunteered to attend because they were considering applying at some point to become SROs.

- In West Orange, New Jersey, John Morella, having completed basic, advanced, law review, and management courses given by NASRO, provides support and direction to newer SROs and coordinates regional NASRO classes for them. As a result, new SROs gain some familiarity with NASRO guidelines, methods, and processes for balancing the law enforcement role with the counseling and teaching functions before they have spent much time in the schools.

- The Scottsdale, Arizona, Police Department's program has two certified NASRO instructors in house, which allows it to train new SROs at almost any time.

*Train SROs in How to Teach*

The Scottsdale Police Department in Arizona and the Virginia Beach Police Department in Virginia send their SROs to the state police academy to become certified instructors. The Tucson Police Department's SRO Procedures Manual requires new SROs who have not already been to general instructors school to arrange with the training academy to attend the next available course.

The West Orange and Albuquerque Police Departments arrange for new middle school SROs to receive G.R.E.A.T. training before going into the schools. According to principal and program coordinator Ward Nelson in Schaumburg, "G.R.E.A.T. training helps improve the cops' ability to teach, develop lesson plans, and manage kids."

*Provide In-House Orientation*

Some programs provide **their own orientation to the program** as a supplement to formal outside training or as a substitute when a basic SRO course is not available before officers or deputies go into the schools. For example, the Delaware State Police provides a two-day orientation for all SROs before they start work in the schools that covers:

- school offense reporting requirements;
- investigations on school premises;
- arrest procedures with juveniles;
- adult versus juvenile enforcement, warrants, and summons procedures;
- crises management;
- counseling;
- establishing partnerships with schools; and
- information from the Delaware Departments of Education and Social Service.

**Arrange for New SROs to Shadow Experienced SROs**

Several programs make provision for new SROs to **"shadow" one or more experienced SROs** before going on the job. Some programs require shadowing as a supplement to classroom learning. However, "If basic training can't be provided before starting in the school," an SRO in Maury County, Tennessee, points out, "having the opportunity to work with existing SROs in a field training officer situation is beneficial."

Typically, programs require a new SRO to follow an experienced SRO around one or more schools for one or two weeks to "learn the ropes" by seeing how skilled SROs perform the job. SROs in the study report that this approach makes it possible for new SROs to **gain indispensable real-world, on-the-job knowledge of the position that formal training typically cannot provide**. In addition, when a new SRO shadows Sheryl Nosbish in Tucson, Arizona, she makes sure to tell the officer who the important people are to get to know, including not just school administrators but also civilian hall monitors, janitorial staff, special education teachers, the president of the local PTA, and the beat officers who work the precinct in which the school is located.

Because his program was brand new, Robert Yant, the Marshall chief of police, sent Jim Marshall, his first SRO, to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to shadow that jurisdiction's experienced SRO. According to Marshall, "The experience was invaluable and helped me create a successful program in my city" (see the case study at the end of the chapter).

| Arrange for New SROs to Observe More Than One Experienced SRO |
|---|

There are advantages to having new SROs observe more than one experienced SRO on the job.

• New SROs can observe how SROs with different talents perform the job.

• New SROs can learn how school climate, student bodies, school administrator expectations and leadership styles, and other factors that can vary widely from school to school can influence how experienced SROs approach the position regardless of an SRO's talents. Three new SROs in Oklahoma County spent one week at each of three different campuses shadowing different SROs to see how things were done differently based on each school's needs and culture. For example, there was a great deal of parent involvement in one school, while another school had significant gang activity.

• The Sarasota County (see the case study) and Maury County programs arrange for new SROs to observe experienced SROs in schools with different grade levels to learn how to adjust their behavior to deal with students at different age levels.

After new SROs have shadowed him, Glenn Brunet in Terrebonne Parish shadows *them* for two days at *their* schools to make sure they are performing appropriately. Similarly, the Delaware State Police and Jefferson City programs assign an experienced SRO to spend portions of several days over a 2-4 week period at each SRO's school to show the officer what to do and answer questions.

**Consider Providing Formal Field Training**
Unlike the informal shadowing exercises described above, three of the programs in the study have *formal field training officer (FTO) programs that are documented in writing and include official evaluations of the field training's effectiveness*.

• The Boone Police Department in North Carolina has a structured 12-week FTO program that is similar to traditional law enforcement agency FTO programs for new recruits fresh out of the academy. The FTO, who is the departing SRO or another experienced SRO, and the new SRO document their activities through daily written observation reports, followed by meetings every other week involving the FTO, patrol supervisor, and SRO trainee.

• The Sarasota County program's FTO coordinator assigns each new SRO to shadow two or three SROs, who are designated as Field Training Officers, to get different perspectives on performing the job. The FTOs make sure the new SRO is familiar with legislation and case law related to police officers and students. At least one FTO observes and critiques the new SRO teach a class during the field training period or as soon as possible thereafter. Before the end of the field

training period, the FTO coordinator has a final review meeting with the FTOs to discuss the new SRO's progress. If satisfactory, the coordinator recommends to the captain in charge of the program that the officer begin "solo" duties (see appendix A).

The Palm Beach County School District Police Department's comprehensive FTO program is documented in the case study at the end of the chapter.

Whether a program has a formal FTO program or informal shadowing arrangement, supervisors need to pick carefully the experienced SROs who will supervise the training. If the established SROs whom the new SROs shadow are not doing their jobs properly or give poor guidance, the experience will at best be inadequate and at worst be harmful. Furthermore, it is important to remember that ***shadowing is an essential supplement, not a substitute, for formal pre-service training***.

**Distribute Written Program Guidelines**

The Tucson program gives all new SROs a 37-page SRO Procedures Manual; SROs must sign and submit to their supervisor a sheet documenting that they have read and are familiar with the procedures. The manual addresses a wide range of SRO roles and responsibilities, such as:

• dress code (SROs may choose not to be in uniform except for the first and last two weeks of the school year);
• hours (based on each school's needs);
• the G.R.E.A.T. program (SROs, once trained, are responsible for teaching the course);
• pertinent statutes;
• guidelines for getting started as an SRO; and
• curriculum outlines for teaching.

**Promote Peer Learning**

Many programs encourage new SROs to continue to contact experienced SROs to answer questions during their first several months on the job. Many new SROs do so on their own initiative. Detective John Jameson, a former SRO in Schaumburg, used to get a call a week from other SROs.

> A relatively new SRO called me for advice about how to handle a student who reported that another student had a pocket knife in school. The new SRO had already searched the student and found the knife—and cigarettes. The assistant principal wanted the student arrested for weapons possession, but the SRO had pointed out that it was not illegal in Illinois to have a pocket knife. The SRO was unsure whether he could charge the student with some other offense. Jameson said to ticket the student for possession of cigarettes and charge him with disorderly conduct on the grounds that, because other students knew of the knife, the student's carrying it in school had created a disruption.

Programs can promote peer learning in two other ways. One way is by holding monthly or quarterly meetings of all SROs, which provides officers with an opportunity to talk informally about how they are addressing common problems. Sending SROs to training programs can achieve the same result: after attending basic NASRO training, Kiel Higgins in Albuquerque reported that "meeting and talking with officers from other SRO programs outside of class about how to handle problems was as important as the curriculum itself."

Generally, *the more training a program can provide SROs before they step foot in the schools (or shortly thereafter), the better*. As described in the case study at the end of this chapter, the Palm Beach County School District Police Department's training for new SROs is especially multifaceted and thorough. While few other departments may be able to implement all of this department's training components, they can consider adopting selected elements.

## In-Service Training

Although programs should address the topic areas identified above in pre-service training, if they have not done so it is never too late to address them as part of in-service training. In addition, even if SROs were trained in the essential topics before they went into the schools, ***programs should periodically provide refresher in-service classes*** since SROs (like everyone else) may forget some of what they learned (e.g., investigation techniques, juvenile procedural law) or there may be new developments to share with them (e.g., case law, drug trends). In-service training also offers yet another opportunity for SROs to share advice on how they have mastered problems.

SRO programs can offer at least three types of in-service training:

• regular in-house staff meetings at which experts give presentations;
• semi-annual and annual training updates provided by the agency; and
• periodic conferences and courses provided by outside organizations or associations.

### Hold Regular Meetings

Each of the three supervising sergeants in the Tucson program conducts periodic trainings for the 6-8 SROs under his supervision, typically to explain a new technology, vendor, or new or complex law or court ruling. For example, in one meeting a superior court judge talked about when State statute makes a disruption a felony as opposed to a misdemeanor. Sarasota County Sheriff's Office personnel have provided in-service training for SROs addressing drug recognition, juvenile case law updates, the local teen court, and programs in the community for driving while impaired (DUI) offenders. An active shooter/rapid response training used scenarios related to schools, such as dealing with armed intruders on campus. At its regular SRO staff meetings, the Virginia Beach, Virginia, Police Department's program has hosted:

• school personnel to talk about special needs populations;
• CrimeSolvers to talk about setting up tip lines in the schools;
• the department's gang unit to discuss trends among local gangs; and
• representatives from the health community to talk about drug awareness.

**Provide Formal In-House Training**

Some programs provide annual or semi-annual training for SROs offered in-house either by department personnel, outside experts, or both.

• The Delaware State Police offers 16 hours of in-service training for SROs each summer that addresses topics such as conflict resolution, physical security assessments, establishing crises plans, drug awareness education, early warning signs of drug abuse, and de-escalating confrontations with kids.

• Program supervisors in Chula Vista, California, redistribute updates of SRO roles and responsibilities every six months at a 6:30 a.m. unit meeting as a means of reinforcing what the officers are supposed to be doing and updating them on any new procedures or changes in procedures. For example, some high school principals were summoning SROs to deal with truant students who were on campus—but, if the youth are in school, they are not an SRO responsibility. As a result, the program supervisors incorporated a policy covering this situation in the written SRO roles and responsibilities and reviewed the policy at the next semi-annual meeting.

• The Palm Beach County School District Police Department provides extensive in-service training each summer (see the case study at the end of the chapter).

**Send SROs to Conferences and Courses**

A number of programs arrange for SROs to attend advanced SRO training offered by independent training organizations. The Maury County program sends all its SROs every summer to the Tennessee School Resource Officers Association week-long conference. Topics have included school safety, school violence, gangs, interviewing skills, natural disasters and terrorism planning, legal issues, bullying, child abuse, and basic drug identification. In 2004, Albuquerque SROs attended a 40-hour crisis intervention training geared toward adolescents, with actors from a local theatre group role playing scenarios with the SROs. The Oklahoma County program offers its SROs an especially wide range of training (see the box "The Oklahoma County Program Provides Multiple Training Opportunities").

> ### The Oklahoma County Program Provides Multiple Training Opportunities
>
> A superintendent of schools in Oklahoma County requests that the SROs in her district attend annual conferences, such as the Governor's safe schools summit, at which they receive updated information and have opportunities to network with other SROs. Both SROs attended in 2002. The program supervisor has also arranged for SROs to attend a variety of other trainings, including:
>
> • a week long Defy Camp run by the State Attorney General's office every summer where participants act as advisors to troubled kids to learn ways of breaking down barriers between themselves and young people and to learn how to mentor them
>
> • the annual Oklahoma Gang Investigators Association Conference
>
> • training by the sheriff's office's tactical team on conducting building searches and using other tactical techniques
>
> • a one-day field sobriety testing class for use in the schools
>
> • a 40-hour crisis intervention training course
>
> • an 8-hour Basic Emergency Public Information Officer training (so that SROs know how to handle the media if there is an emergency at the school)
>
> • an all-day domestic violence seminar
>
> • an all-day bullying class
>
> • a child abuse and neglect seminar
>
> • drug seminars on club drugs and other illicit drugs used by juveniles so the SROs can use the information as part of in-service training for teachers

Program supervisors in several states, including Alabama, California, Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas, periodically offer statewide and even regional one-day school safety and security conferences, attended principally by SROs, school security staff, and school administrators that address regional as well as national trends in school safety and security issues—for example, gang prevalence and threat assessments. Programs in states without regional conferences can arrange to offer them at low cost by using local trainers, obtaining donated food, asking schools to contribute in-kind duplicating services, and charging at modest $10 participation fee. For example, a school district police department in Maryland set up a regional school safety conference for surrounding States that attracted 200 participants the first year and 400 the second year—about half of them SROs.

Agencies with COPS in Schools grants from the COPS Office are required to send grant-funded officers (and one school administrator per grant) to COPS in School trainings. As a result, all 64 grant-funded SROs in the Palm Beach County School District Police Department have benefited from the three-day trainings at no cost to the department.

## Consider Timing and Costs

Because school administrators do not like to "lose" their SROs for even a single day, **several programs are careful to provide in-service training only when schools are not in session**. In the past, one program pulled its SROs out of their schools two or three times a month for training. After the principals objected, the police department agreed to remove the officers only once a month for just one or two days and never to pull out both SROs at each high school on the same day. The Sarasota County program holds in-service training on the six days every year when teachers have professional days and students do not come to school.

Many police and sheriff's departments pay SRO training registration fees out of their training budgets. Some school districts pay for part or all of the training costs. A superintendent of a Stark County School District pays for his SRO to attend the annual NASRO conference, one year contributing $1,200 for registration and travel expenses.

Programs have found creative ways to eliminate or reduce training costs.

- Free courses are often available. Jim Marshall has attended courses on children with special needs offered for free by the Minnesota Department of Education. School administrators in Fontana, California, permit SROs to sit in on the training the school district provides for faculty and administrators when the subject matter is pertinent to the officers.

- The Lenoir County program in North Carolina often sends only one of its three SROs to in-service training conferences but requires the officer to bring back materials to use in training the other two SROs.

- After reviewing its schedule of trainings and learning that none were going to be held in the near future in Tennessee, Captain Nathan Johns in Maury County hosted a NASRO training in nearby Columbia, which saved the program travel and per diem expenses as well as entitling it to one free registration (worth $425) for every 10 SROs who registered.

## Include School Administrators in the Training

Because of the importance of getting along with school administrators, the COPS Office requires agencies awarded a COPS in Schools grant to send at least one school administrator per grant from a partnering school district along with the SROs supported by the grant to one of its three-day training conferences. Several program coordinators and school administrators agree with the COPS Office that **it is extremely valuable to train principals and assistant principals along with SROs as a team**.

When the SRO program first began in Schaumburg, some faculty and school board members were concerned that "uneducated" SROs would be running down the corridors "kicking butt." In part to correct this misperception, the school district paid for—and the school board required—that all school administrators attend a 40-hour NASRO basic SRO training course. According to a school administrator who attended, "Since these trainings are attended primarily by SROs, the administrators had a tremendous opportunity to hear about the program from the officers' perspectives and to gain information on a number of strategies from different jurisdictions for solving program-related problems."

Even the program supervisor in a site in which the SROs engage predominantly in law enforcement activities recommended joint SRO training with school administrators, because "the biggest thing about being an SRO is not the criminal side but being able to work with assistant principals."

Joint training for SROs and school administrators should focus especially on:

• cultural differences between law enforcement agencies and school systems;
• supervision of the SROs; and
• decisions about what the SROs will and will not do.

*   *   *

Three case studies illustrate a number of ways in which programs can provide thorough, timely, and often inexpensive or free pre-service and in-service training for SROs.

• The experience of the Marshall, Minnesota, Police Department suggests how a single SRO in a small law enforcement agency (21 sworn) in a small community (13,000) can receive comprehensive training before and after going into the schools.

• Dissatisfied with the training provided by an outside training organization, the Fontana Police Department developed its own in-house training course that, at no cost to the agency, provides training to new SROs before they go into the schools. When the department cannot send all its SROs for in-service training, it requires those who attend to provide the training for those who could not.

• Because the department consists entirely of SROs and is operated by a school district, few other programs are likely to be able to implement every component of the Palm Beach County School District Police Department's comprehensive training program. However, other programs can replicate selected features of the training, such as arranging for new SROs to shadow different experienced SROs and finding trainers from other law enforcement agencies to teach in-service classes for free in exchange for the department's having provided these agencies with free courses.

## Case Study: Marshall, Minnesota, Police Department (21 sworn)

The experience of Marshall, with a population of only 13,000 and only one SRO, suggests **how other small communities and programs can provide training that is timely, inexpensive, and thorough**.

### Pre-Service Training

Chief Robert Yant was able to provide both NASRO training and shadowing for the new SRO, Jim Marshall, before the officer began working in the schools. Although the Marshall Police Department was awarded its COPS in Schools grant in the middle of a school year, **Yant delayed posting the SRO in the schools**—and drawing down funds from the grant—**until the fall when he could arrange for the SRO to attend a NASRO training** in Kansas City. While the chief initiated the delay in part because he needed time to hire a replacement for the SRO, he also wanted to avoid sending an untrained officer into the schools.

Jim Marshall, the new SRO, reported that "The most beneficial aspects of the NASRO training were the legal and case law modules." The NASRO training also helped him to anticipate what to expect by way of kids' coming to him with problems.

After Marshall spent two weeks in the local schools at the end of the 1999-2000 school year, **Yant arranged for him to shadow three SROs in Sioux Falls, South Dakota**, a 90-minutes drive away. Yant picked that program because he had come to know the program supervisor after having recruited him to serve on the department's oral screening panel that selected Marshall as the initial SRO.

Jim Marshall observed two high school SROs and one junior high school SRO in Sioux Falls. He asked the officers questions about procedures, such as search and seizure, and how to handle various situations, such as kids who were out of control or fighting. He found out what topics they taught in the classroom and, based on their answers, developed his own curriculum to teach in the schools.

For Marshall, the shadowing was the most important part of his pre-service training:

> It showed me what I'd be doing-being in the hallways with kids and not just hanging out in the office doing nothing. I saw how they mingle with kids and build rapport. I saw how I could use free time to develop programs, prepare presentations, and talk with kids. If you're not doing anything, administrators will catch on. The opportunity to view them [the Sioux Falls SROs] in action was something the NASRO training could not provide.

Marshall reported that he also benefited from observing different SROs: "One was more outgoing and good at building relationships with kids, one was more talented at teaching, and one was skillful in working with school administrators—he fit right in." As a result, Marshall was able to see how he could attempt to combine the best features of all three SROs into his own approach to working in the schools.

## In-Service Training

As a very small department with a limited training budget, the Marshall Police Department does not arrange for any specialized in-service training for its SRO. As a result, *Jim Marshall on his own looks for training opportunities* in mailings he receives and from tips from school administrators. The two or three times a year when he discovers a course or class that would be helpful, his supervisor agrees to pay the registration fee. The courses Marshall has attended in this manner have addressed:

• children with special needs;
• bullying;
• dealing with mentally ill people;
• case law related to guns, drugs, and violence in the school setting; and
• family and community violence prevention.

Marshall manages to attend some free courses, as well. For example, the Minnesota Department of Education offers courses on children with special needs at no cost to participants. Although typically offered for school personnel, Marshall attends them if he feels they will help him as an SRO.

## Case Study: Fontana, California, Police Department (151 sworn)

By developing its own in-house training course coupled with having new SROs shadow experienced SROs, *the Fontana Police Department has been able to ensure that all new SROs are trained before they go into the schools*.

**Pre-Service Training**

When the SRO program began, the department arranged for its new officers to receive basic training from an outside organization. However, once the department became experienced with SRO work, it became dissatisfied with the vendor's training, largely because only one individual taught all 40 hours of the course. Officers who had attended the training reported that they would have preferred that several speakers, each selected for his or her specialized knowledge and field experience, give discrete sections of the overall course. They felt this was important both to avoid "listening fatigue" and, more importantly, because no single person, in their judgment, could have the expertise or provide the credibility of field experience in the wide range of topics included in the training.

This impression was confirmed by the first two SROs funded through Cops in Schools grants who attended the COPS Office conference for grantees. Over the conference's three days, no single trainer covered more than two or three hours of the course. Training modules addressing such areas as creating a common vision among school and law enforcement staff, solving problems, teaching class, and understanding legal issues involving children in a public school were each covered by a different specialist. As a result, *the department developed its own 40-hour basic SRO training program* that addresses a wide range of topics (see the box "Sample Topics That Fontana's In-House Training Addresses"). SROs, program supervisors, prosecutors, judges, and principals, assistant principals, the superintendent of schools, and a school board member teach different sections of the course. The training includes field trips to schools to observe teaching and become familiar with school environments and personnel.

Because the department arranged to have the course certified for one time by the California Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST), *it was able to offer the training statewide for a fee of $175 per registrant*. While the department did not develop the course as a commercial enterprise, and the initial goal of developing its own curriculum was to train its own SROs, offering the training to other SRO programs in the State generated a small amount of income (see chapter 7, "Identifying Sources of Program Funding"), whereas sending new SROs for training by the previous provider had cost the program money in travel expenses and registration fees.

| Sample Topics That Fontana's In-House Training Addresses | |
| --- | --- |
| **Introduction** | **Relationship Building With Administrators** |
|     Overview of the SRO Program | **Introduction to Gangs** |
|     Defining the Role of an SRO | **Crime Prevention Approaches** |
| **Mentoring** | **Criminal Law** |
|     Formal/Informal |     Penal Code |
|     Purpose and Benefits of Mentoring |     Education Code |
| **Bullying** |     City Codes |
|     What Causes Bullying |     Report Writing |
|     School Shootings | **Child Abuse/Molestation** |
| **Basic Teaching Skills** |     Reporting Laws |
|     Preparing a Lesson Plan |     Child Abuse Investigations |
|     Presentation |     Diagnostic Indicators |
|     Proper Use of Visual Aids | **Drug and Alcohol Recognition** |
|     Team Teaching | |

As with many of the program's other activities designed to publicize its effectiveness and services, program administrators believe that developing and marketing their own SRO training course contributes to raising the program's profile with funding sources, thereby helping to ensure its survival (see the Fontana case study at the end of chapter 8, "Maintaining Program Funding").

The department supplements the formal training for new SROs with time spent shadowing an experienced SRO. Each new SRO shadows an experienced SRO for a week at the school the "rookie" will be assigned to. The supervisor also arranges as needed for new SROs to observe experienced SROs teach class and provide security at after-school events (e.g., dances). The program supervisor debriefs with the experienced SRO and the school principal to ensure that the new SRO is ready to perform properly on his or her own.

### In-Service Training

In addition to 40 hours of basic training before going into the schools, new SROs receive in-service training throughout the year. If only a few officers attend a training, they are obligated to train the rest of the SROs on the topic. In addition to legal updates, in-service training has addressed the following topics:

• Dealing with Angry Kids: an eight-hour course addressing juvenile anger.

• Drop-Out Prevention: a three-day class focusing on recognizing signs of youth prone to dropping out of school and on meeting the needs of at-risk youth.

• Sexual Assault Investigation: a 40-hour course on investigating sexual assault and abuse concentrating on school-age children.

- No Bullying Program: an eight-hour overview of bullying and its effects on children.

- Teen and Child Substance Abuse: an eight-hour course devoted to recognizing signs of addiction, intervention techniques, and counseling options for troubled teens.

## Case Study: Palm Beach County, Florida, School District Police Department (148 sworn)

The Palm Beach County School District Police Department has an especially intense and creative pre-service and in-service training program for its SROs. However, because the department consists entirely of SROs and is operated by a school district, few other programs are likely to have the resources, time, or authority to implement every component of its training program. Nonetheless, *other programs can replicate selected features of the Palm Beach County training program*.

### Pre-Service Training

For their first two weeks, new SROs attend all-day classes focusing in particular on report writing skills. Lieutenant Vanessa Snow, the department's administrative lieutenant, who supervises the FTO program, then assigns each new recruit to a group of 3 of the current 16 FTOs, each of whom is an active SRO at a different grade level school (see the box "The Programs Screens and Trains FTOs Carefully"). *For the next six weeks, the new SRO rotates among the three FTOs, shadowing them, and then returns to spend a final week with the initial FTO*. The FTOs themselves asked the chief to institute the procedure of returning for a final week's supervision by the initial FTO because the first FTO would be in a good position to assess the level of change in the recruit after the FTO training period had ended.

*FTOs must make every effort to cover the entire list of topics in their FTO manual.* Each FTO signs off on the topics he or she has covered on the list and passes the checklist on to the next FTO who will be training the SRO. The checklist includes a column for "Instructed/Explained" and another for "Performed/Tested." However, not all FTOs get through the entire checklist because of lack of time and opportunity—for example, there may not have been an arrest for which the new SRO had to write a report.

At some point, SROs in training observe at least one of their FTOs teach a class and then team teach with an FTO. James Wilkerson, an FTO, requires his new SROs to develop a classroom presentation on a topic (e.g., kids hitting each other), helps them decide what to say, and then observes the officers teach the class. After the class, Wilkerson gives guidance on how to improve their teaching techniques—for example, to tell kids who ask questions that get off the subject, "let me come back to that later if

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### The Program Screens and Trains FTOs Carefully

The department thoroughly screens SROs who apply to become FTOs. Applicants must meet specific written criteria (see appendix B), including:

- a work history that indicates above-average initiative and self-motivation;
- no formal disciplinary actions for two years prior to application and appointment;
- a two year commitment to the position;
- positive recommendations by present and prior supervisors; and
- the demonstrated ability to write clear, complete, and timely reports.

Instructor-certified candidates are preferred.

In addition to meeting these criteria, to be eligible SROs must:

- no longer be on probation,
- be recommended by their supervisor, and
- obtain on their own initiative an FTO certificate from a recognized training institute.

FTOs receive two hours of overtime pay each day they supervise a recruit and can parlay the skill in a career ladder progression leading to a four percent pay raise at the end of four years if they meet several other criteria. Four of the first six SROs who became FTOs when the field officer training program was instituted in 1998 were still FTOs in 2005.

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FTOs make sure that over the course of the training the recruits move from the street mentality of "cuffing and stuffing" in response to criminal behavior to what Lieutenant Vanessa Snow calls "the proactive mentality needed in the schools to prevent misconduct and not be just an enforcer but also a teacher and counselor—a paradigm shift."

One SRO supervisor points out that the **FTO program also helps new SROs understand how to deal with school administrators**—"you need to get the principal to trust you. Recruits observe FTOs interact with administrators and learn that you have to humble yourself with principals and assistant principals. On the streets, cops make their own decisions (sergeants are usually too busy to help out or confer), but here [in the schools] it has to be more of a team decision."

At the end of each day of supervision or at the beginning of the following day, **the FTO faxes Lieutenant Snow a report of his or her observations**. Snow reviews the report for deficiencies or areas of excellence—for example, ability to communicate with difficult people, crisis management, or report writing. "There is a learning curve," Snow says, "with recruits typically improving over time." For example, some recruits are used to writing short incident reports in their previous jobs, but in this position "more is better—they need to be very thorough in their reports," Snow says. The reports are initially based on real incidents that the FTO handles and eventually incidents that the recruit handles under the FTO's supervision.

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Appendix C provides the SRO performance-based evaluation form that FTOs fill in at the end of every day (supervisors complete the same form every month for the next 16 months while the new SROs are still on probation, and then annually). The evaluation covers 12 areas, ranging from appearance, to report writing, to interpersonal effectiveness with peers, administrators, students, and the community. Supervisors use a rating scale of 1 (not acceptable), 2 (development needed), 3-5 (acceptable), and 6-7 (superior). As illustrated in the box "Sample Guidelines for Completing the Performance Based Evaluation," there is an 11-page set of detailed guidelines that FTOs and supervisors follow in filling out the evaluation form.

Shortly before the end of the field training period, *chief James Kelly meets with the FTOs as a group for two hours to discuss officer by officer how each new SRO has done*, his or her strengths and weaknesses, and the need for any further training—for example, to improve an officer's report writing skills or ability to build relationships with kids. In the latter instance, Kelly has sent new SROs back to an FTO who encourages the recruit to engage more with kids and observes and documents the improvement. Kelly also asks the FTOs for their "gut" feelings about the recruits because these feelings, too, he says, are important to assessing the new SRO's capabilities. When one FTO reports a recruit is "excellent" and another says the same recruit is only "good," the chief makes them explain their positions to reach consensus or account for the different perceptions.

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**Sample Guidelines for Completing
the Palm Beach FTO Performance-Based Evaluation**

**Appearance**

> *Unacceptable*—Dirty shoes and wrinkled uniform. Uniform fits poorly or is improperly worn  . . . .
> *Acceptable*—Uniform neat and clean, fits and is worn properly  . . . . Shoes are shined.
> *Superior*—Uniform neat, clean and properly pressed. Leather is shined and shoes are spit-shined. Displays command presence.

**Report Writing**

> *Unacceptable*—Is unaware that a report or form needs to be completed/does not know what reports or forms to utilize.
> *Acceptable*—Is aware of commonly used forms/reports and understands their funtion  . . . . Completes with reasonable accuracy and thoroughness . . . .
> *Superior*—Consistently makes accurate form selection and completes them with out assistance  . . . .

**Interpersonal Skills**

> *Unacceptable*—Unable to properly establish communication lines with other . . . . Participates in conduct that has the potential to/or places the department in a negative light . . . .
> *Acceptable*—Actively works at establishing positive relationships with others . . . .
> *Superior*—Establishes excellent rapport with others . . . . Displays mastery in the resolution of conflicts.

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During these discussions, Kelly develops a sense of which school to assign each new SRO to. He meets with the captains during the summer, when the SROs and principals make any requests they may have for transfers and when new schools come on line, and assigns each recruit to a school. He then meets with the supervisors and discusses each recruit with them, visits each principal alone, and then introduces the recruit to the principal along with the new SRO's supervising lieutenant so they can spell out their mutual expectations.

No recruit has failed to pass the field training program because of the careful screening to become a member of the department and because the FTOs work to make the SROs succeed.

After Kelly has assigned new SROs to their schools and to a supervisor, the officers remain on probation for another 16 months. During this period, supervisors complete a monthly evaluation using the same "daily" report that the FTOs completed. After the total 18 months of probation, SROs are evaluated annually.

**In-Service Training**

To avoid pulling SROs out of the schools when classes are in session, ***the program provides 120 hours of in-service training during the summer***. In-house department staff provide about half the instruction, with personnel from other law enforcement agencies providing the rest.

Each February, Lieutenant Snow starts to line up courses and training sites for the following summer. The box "In-Service Training Classes" identifies some of the training classes she has arranged.

Contracted trainers from other law enforcement agencies have taught classes on religious terrorism and biometrics (thumb scans, retinal scanning) at no cost to the department in exchange for the department's having provided them with courses in, for example, crisis response training, or by having allowed their officers to attend recertification courses that Palm Beach County School District SROs attend. The department has even donated uniforms to less fortunate law enforcement agencies. These kinds of relationships are enhanced because the department operates in a county with over 37 municipal law enforcement agencies with which it has mutual aid agreements and with which SROs sometimes have to interact.

| In-Service Training Classes | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Course** | **Instructor(s)** | **Hours** |
| Juvenile Sex Offenders/Predators . . . . . | Sheriff's Office . . . . . . . . . . | 2 |
| Violence and Gangs in Schools . . . . . . | In-House . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 4 |
| Child Abuse/Neglect . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | Sheriff's Office . . . . . . . . . | 4 |
| Department of Juvenile Justice Update . | State Attorney's Office . . . . | 2 |
| Aerosol Drug Testing . . . . . . . . . . . . . | In-House . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 2 |
| "Designer" Drugs . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration | 5 |
| Cultural Diversity . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | Outside consultant . . . . . . | 10 |
| Drug Identification . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | Sheriff's Office . . . . . . . . . | 20 |
| Characteristics of Exceptional Students | School District Personnel . . | 8 |
| Crisis Plan Implementation . . . . . . . . . | In-House . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 4 |
| Language Skills . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | County School District Department of Multicultural Education | 5 |
| First Responder Investigation of Missing, Runaway, and Abducted Children | County Sheriff's Office . . . . | 5 |
| Domestic Violence . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | County Sheriff's Office . . . . | 5 |

Trust funds pay for some of the training, and community colleges and institutes receive State money to sponsor other classes that SROs attend. Still other courses are offered for free with the only expense to the department being supplies or a hotel and meals for the trainer. As a result, while the department has a training budget, it rarely has to use it.

During the summer, the department sends about 20 SROs for annual training with the Florida Association of School Resource Officers (FASRO) if their schools agree to pay the registration fee or if the officers are willing to pay out of pocket. SROs who attend are excused from the in-house summer training that they would otherwise be participating in that week. The department pays for supervisors to attend the training.

# Appendix A

## Sarasota, Florida, Sheriff's Office SRO Field Training Policies and Procedures
### YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

| SUBJECT | POLICY |
|---|---|
| YOUTH SERVICES FTO PROGRAM | 7 |

| INDEX - CROSS REFERENCE | DATE |
|---|---|
| | June 16, 2004 |

I. <u>Purpose</u> – The Youth Services Field Training and Evaluation Program is an extension of law enforcement that combines field training with objective evaluations to insure consistency and fairness on determining the standards of a competent Youth Services detective are met.

II. <u>Policy</u> –It is the policy of the Youth Services Bureau to establish a formalized Field Training and Evaluation Program
in order to maintain the highest standards of professionalism.

III. Procedure-The Field Training Coordinator will coordinate the training of all newly assigned law enforcement members. The FTO coordinator has responsibility of the day to day functioning of the FTO program and is the lead supervisor in all matters related to field training matters. The supervisor is involved in the selection and training of new FTO's and is responsible for any refresher training necessary in order to insure the Unit is kept abreast of the latest training techniques.

A.   Process of Field Training- One week program of training

    1. Day One
        a)   Introduction of the SRO program.
        b)   Completion data sheet and YSB equipment issue inventory form.
        c)   Assignment with selected  FTOs
        d)   Instructed on policies and procedures.
        e)   CIB, case assignment and investigative procedures.

    2. Day Two
        a)   Assigned to a SRO FTO  of grade levels they will not be working
        b)   Learn responsibilities of High School, Middle School, Elementary School and
            Intervention SRO

    3. Day Three
        a)   Assigned to SRO FTO at the Grade level they will be working
        b)   Introduced to school administration at the school(s) they will be working.
        c)   Assigned with grade level SRO FTO at their assigned school(s) if possible.

    4. Day Four
        a)   Assigned to a SRO FTO  at the Grade level they will be working
        b)   Assigned with grade level SRO FTO at their assigned school(s) if possible.

5. Day Five
   a) Assigned to a SRO FTO at the Grade level they will be working
   b) Assigned with grade level SRO FTO at their assigned school(s) if possible.

   B. Successful completion: at the end of each day the assigned SRO FTO will complete a daily training report. This report will be discussed with the new SRO. Any concerns will be addressed in this report. This report will also cover strengths and accomplishments for the day. This daily training report will be forwarded with the new SRO along with the grade level field training checklist. The SRO FTO will make a copy of these reports and forward them to the FTO coordinator for review. The FTO coordinator will be contacted if the SRO FTO is behind schedule. At the end of the week long FTO training period the daily reports will be reviewed by the FTO Coordinator.

   C. Extensions: The Field Training Officer has the latitude to recommend an extension of a new SRO beyond the minimum days. Any problems will be documented on the daily training report. The report will be reviewed with the FTO Coordinator. A Training action plan can be developed and forwarded to the Youth Services Bureau Commander for input. The Bureau Commander will have the final decision to release or fail the new SRO.

   D. Teaching -Teaching is a vital aspect of the School Resource Officer duties. At some point during the FTO program, the new SRO will be required to teach a class, if at all possible.

## Appendix B

### Palm Beach, Florida, County School Police Department
### SRO Field Training Procedure
### THE PALM BEACH COUNTY SCHOOL POLICE DEPARTMENT

### GENERAL ORDER

| | |
|---|---|
| **TITLE:** | **FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM** |
| **GENERAL ORDER:** | 22.1 |
| **EFFECTIVE:** | **February 13, 2004** |
| **RESCINDS:** | G.O 22.1 (February 1, 2002) |
| **ACCREDITATION STANDARDS:** | **CFA 14.08** |
| **PAGES:** | 2 |

**CONTENTS:** This order consists of the following numbered sections:

    I. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
    II. RECRUIT STATUS
    III. GLOSSARY

**PURPOSE:** To establish guidelines for the law enforcement officer field training program.

**SCOPE:** This order applies to all law enforcement officers.

**PLAN :** All newly appointed law enforcement officers are required to successfully complete an "on the job" field training program designed to acquaint them with department General Orders, procedures, and rules and regulations.

**PROCEDURE:**

**I. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

  **A. Administrative Lieutenant:** The Administrative Lieutenant is responsible for the administration of the Field Training Program to include:

    1. Initial approval of officers selected as Field Training Officers ;

    2. Annual review of the Field Training Program;

    3. Managing the Field Training Program and keeping FTO manuals current.

    4. Rotating assignments to allow new officers to experience a variety of law enforcement situations. [ CFA 14.08 G ]

    5. Ensuring that FTOs are trained to perform their assigned duties. [ CFA 14.08 A ].

    6. Ensuring that FTOs report new officers progress through use of designated reporting mechanisms. [ CFA 14.08 H ]

    7. Coordination of the supervision of FTOs through Zone Lieutenants. [ CFA 14.08 E ]

  **B. Field Training Officers ( FTO ) :** Officers selected as Field Training Officers (FTO's) must successfully meet the program selection process listed below [ CFA 14.08 A ]:

    1. Two (2) years of continuous service with the Palm Beach School District Police Department; or

    2. A work history, which indicates above-average initiative and self-motivation. Evaluations should be satisfactory or higher in this area.

    3. No formal disciplinary actions as defined in school district policies and procedures for two (2) years prior to application and appointment to the Field Training Officer program.

    4. Willingness to make a two (2) year commitment to the Field Training Officer Program.

    5. A knowledge and understanding of the Field Training Officer's basic responsibilities. This can be accomplished by reviewing the Field Training Officer manual.

    6. Positive recommendations by present and prior supervisors at time of application and appointment to the Field Training Officer Program.

    7. A positive review of applicant's personnel, internal affairs and attendance records. Attendance records pertain to injury and sick usage.

8. The demonstrated ability to write clear complete and timely reports.

9. Accurate, concise, and clear oral and written communication skills.

10. Ability to pass the selection process.

11. Field Training Officers must possess a current Field Training Officer certificate from a recognized training institute prior to their first training assignment.

12. Possess a thorough understanding of School Based Policing and the School Resource Officer Concept.

13. Preferably Instructor certified ( State of Florida designation and/or completion of 80 hour Instructor Techniques course ).

**C. FTO Duties :** FTO duties will include the following :

1. Directing the activities of trainees.

2. Providing instructions on department General Orders, procedures, and rules and regulations.

3. Documenting training.

4. Evaluating trainee job performance.

5. Other duties as assigned.

**D. FTO Status:**

1. In the event a Field Training Officer receives formal discipline, as defined in school district policies and procedures, the officer will be removed from the Field Training Program for two years from the date of the discipline.

2. Reinstatement in the Field Training Officer Program will be at the discretion of the chief of police.

**II. RECRUIT STATUS:**

1. A recruit may be required to repeat any portion of the FTO Program at any time upon identification of any performance deficiency.

**III. GLOSSARY:**

FIELD TRAINING MANUAL - The Field Training Manual provides guidelines and procedures for the administration of the Field Training Program. The manual outlines the selection criteria, responsibilities, training curriculum and training requirements of the Field Training Officer. The manual also provides the criteria for the evaluation of each recruit officer. [CFA 14.08 A , B , D] .

FIELD TRAINING OFFICER (FTO) - A specially trained law enforcement officer who is responsible for providing on-the-job training to newly appointed officers.

FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM - A 4-week program that provides on-the-job training and evaluation of newly appointed law enforcement officers. [ CFA 14.08 C ]

RECRUIT- A law enforcement officer who has never been employed by the department or a previously employed department officer who has been absent from employment for over two years.

**INDEXING:**

FIELD TRAINING MANUAL
FIELD TRAINING PROGRAM
FTO STATUS
RECRUIT STATUS
FTO

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DRAFTED: HG/October 10, 2001/Filed: FTO22.1 .

**APPROVED:**

JAMES P. KELLY, CHIEF                    DATE
PALM BEACH COUNTY SCHOOL
POLICE DEPARTMENT , FLORIDA

## Appendix C

### Palm Beach, Florida, County School Police Department
### SRO Field Training and Supervisor Observation Report

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY
SCHOOL POLICE DEPARTMENT

**Performance Based Evaluation**

☐ **Daily Observation Report (DOR)**

☐ **Supervisor Observation Report (SOR)**

☐ **Annual Observation Report**

Daily Observation Report (DOR) is completed by the Field Training Officer (FTO). The Supervisor Observation Report (SOR) and Annual Observation Report are completed by Supervisors.

| OFFICER | | OFFICER ID | SOR ONLY - PROBATIONARY PHASE | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | MONTH NO. | 12 MONTH REVIEW DATE | PROBATIONARY END DATE |
| FIELD TRAINING OFFICER OR SUPERVISOR | | OFFICER ID | | / / | / / |
| ASSIGNMENT | | | | | |

Reason for no evaluation:

_____

_____

_____

_____

**RATING INSTRUCTIONS**

- Rate observed behavior on the scale below.
- Comment on any behavior you wish, but a specific comment is required* on all ratings of "2" or less and "6" or above.
- Check "NO" if behavior is "Not Observed". If the officer fails to respond to training in a specific area, check "NRT".
- Check" "RT" if "Remedial Training" is required in a specific area.

| CATEGORY NUMBER | CATEGORY | *NOT ACCEPTABLE | DEVELOPMENT NEEDED | ACCEPTABLE | | *SUPERIOR | NO | NRT | RT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | **APPEARANCE** | | | | | | | | |
| A. | General Appearance | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 | | 6 7 | | | |
| **2.** | **ATTITUDE** | | | | | | | | |
| A. | Acceptance of Feedback - FTO Program or Supervisor/Principal | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 | | 6 7 | | | |
| B. | Attitude Toward School Based Policing, School Staff, and Students | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 | | 6 7 | | | |
| **3.** | **KNOWLEDGE** | | | | | | | | |
| A. | Knowledge of Department Policies and Procedures and/or Criminal Procedures | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 | | 6 7 | | | |
| B. | Knowledge of Criminal Statutes, District Policies, and/or Traffic Laws | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 | | 6 7 | | | |
| C. | Relates Knowledge Described Above to Field Performance | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 | | 6 7 | | | |
| D. | Knowledge of School Based Policing, SRO Theory or Concept | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 | | 6 7 | | | |
| E. | Relates Knowledge Described Above to Field Performance | 1 | 2 | 3 4 5 | | 6 7 | | | |

**Observation Report continued** ☐ **Daily** ☐ **Supervisor** ☐ **Annual**

| OFFICER | OFFICER ID | FIELD TRAINING OFFICER OR SUPERVISOR | | OFFICER ID |
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## FIELD PERFORMANCE

| CAT. NO. | CATEGORY | *NOT ACCEPTABLE | DEVELOPMENT NEEDED | ACCEPTABLE | | | *SUPERIOR | | NO | NRT | RT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4.** | **FAMILIARIZATION WITH LOCAL POLICE AND/OR SHERIFF'S OFFICE** | | | | | | | | | | |
| A. | Weekly Meetings/ Contact with Local Jurisdiction | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| B. | Knowledge of Local Officers Working in School Area | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| **5.** | **REPORT WRITING** | | | | | | | | | | |
| A. | Accuracy, Organization, Details and Completeness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| B. | Time Used, Spelling, Neatness, Grammar | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| **6.** | **PERFORMANCE** | | | | | | | | | | |
| A. | Non-Stress Conditions: Problem Solving, Decision Making, Appropriate Actions and Behavior | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| B. | Stress Conditions: Problem Solving, Decision Making, Appropriate Actions, and Behavior | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| **7.** | **OFFICER SAFETY** | | | | | | | | | | |
| A. | General in School Setting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| B. | Suspects, Suspicious Persons and Prisoners | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| **8.** | **CONTROL OF CONFLICT** | | | | | | | | | | |
| A. | Voice Commands or Verbal Judo | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| B. | Skill Level | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| **9.** | **RADIO USE** | | | | | | | | | | |
| A. | Articulation of Transmission, Appropriate Use of Codes, and Procedures | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| B. | Listens and Comprehends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| **10.** | **LEADERSHIP SKILLS** | | | | | | | | | | |
| A. | Leadership / Motivational Aptitude | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| B. | Goal Setting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| **11.** | **INVESTIGATIVE ABILITY** | | | | | | | | | | |
| A. | Interview and Interrogation Skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| B. | Observation Skills/Self Initiated Field Activity - Criminal and Civil Violation, Follow-up Investigations and Physical Arrest | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| C. | Follows Orders, Direction, and Completes Assignments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| **12.** | **INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS** | | | | | | | | | | |
| A. | Peer | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| B. | Administrator | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| C. | Students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| D. | Community | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |

**TOTAL PERFORMANCE BASED EVALUATION POINTS** ▢

PBSD 1950 (Rev. 5/11/2004)

**Observation Report continued**    ☐ *Daily*    ☐ *Supervisor*    ☐ *Annual*

| OFFICER | OFFICER ID | FIELD TRAINING OFFICER OR SUPERVISOR | OFFICER ID |
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The most satisfactory area(s) of performance were category number(s) _____

The least satisfactory area(s) of performance were category number(s) _____

Specific incident(s) which demonstrate(s) the officer's performance in this/these area(s):

_____
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_____
_____

**CATEGORY  SCORE**      **COMMENTS**                    **Documentation of Performance and Comments**

*Observation Report continued*  ☐ *Daily*   ☐ *Supervisor*   ☐ *Annual*

| OFFICER | OFFICER ID | FIELD TRAINING OFFICER OR SUPERVISOR | OFFICER ID |
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**NARRATIVE**

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**Observation Report continued** ☐ *Daily* ☐ *Supervisor* ☐ *Annual*

| OFFICER | OFFICER ID | FIELD TRAINING OFFICER OR SUPERVISOR | OFFICER ID |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |

**NARRATIVE CONTINUED**

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| SIGNATURE OF OFFICER | DATE | SIGNATURE OF FTO / SUPERVISOR | DATE |
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**ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY**

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**END OF PROBATION**   Officer has satisfactorily completed probationary period.

DATE                         NAME/ID

_____/_____/_____      _____

APPROVED ☐   DISAPPROVED ☐   ACKNOWLEDGED ☐

| SIGNATURE OF ADMINISTRATOR/SUPERVISOR | DATE |
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APPROVED ☐   DISAPPROVED ☐   ACKNOWLEDGED ☐

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APPROVED ☐   DISAPPROVED ☐   ACKNOWLEDGED ☐

| SIGNATURE OF ADMINISTRATOR/SUPERVISOR | DATE |
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While the focus of this chapter is on how to supervise SROs, a few supervisors contacted for this study indicated that they do not need to spend much, if any, time monitoring their SROs.

- Some supervisors believe that they have placed experienced, self-motivated officers in the position who can work entirely on their own. One supervisor said, "There is little need to monitor the SROs closely because most of them have been in the department for 12-14 years and because we've had a long history of police involvement in the schools." Another supervisor felt that if he needed to spend a lot of time supervising the SROs, then "I've placed the wrong officers for the position."

- Other supervisors believe that supervision is not needed because, as one said, "Principals monitor them and tell me if there is a problem. For example, a principal called me to report that an SRO was constantly late for things. I spoke to the SRO and he shaped up."

- Another supervisor reported that SROs appreciate "the freedom of not having a supervisor breathing down their necks."

- Some program participants in small sites feel that informal conversations between the police chief or sheriff and the school superintendent or principal provide adequate supervision.

## The Need for Close Supervision Despite Obstacles

Despite these perceptions that close supervision is not necessary, most program supervisors in the study recognize the need to monitor their SROs' behavior carefully. However, they also report that there are often serious obstacles to supervising them properly.

### Be Realistic About the Obstacles to Adequate Supervision

The most common explanation for not exercising adequate supervision is *lack of time*, typically because supervisors have other important responsibilities. In many cases, the department gives these other responsibilities a higher priority than it gives the SRO program. For example, there are supervisors who also command their department's uniformed services division, detective or juvenile bureau, or community services division; who are the department's assistant public information officer or grant manager; or who continue to investigate juvenile cases as juvenile detective sergeants.

The *long distances between schools* or *large numbers of schools* in some jurisdictions hamper some supervisors:

• One supervisor in the Albuquerque, New Mexico, Police Department oversees 15 schools spread out over the entire city.

• The Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office program supervisor is responsible for 12 SROs in a county of 776 square miles.

Some supervisors, since they lack understanding of what SROs are supposed to do, are said to take a "hands-off" approach *because they would find it awkward or embarrassing to monitor them*.

**Become Aware of the Multiple Purposes Supervision Serves**
Despite these obstacles, finding ways of supervising SROs adequately is important to:

• assist new SROs in *making the transition* from patrol officer to school-based resource officer;

• identify signs of poor SRO performance *before* school administrators have to bring it to the supervisors' attention—school administrators should not have to report problems with SROs that program supervisors could have caught if they had been conscientiously monitoring the officers' behavior in the first place;

• make sure SROs realize that *their department considers their work to be important*;

• make SROs feel they have *support from department leadership* when prioritizing their workload, working through problems with school administrators, or handling challenging situations in the schools;

• ensure reasonable *consistency in program implementation* with programs that have officers in multiple schools or more than one program supervisor; and

• demonstrate *to school administrators* that the agency considers the program an important collaborative initiative.

Even when programs assign independent, mature officers as SROs, *supervisors cannot assume that the officers need little supervision* (see the box "Even Well Qualified, Experienced SROs Need Supervision").

Supervisors cannot rely on administrators to always report problems because some school principals and assistant principals may be too busy or may be reluctant to involve the supervisor and, as a result, allow the problem go unaddressed or let it fester until it explodes. One police chief with experience with numerous school administrators reported:

> In my experience, I have found that many principals will accept mediocrity instead of saying something negative about their SRO. In fact, school administrators exist in a culture where they often "don't want to get anybody in trouble." Therefore, they will not criticize an SRO's performance to the SRO supervisor.

An example of the importance of not assuming principals will take the initiative to report dissatisfaction with their SROs occurred when a high school principal who was contacted by the SRO supervisor only at the end of the school year expressed concern that his SRO had been making better connections with the athletes than with other students and needed to reach out to the other kids. While the following year the SRO made a concerted effort to contact kids from other walks in life and fixed the problem after the supervisor talked with him, an entire school year should not have passed before the problem was corrected.

As a result, some supervisors make it a point to ferret out problems early.

• Tim Carney, when he became the captain in charge of the Sarasota County SRO program in Florida, required supervisors to be more visible on campus where they could supervise SROs and meet frequently with principals to identify problems with officers early rather than getting "blindsided" by the news of problems at the end of each year during the principals' annual evaluation of the SROs.

• The sergeant in charge of the Lakewood, Colorado, SRO program decided the best way to ensure she was aware of any problems between officers and school administrators was to host a roundtable discussion each semester with all SROs and school administrators so she could look for both verbal and non-verbal clues to any problems.

• The sergeant in charge of the Fontana, California, program conducts performance reviews with each SRO every three months so he can identify and address problems more quickly than if the review occurred only at the end of the school year.

A largely "hands-off" approach to supervision also results in school administrators alone directing the activities of the SROs assigned to their schools. ***The law enforcement agency needs to ensure that the SROs are addressing its goals, as well.***

## Even Well Qualified, Experienced SROs Need Supervision

While some program supervisors believe that *their* SROs require little or no supervision, a number of programs have found to their embarrassment that this is not true.

• Because SROs deal constantly with parents and engage in after-school activities with kids, they frequently make decisions that must withstand public scrutiny. As a result, supervisors need to make sure the officers are not exposing the department to any possible negative public relations.

• According to one supervisor, "You need to monitor people, because all young people do their own thing—especially when they're given a lot of autonomy."

• Another program supervisor noted that not all law enforcement officers want to work as hard as the SRO position requires.

— A school principal reported that, "One SRO was a bit lazy—he was not visible enough, spending too much time in his office. So I talked with the SRO first and then brought in the supervisor—who was unaware of the problem—to rein force my concern. The SRO corrected the problem."

— A police chief decided the department needed to play a more active role in supervising the position after it was discovered that an SRO was taking advantage of the lack of supervision to shirk his responsibilities.

• Even the most conscientious SROs (or teachers or tug boat captains or assembly line workers) may become lax over time if left unsupervised. Illustrating this, one program supervisor has begun periodic "field inspections" to check on the SROs' appearance and equipment because he had found that "they were starting to look a little sloppy wearing jeans and sneakers" (although the SROs were not required to wear uniforms).

• In a county in which supervisors trusted the SROs to be in their schools (and assumed administrators would call them if the were not), one SRO was regularly leaving school for a tryst. The discovery created very bad publicity for the department.

• As discussed in chapter 4, "Minimizing Turnover Among SROs," some highly effective SROs get burned out or become dissatisfied with the position but keep their unhappiness to themselves. Programs need to do their best not to lose these SROs by keeping in regular touch and staying alert to any signs of frustration with the assignment that can be addressed before it is too late.

Finally, as Sergeant Lowell Rademacher, the (now retired) program supervisor in Marshall, Minnesota, pointed out, "The level of supervision depends on the nature of the individual SRO—some need a lot, some little." But all require at least a basic level—and sometimes more than they and their supervisors think.

## Approaches to Effective Supervision

While it is important to establish formal procedures for supervising SROs, departments must first be clear about what activities they expect their SROs to undertake.

### Identify the SRO Responsibilities That Supervisors Need to Monitor

Several supervisors and SROs report that, without formal documentation of the officers' specific roles and responsibilities, supervisors will have a difficult time monitoring them because the SROs are likely to be unclear about what is expected of them and supervisors will be uncertain about what they should be looking for. To help prevent this problem, the contract between the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office and School District includes a five-page description of the SROs' responsibilities at each grade level that supervisors use to monitor and assess the officers' performance. The box "Detailed, Written SRO Responsibilities" provides examples of how two other programs have facilitated supervision by preparing detailed written descriptions of the SROs' responsibilities that supervisors use as guidelines for making sure the officers are doing what they are supposed to be doing-and not doing what they should not be doing.

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**Detailed, Written SRO Responsibilities Make Effective Supervision Possible**

The Jefferson City, Missouri, program's memorandum of agreement with the school district stipulates that the SROs:

• Will be in the hallways during all class changes and lunch periods.
• Will not act as a school disciplinarian.
• Will not conduct locker checks without probable cause.
• Will not leave the school facility without prior notification of the School Administrator and/or the School Resource Officer Supervisor.
• Will not transport a sick or injured child for medical assistance.

The Schaumburg, Illinois, program's School Resource Officer Operations Manual includes a detailed list of SRO responsibilities, such as:

• Teach lessons in gang/violence resistance and gang/alcohol resistance to all students.
• Interact with students as a positive role model during lunch and study hall periods.
• Establish a working relationship with behaviorally at risk students.
• Work with parents on runaway problems.

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**Implement Multiple Supervision Approaches**

There is a variety of approaches SRO programs can use to supervise SROs:

• require and review SRO activity logs;
• review case or arrest reports;
• host regular meetings with SROs as a group;
• visit the school campus;
• maintain telephone or radio communication;
• survey students;
• survey teachers; and
• formally evaluate SRO performance.

Several supervisors and SROs report that ***the most effective supervision occurs when programs use two or more approaches to monitoring the officers' performance***. The programs in Sarasota County and Palm Beach County, Florida, and Maury County, Tennessee, described in the case studies at the end of this chapter, all use multiple approaches to supervising their SROs, including several of the following methods.

*Require and Review SRO Logs*

The most common method programs use to supervise SROs is to require weekly or monthly activity logs. Most programs require the SROs to include not only activity counts but also narrative detail—because, as the program supervisor in Boone, North Carolina, reported, "Having narrative helps me identify subtle issues in the schools that might not be obvious if I just received activity counts." One sheriff's office requires SROs to get teachers' signatures on the officers' logs to verify that the officers have actually taught the classes listed in their logs. The box "Sample Activities Tracked in SRO Logs" summarizes the types of activities most departments require SROs to track.

| Sample Activities Tracked in SRO Logs |
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| The following are some of the most common activities program supervisors require their SROs to track.<br><br>• complaints       • referrals to other agencies<br>• completed reports       • meetings<br>• arrests       • classroom lectures/presentations<br>• weapons confiscated       • after-school events<br>• investigations       • parent and child counseling sessions |

The Lenoir County Sheriff's Office in North Carolina and the Delaware State Police use an incident tracking software program called *School COP* developed with funding from the National Institute of Justice. Distributed at COPS in School trainings funded by the COPS Office. The software with instructions and a sample database are available for free at [www.schoolcopsoftware.com](http://www.schoolcopsoftware.com). Chapter 8, "Maintaining Program Funding," provides additional information about the software in the section on "Documentation of Program Activity."

While just having to fill out the logs may serve to keep some SROs on their toes, supervisors need to review the logs conscientiously to follow up on any apparent problems they reveal (see the box "Following Up on Concerns Raised by SRO Logs").

In many cases, supervisors distribute the SROs' reports to school administrators and, in some cases, city or county commissioners, who may use the information to conduct their own program oversight.

• In Illinois, the Schaumburg School District assistant superintendent of schools reports he reads the SROs' monthly reports not only to monitor the officers' activities but also "because board members may call me on an incident at a school and ask for more information about it. For example, when drugs were detected at a junior high school, there was a rumor that they were being distributed at a soccer field. I knew this wasn't true—just one kid was involved and he was arrested— because of what I read in the SRO's monthly report."

• The Marshall Police Department program supervisor submits the SROs' monthly reports to the chief who forwards them to the city council.

• A representative from the Maury County School District in Tennessee reviews SROs' weekly logs to track their activities and the types of problems officers are addressing. He also uses the information to keep the county commissioners informed about the program's activities.

*Review Case or Arrest Reports*

In most programs, supervisors review SROs' case records and arrest reports for accuracy, completeness, readability, and the need for follow up. Of course, all police agencies require supervisors to review officers' arrest reports, but they do it with varying degrees of thoroughness and follow up. Because arrests of students can result in parental confrontations and telephone calls to local officials, supervisors need to be especially conscientious about reviewing their SROs' reports.

| **Following Up on Concerns Raised in SRO Logs** |
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| Diligent supervisors follow up on "red flags" or missing information in SROs' logs.<br><br>• When a Sarasota County program supervisor informed the unit commander he had noticed that an SRO had not reported having taught any classes during the previous six weeks, the commander told the supervisor to tell the SRO to get into the classroom more.<br><br>• When a supervisor in Maury County saw from an SRO's logs that the officer was not teaching many classes but had high arrest numbers, he explained to the SRO that he was being too reactive and needed to do things like increase the number of violence prevention classes rather than make so many arrests.<br><br>• The Boone Police Department supervisor could tell from an SRO's logs that the officer was being too counselor-oriented and trying to solve student problems on his own instead of referring students to appropriate local resources for help. |

*Meet Regularly With SROs as a Group*

Many supervisors hold regular meetings with SROs in order to:

• provide supervisors an opportunity to share department and programmatic information;
• provide SROs an opportunity to meet with peers to discuss common issues and trends;
• assure that the SROs are visiting the department on a regular basis; and
• generate a "team" feeling and esprit de corps among the SROs.

***These meetings also afford an opportunity for supervisors to "read between the lines" of what SROs say to identify problems the officers may be having.*** In addition, simply by gathering the SROs together and encouraging them to "vent," supervisors may learn of issues that the officers themselves will not volunteer to discuss.

In a few programs, school administrators participate in the meetings, which, many supervisors report, provides not only a greater opportunity to have problems with the SROs or the program raised but also a chance to solve them on the spot. The meetings also give supervisors the opportunity to address any confusion school staff may have related to appropriate SRO activities and department procedure.

- The Lakewood Police Department's roundtable meetings held once or twice a semester to discuss problems and trends in the schools include not only the program supervisor and the SROs but also school administrators. Sergeant Patricia Heffner, the program supervisor, reports that "the roundtables give me an opportunity to identify issues I might have missed during individual discussions with SROs and school administrators."

- In another site, an advisory committee consisting of parents, a teacher, a community group member, and a school board member, as well as the SROs, the chief deputy, and school administrators, meets monthly to share information about the program's operation.

*Visit Schools*

Supervisors in many programs visit their SROs' schools to talk with the officers, school administrators, or both, and to observe how the SROs interact with students. Most supervisors are limited to visiting only once a year because of their other responsibilities or because of the large number of participating schools or long distances between them. Nevertheless, some supervisors manage to visit more often.

- Sergeant Rochelle Thompson, the program supervisor with the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office, visits one to three different schools each week.

- Captain Tim Carney in Sarasota County expects each supervisor to visit unannounced each high school and middle school to which his SROs are assigned at least once a week and each elementary school at least every other week.

- Lieutenant Chris Hagwood, supervisor of the Garner, North Carolina, Police Department program, tries to observe the three SROs at their schools once a month, including observing them teach.

- The Boone Police Department supervisor drives by the high school most mornings so the principal knows he is accessible and available to discuss any issues or suggested improvements.

Visiting schools not only provides an opportunity to monitor the SROs' activities, it also **demonstrates to school administrators how important the police or sheriff's department considers the program to be**.

Some supervisors in smaller departments do not place much emphasis on visits because they say they are confident that, because of their close relationships with

school administrators, principals and assistant principals will contact them quickly if there is a problem with the SROs. However, as explained above, this confidence can be misplaced (see the box above, "Even Well Qualified, Experienced SROs Need Supervision").

In some cases, ***supervisors plan their visits to observe SROs give presentations, teach classes, or supervise extracurricular events***.

• Supervisors in the Chula Vista, California, program observe the elementary school level SROs teach at least once a year, showing up at random and sitting in the back of the class. Sergeant William (Joe) Cline, one of the supervisors, believes "This is just sound supervision. As a supervisor, [by observing the SROs teach] you can better assess the skills and abilities of your staff for their yearly evaluations and for continuous feedback, praise, and, when necessary, development."

• In addition to observing SROs teach, Tucson, Arizona, Police Department supervisors go to selected after-school or weekend events that SROs run or play a prominent role in.

Of course, most supervisors visit the schools immediately whenever there is a major problem that requires a ranking officer's attention.

*Maintain Telephone or Radio Communication*

Program supervisors in one program rely heavily on telephoning SROs to keep tabs on what they are doing and anticipate any problems. Many other departments issue cell phones or pagers to their SROs to help maintain contact between officers and program supervisors.

| **Dispatchers Track SRO Activities in One Program** |
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| In a small site in Kentucky, the SRO calls in his activities to the law enforcement dispatch center. When a new activity starts, he radios in and the dispatcher records the precise time and activity category (e.g., "going on patrol now;" "responding to call to investigate possible drug use;" "going to teach driver ed now"). Of course, patrol officers and road deputies in all agencies radio their dispatchers when they initiate an activity and have "cleared" a scene. However, the dispatch system in this community calculates time spent on each activity and can aggregate time spent on various activities on a weekly or any other basis. |

*Survey Students*

The supervisor of the Jefferson City, Missouri, program conducts surveys of randomly selected 7th, 9th, and 12th grade students on perceptions of safety and opinions of the SRO, asking such questions as, "Does the SRO help you feel better about the police?" "Does your SRO attend extracurricular events?" "Are you able to talk easily with your SRO?" When the data showed that several students did not know who or where one SRO was, the supervisor instructed the officer to be in front of the school when the buses arrived and to walk through the cafeteria at lunch.

*Survey Teachers*

The Lenoir County Sheriff's Office administers a formal survey twice a year to teachers asking about the faculty's:

• perceptions of their own safety and safety of the school;
• knowledge and interactions with their school's SRO; and
• opinions of the officers' performance in such areas as visibility, rapport with students, communication skills, and impact on the school environment.

The program supervisor uses the information to improve the program. For example, when several teachers reported that the SROs were not in the school enough, the supervisor tried to reduce the number of times the officers were pulled from the schools to attend court.

*Formally Evaluate SRO Performance*

Several programs report that developing a strong performance evaluation system for SROs is important to:

• be able to identify areas in which SROs need to improve;
• learn how to increase the effectiveness of the program as a whole;
• hold the department accountable for the program's performance;
• provide a method of securing school administrators' comments on the program and on individual SROs' strengths and weaknesses; and
• secure information that can be used to market and sustain the program.

In many cases, departments evaluate SROs using the same criteria they use for assessing patrol officer performance. However, several supervisors in the study reported that the information they obtain from this type of assessment makes it difficult to identify how the SROs' performance might be improved, while some SROs report that the questions are unsatisfying to them because the assessment fails to consider the unique activities they perform in the schools. As a result, many

departments included in the study use one of two approaches to monitoring the specific behavior SROs engage in:

- ***Include additional performance measures in the standard performance evaluation that make it more applicable to SROs.*** For example, the Garner Police Department uses a performance appraisal software to score patrol officers in five areas but includes two additional areas for SROs—teaching and counseling. For each of the two SRO-specific areas, the software identifies a number of specific focuses to help assess each officer's strength and weaknesses. For example, teaching includes:

   a) Comes to presentations well prepared.
   b) Organizes information in a logical and pedagogic manner.
   c) Meets the needs of the audience (faculties or students).
   d) Stimulates public interest and attention.
   e) Motivates learners to take action when needed.
   f) Leaves room for questions and discussions.

By retaining the measures for patrol officers but including measures tailored to the SROs' work, departments and SROs are able to maintain some consistency in their performance reviews as the officers make the transition from street work to school work and back.

- ***Develop and use only performance measures that are specific to the SRO position***, such as classroom teaching, relating to students, and working well with school administrators. According to Jim Aquilo, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent in Plain Local School District in Stark County, Ohio, school administrators developed their own SRO assessment measures to make sure the measures addressed the school district's needs in having an SRO in the schools (see appendix A). The Sarasota County program has also developed performance measures tailored to the unique work SROs perform (see the case study at the end of the chapter). Furthermore, the program's evaluation procedure provides for the supervisor and SRO to develop a written plan and a mutually agreed-upon 30-, 60-, or 90-day deadline by which the officer will remedy any problems. Five law enforcement agencies, with assistance from the COPS Office, have developed specific outcome goals for SROs and identified ways of measuring how well the officers have achieved each goal (see the box "SRO Performance Measures That Five Law Enforcement Agencies Developed").

**Involve School Administrators in Assessing SRO Performance**
Many programs have found it extremely helpful to involve school administrators in helping to assess their SROs' performance.

*Why Involve School Administrators*

Programs offer a number of compelling reasons for bringing principals and assistant principals into the assessment process.

• Principals and assistant principals can usually assess SROs' performance in ways that program supervisors cannot because **school administrators have vastly more contact with SROs**. In effect, because of their daily contact with the SROs, they are the police agency's on-site "eyes and ears."

• Principals and assistant principals have a much better grasp than the law enforcement agency can ever have of **the problems in their schools that the SROs can help address**. For example, one school district asked its SRO to expand the topics included in his elementary school lesson plans after teachers and students requested that the officer cover other important issues besides gangs.

• Insofar as SRO programs represent collaboration between law enforcement and the schools, it is only logical that **there should be collaboration in terms of supervision**. In addition, including school administrators in the supervision of SROs conveys the message that they are valuable partners in the joint initiative.

• Supervisors who do not have the authority to replace SROs, or are uncertain about whether they will be supported if they ask their superiors for permission to remove an SRO, can **use administrator evaluations to buttress their case**. A principal turned in a written evaluation to the supervisor in one program documenting that the SRO was performing poorly and liked being an SRO only because of the weekday, daytime hours. The supervisor already knew about the problem but had been unable to remove the officer until he had the school administrator's negative evaluation.

Indeed, most good SROs *want* their school administrators to provide supervisors with their opinions of the officers' performance. Because school administrators in one school district do not evaluate their SROs, one SRO went out of his way to ask his assistant principal at the end of the school year to provide a written evaluation of him. "When my yearly evaluation [by the sheriff's office ] comes up, I want a record of what I have done and how well I did it, and how the administrator feels about my work."

## SRO Performance Measures That Five Law Enforcement Agencies Developed*

With funding from the COPS Office, Circle Solutions, Inc, a professional services firm in the Washington, D.C., area, piloted an outcome-oriented SRO performance evaluation process with five law enforcement agencies in six schools. For each SRO for the coming year, a group of SROs, their supervisors, and program "consumers"—students, faculty, staff, and parents—identified three to six goals specific to the crime and disorder problems in the officer's school. ***The consumer group designed measures to determine whether the SRO achieved the goals and helped collect the data.*** Throughout the school year, SROs implemented activities designed to achieve the goals and tracked their activities. At the end of the year, the consumer group reconvened to assess how well the SROs had achieved their goals. The purpose of these efforts was ***to integrate the findings into the SROs' performance evaluation*** and to use the findings to adjust the activities the SROs would implement during the following school year.

The matrix below identifies some of the goals and measures the group developed. The full project report, as well as a guide for replicating the SRO performance evaluation process, is available from www.copsinschools.org.

| Outcome Goals | Measures of Achievement |
|---|---|
| Reduce fights or bullying on campus | • Incident reports for fights<br>• Discipline referrals for fighting or attempting to fight<br>• Suspensions for assaults, fighting, or threats<br>• Police crime reports on assaults and battery |
| Reduce gang activity on school grounds | • Student survey on threats, victimization, and knowledge of anti-bullying strategies<br>• Student survey on the prevalence of gang behaviors<br>• Parent survey regarding their knowledge of gang signs and behavior<br>• School staff survey regarding knowledge of gang signs and behaviors, and prevalence of gang behaviors |
| Improve trust and relationships between SRO and students | • Student survey regarding familiarity with SROs and comfort level approaching them |
| Reduce the incidence of drug violations by students in school | • Incident reports of use or sales<br>• Arrest reports<br>• Student referrals for alcohol or drug use |
| Reduce neighborhood offenses (e.g., criminal mischief, robbery) by students during school hours | • Calls for service<br>• Crime reports |

\* Information provided by Circle Solutions, Inc., McLean, Virginia: (703) 821-8955.

*Areas of SRO Performance That Programs Can Ask School Administrators to Review*

Typically, programs provide school administrators with a specific set of questions to answer in assessing SRO performance. Appendixes B and C present the assessment forms that the Olympia, Washington, and Pine Bluffs, Arkansas, police departments distribute to school administrators. The box "Sample Performance Areas and Measures That School Administrators Can Use to Assess SRO Performance" lists some of the areas of SRO performance that programs frequently ask school administrators to assess and some of the ways administrators can evaluate the officers' performance in each area of performance.

| Sample Performance Areas and Measures That School Administrators Can Use to Assess SRO Performance | |
| --- | --- |
| **Performance Areas** | **Sample Assessment Criteria** |
| Professionalism | ☐ Demeanor<br>☐ Appearance<br>☐ Punctuality<br>☐ Discretion |
| Communication Skills | ☐ Speaking ability<br>☐ Ability to verbalize effectively<br>☐ Listening skills |
| Knowledge of Job and Duties | ☐ Knowledge of laws and arrest powers<br>☐ Knowledge of reporting responsibilities |
| Job Performance | ☐ Classroom management skills<br>☐ Teaching skills<br>☐ Participation in extracurricular activities<br>☐ Productivity<br>☐ Handling noncriminal incidents<br>☐ Conflict resolution |
| Community Relations | ☐ Accessibility to students<br>☐ Relationship with parents<br>☐ Relationship with teachers |
| Crisis Intervention | ☐ Crises and safety planning<br>☐ Handling criminal incidents<br>☐ Impact on the school environment |

*Rating Schemes*

After the program has identified the information it will solicit from school administrators, it needs to consider **how performance will be measured**. The box "Examples of Methods School Administrators Use to Rate SRO Performance" suggests a variety of different rating schemes. Most departments ask administrators to rate officer performance in specific areas using a 3-, 4-, or 5-point scale, which provides degrees of agreement or disagreement with each performance measure.

Most programs ask school administrators to answer a few open-ended questions regarding the SROs' strengths and weaknesses, suggest areas for improvement, or explain the choice of a low rating  Supervisors can use such supporting information during performance reviews to reinforce their recommendations to the SROs for why and how they need to improve.

| Examples of Methods School Administrators Use to Rate SRO Performance | |
|---|---|
| **Performance Area** | **Rating Scheme** |
| Organizational skills (e.g., scheduling, flow of material, dependability) | Scale of 1 to 5 (5 highest, 1 lowest) |
| Desire to have this particular SRO Officer return to your school next year (as a guideline, a rating of "3" indicates that you would be content with any SRO Officer, including this one; a "5" means you absolutely want him/her to return, specifically; a "1" would indicate that another officer should be assigned to your school) | Scale of 1 to 5 (5 highest, 1 lowest) |
| Provides security in and around building, particularly at student arrival and departure times | 1= meets standard of school district; 2 = sometimes meets the standard; 3 = needs improvement |
| Assists in mediating disputes in a non-violent manner | 1= meets standard of school district; 2 = sometimes meets the standard; 3 = needs improvement |
| Judgment-ability to accurately assess situations and act accordingly | 4-point scale (poor, fair, good, excellent) |
| Professionalism-presents a good image with appearance and actions | 4-point scale (poor, fair, good, excellent) |
| Effectiveness as a teacher<br>a. Control of classroom  c. Preparation<br>b. Content of classes   d. Interest in students | 5-point scale (strongly agree, agree, don't know, disagree, strongly disagree) |
| Officer's presence contributes to an increased perception of safety | 5-point scale (strongly agree, agree, don't know, disagree, strongly disagree) |

*Approaches to Involving Schools in Evaluating the SROs and the SRO Program*

The program coordinator should collaborate with appropriate school administrators in determining what would, on the one hand, ***provide the least burdensome way principals and assistant principals can provide their assessments*** yet, on the other hand, ***furnish the program with the most useful information about its SROs***. In some programs, school administrators have developed their own forms.

- The Stark County Sheriff's Office encourages administrators from each of its five partner school districts to review the performance of its SROs at least annually. Two of the school districts developed specific reporting forms for this purpose. Jim Aquillo, Plain Local School District Assistant Administrator to the Superintendent in charge of security, together with a school superintendent in a near-by school district, developed an evaluation form. They based the form on examples the SROs had brought back from National Association of School Resource Officer (NASRO) conferences but revised them to reflect their two SROs' unique job descriptions. They made sure that the evaluation measures were related to what the SROs were in fact supposed to be doing (see appendix A). Twice a year, Aquillo sends the form to all 11 principals in his school district, summarizes the results he gets back, and submits them to the Stark County Sheriff's Office SRO program supervisor.

A few programs add interesting innovations to their approaches to involving school administrators in the assessment process.

- In addition to formally requesting annual evaluations from teachers and administrators, when Sergeant Rochelle Thompson, the program supervisor in Oklahoma County, visits different schools each week, she takes six copies of an evaluation form to hand out randomly to teachers, coaches, and administrators she happens to run into in the corridors to verify that the SROs are making themselves visible in the schools.

- The Tucson Police Department's annual review of each SRO includes written comments from the municipal court's prosecuting attorneys-for example, assessing the officer's ability to testify effectively and the thoroughness and accuracy of his or her written reports and investigative skills. Program supervisors telephone the attorneys for their verbal evaluations.

- The captain in charge of the Sarasota County program makes the program's three first-line supervisors responsible for getting written evaluations returned by at least three administrators for each SRO—for example, a principal, assistant principal, and teacher.

In addition to addressing in-person with school administrators and SROs any problems or issues their evaluations raise, supervisors should review the assessments to note and address any areas where administrators' expectations of the SROs' performance may be inconsistent with the supervisors' understanding of the officers' job duties.

## Supervisors

Supervisors need to devote adequate time and care to monitoring the SROs' activities to be able to reliably assess the officers' performance. Programs also stress that it is essential either to select supervisors who are already qualified to supervise SROs or else train them in how to supervise SROs.

### Establish a Realistic Ratio of Supervisors to SROs

There is no established standard for an effective ratio of supervisors to SROs. Most of the programs in the study have only one supervisor, even when the program has several SROs. For example the Oklahoma County program supervisor monitors 12 SROs, while the King County, Washington, supervisor is responsible for 10 full-time SROs and 25 part-time SROs. Some supervisors may not be able to monitor such a large number of SROs properly. As a result, when the Pinellas County, Florida, School District Police Department saw the need for increased supervision of its SROs, it negotiated with the school district to give up one-and-one-half of its SROs in return for funding an additional supervisor.

A number of other programs have more than one supervisor, typically two or more sergeants working under a higher ranking officer who frequently has other responsibilities in addition to running the SRO program (see the box "Sample Ratios of Supervisors to SROs").

### Select Supervisors Carefully for the Position

Most departments have no formal procedures for selecting supervisors for the SRO program beyond what is required by the labor-management agreement or agency policies and procedures. As one supervisor said, "There is no rhyme or reason in the selection process" in his agency. In small police departments and sheriff's agencies, chiefs or sheriffs typically identify one of their few ranking officers to supervise the SRO—or supervise the SRO themselves. In many larger agencies, the supervisor assumes the responsibility by virtue of having been promoted to supervisor of the unit in which the SRO program is housed—for example, the juvenile bureau or community relations division.

| Sample Ratios of Supervisors to SROs |
|---|
| • *Virginia Beach:* An administrative captain and 4 sergeants supervise 30 SROs. <br><br> • *Albuquerque:* 2 sergeants supervise the 20-person SRO/G.R.E.A.T. unit, each responsible for 15 schools (10 middle schools, 5 high schools). <br><br> • *Chula Vista:* 2 sergeants and 2 field agents supervise the program's 18 SROs. Each sergeant handles officers at 49 different schools. <br><br> • *Tucson:* Each of 3 sergeants supervises 8 SROs. <br><br> • *Palm Beach County:* Each of 13 lieutenants (the department has no sergeants) supervises about 10 SROs. <br><br> • *Sarasota County*: 3 sergeants and 1 captain supervise 27 SROs (see the case study at the end of the chapter). |

However, departments that have developed formal, detailed procedures for screening candidates for SRO supervisor positions report the ***process results in the selection of qualified individuals who can best ensure that the program is properly monitored***.

• *Tucson:* The Human Resources Division opens up the application process at the request of Rick Hovden, a lieutenant in the bureau in which the SRO program is housed. Interested sergeants send memorandums of interest to the Human Resources Division, which forwards them to Hovden. The lieutenant rates applicants based on what is written in the memo, the person's qualifications, a review of personnel files, and other considerations. He then interviews each applicant or, if there are several applicants and he so chooses, he convenes an interview panel.

• *Chula Vista:* The supervisor is a four-year assignment. After the position has been announced, applicants go before an oral board, which chooses the person.

• *Palm Beach:* Candidates must past a written test, role play scenarios in front of an interview panel of supervisors from other law enforcement agencies, be interviewed by a panel of department captains, and be appointed, after an interview, by the chief (see the case study at the end of the chapter).

***A few programs require applicants to have been SROs.*** Of course, this is not feasible when a program is just beginning or the current SROs do not want or are not suitable for the position. However, when it is an option, the experience can be invaluable for effective program monitoring. An SRO in one police department complained that his program supervisors are "not familiar with the program and may not understand why an SRO handled a situation in a particular way, because there are differences in how the same problem may be handled in the school versus on the street." Sergeant Richard Davies, a former SRO in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, reported that his supervisor once wrote him up because, after a few years, the SRO's arrests were down. "The upper echelon, using a departmentwide evaluation measure that rates officers on number of arrests, did not understand that I had finally brought the school under control to where I did not need to make so many arrests." The higher-ups told Davies' immediate supervisor (who ***did*** understand that the measure did not apply to SROs) to "counsel" Davies. Reflecting these problems, the Maury County Sheriff's Department eventually added experience as an SRO as a selection criterion because, according to Captain Nathan Johns, "Supervisors need to be able to relate to the issues brought up at the weekly meetings because they had once been in those shoes."

## Train Supervisors

Few of the programs in the study train program supervisors in how to monitor SROs. (The 2002 NASRO School Resource Officer Survey—contact Resourcer@aol.com or call 888-31-NASRO—also found that "school-based law enforcement supervisors are not specially trained in the supervision of school-based officers.") Some supervisors, however, have had related experience or training that improves their suitability to monitor the SROs' performance. For example, Sergeant Jerry Thommes, the current police department SRO supervisor in Schaumburg, was the school liaison officer at the local high school where, unlike most liaisons, he taught 20 class periods a semester. He had also attended a 40-hour NASRO training, becoming certified as an SRO.

Even when supervisors have been SROs themselves, ***training can give them guidance in effective methods of assessing SRO performance and providing constructive criticism***. After all, patrol officers or road deputies who are promoted to sergeant—even though they have been on patrol for years—go to sergeant's training school before they are thrown out on the streets supervising a group of officers or deputies. Reflecting this perspective, new supervisors in Palm Beach County do ride-alongs with experienced supervisors before taking on the new position (see the case study below).

As Sergeant Jerry Thommes did, supervisors with no personal experience as SROs can attend one of the basic SRO courses offered by several organizations (see chapter 5, "Training SROs") to learn what SROs should be doing—and not doing—for purposes of assessing their performance. At least two organizations also offer specialized training for SRO supervisors:

• NASRO offers a 24-hour SRO Management Symposium designed to provide managers with "information, skills and strategies to develop, coordinate, and maintain a successful SRO program in their school community"—see www.nasro.org/course_management.asp.

• Corbin & Associates, Inc., offers a 24-hour Supervision and Management of School-Based Law Enforcement Programs that covers the SRO position "from the selection interview, through performance reviews, to the removal of problem officers"—see www.srotraining.com/description.html. The sergeant who supervises the Lakewood SRO program attended this course.

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*

The case studies that follow illustrate how three programs have gone about providing timely and thorough training for their SROs.

• In addition to requiring SROs to complete activity logs, the program operated by the Sarasota County, Florida, Sheriff's Office formally evaluates SROs twice a year with mandatory school administrator participation. The agency's StarTrac meetings, a departmentwide accountability tool patterned after New York City's Compstat sessions, provide an opportunity for the program to explain its activities and successes and a chance for the sheriff and majors to ask pointed questions about what the program is doing and how it can improve—and publicly commend high quality performance.

• The Maury County, Tennessee, Sheriff's Department requires SROs to complete an activity log every other week that provides 29 pieces of information. Program supervisors compare the information in the logs over time and across schools, and submit the reports to the county board of education and the county commission. The department holds a mandatory weekly meeting for all SROs and SRO supervisors which the sheriff often attends that enables SROs and supervisors to identify and resolve any problems. All candidates for supervisor must have experience as SROs.

• The Palm Beach County School District Police Department's process for selecting and training front-line supervisors is especially thorough. Candidates must be recommended by their supervisors; pass a written test on State and county law and the department's own general orders; role play scenarios in front of an interview panel of supervisors from other law enforcement agencies; and be interviewed and scored by a panel of department captains. Applicants who pass are sent to a police academy for 40 hours of management training and, when a supervisory position opens up, spend four days doing ride-alongs with experienced supervisors.

## Case Study: Sarasota County, Florida, Sheriff's Department (500 sworn)

Three sergeants devote full-time to supervising 27 SROs. A captain who commands the Youth Services Bureau, Tim Carney, spends full-time overseeing the entire program. Carney was an SRO himself for eight years.

Openings for supervisor are posted agencywide, and Carney either selects someone on his own or convenes a panel of officers, including existing SRO supervisors, to interview the candidates. Having been an SRO weighs heavily in favor of the applicant—as a result, most supervisors have been SROs.

As described below, the program relies on several methods of supervising SROs:

• SRO activity logs;
• StarTrac meetings;
• visits to schools to talk with administrators and observe SROs teach;
• formal twice-yearly evaluations of SRO performance; and
• formal participation by school administrators.

### SRO Activity Logs

Supervisors make use of SRO logs to help monitor the officers' activities.

• An SRO's log indicated that he had not taught any classes during the previous six weeks. While the supervisor told the captain that the SRO was doing a lot of coaching "and the kids love him," and the other SRO at the school was doing considerable teaching, Captain Tim Carney still told the supervisor to tell the SRO to get into the classroom more.

• After a lewd and indecent incident at a school, the SRO documented in his log that he had submitted a school report. According to the SRO, "When Captain Carney read my log, he wanted to know why I hadn't submitted a police report. I told him that the victim's parents wanted the problem handled administratively, and I had documented that."

- Another SRO said, "We have to teach certain classes for certain grade levels, and the log now shows the status of all the classes—how far we are along in teaching each course for each grade level. That way, supervisors can warn you, for example, that the school year is coming to an end and you haven't started or completed a particular course you're responsible for teaching every year. My supervisor once pointed out to me that I hadn't completed one of my teaching assignments. I explained that the 3rd and 4th grade teachers were tied up every class teaching for the FCAT [Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test] given in March, so they would not let me in their classrooms until after the test. But this shows that the supervisors are tracking the SROs' progress through our reports."

SROs submit their logs to the program secretary a few days before each StarTrac meeting (see below); supervisors screen them for errors or unusual entries and then review the statistics together before presenting them at StarTrac.

## StarTrac Meetings

The sheriff's office has adopted a variation on the New York City Compstat system, called StarTrac, involving a meeting every six weeks of top command staff (sheriff, majors) to review each bureau's activities (e.g., special operations, day shift operations) during the preceding month-and-a-half and to follow up on issues raised at the previous meeting. A number of other ranking officers attend as observers. Bureau commanders give PowerPoint presentations describing their units' activities. The sheriff and majors ask questions, criticize failures and discuss remedies, and praise good performance.

***The Youth Services Bureau—consisting entirely of the SRO program—presents an update on the SRO program at each meeting.*** The box "A StarTrac Meeting Discussion About the SRO Program" illustrates how the procedure helps to hold SROs—and their supervisors—accountable for their activities and time. "There is so much more accountability with StarTrac," one SRO said. "You need to be able to account for your numbers [on your logs]."

## Visits to Schools

The previous commander had wanted the supervisors to remain in the office to be available in case an emergency occurred that they would need to address on short notice. The new captain, Tim Carney, ***wanted supervisors to be more visible on campus where they could supervise the SROs and meet frequently with principals to identify problems with the SROs early*** rather than getting "blindsided" by the news of problems at the end of each year during the principals' annual evaluation of the SROs. In addition, with the advent of cell phones, the supervisors, even if they were at a school could be contacted and respond immediately in the event of a crisis.

| **A StarTrac Meeting Discussion About the SRO Program** |
|---|

Captain Tim Carney, commander of the Youth Services Bureau, presents a 30-minute report and then answers questions about the SRO program, including reading letters of commendation for three SROs. Carney displays charts of crime statistics for the schools countywide and then for each school in the district. Each chart (see the examples in appendixes D and E) shows:

- statistics for the current reporting period (i.e., previous six weeks), the previous reporting period, and the differences between the two; and
- current and previous year-to-date statistics, and the differences between the two.

Another matrix identifies the specific meetings the SROs have attended (e.g., Kiwanis, Boy Scouts), the dates, and the names of the SROs who attended.

A major asks a series of questions:

- "What were the circumstances surrounding the bomb threat?"
- "It looks like three of your SROs were stuck with the really tough assignment of chaperoning Grad Night. How did that go?"
- "Why has [the crime of] battery gone down so much in the schools compared with the previous reporting period?"
    Carney: "Kids get squirrelly this time of year and get suspended, plus the bullying curriculum."
- "Why have disturbances gone down?"
    Carney: "Spring break reduces the number because school is not in session."
- Sheriff: "Do kids calm down because they're afraid of not graduating?"
    Carney: "Yes."
- Major: "Look into why disturbances are down to make sure there aren't problems that aren't going unrecorded."
    Carney: "We will check into that."

The sheriff congratulates an SRO who recovered a valuable piccolo that had been stolen. After a description of how the SROs handled a bomb scare, a major says, "Good job."

Sergeant Tim Enos, one of the three supervising sergeants, then gives a presentation on prom/graduation alcohol prevention activities. The sheriff says, "very good—you're doing a good job. It's a whole community effort. Excellent."

Carney's goal is for each supervisor to visit—unannounced—each high school and middle school to which his SROs are assigned at least once a week and each elementary school at least every other week. This can be difficult at times because the schools are so spread out. However, one school principal reported that "Carney has the supervisors come out [to the schools] a lot to talk with the principals and assistant principals. The principals are often in the rotunda area at the beginning of the day, and the supervisors can easily ask how things are going."

Carney requires that supervisors observe their SROs teach at least once each year to be able to evaluate them in this area on the annual assessment form. While observing a new SRO teach, Sergeant Tim Enos noticed that the deputy allowed a student to crack jokes to other nearby students during the class until the SRO eventually told him to be quiet or leave the class. After the class, Enos suggested that the SRO walk around the class and "spend time near the class 'clown'—don't stand next to the good kids."

**Formal Evaluations of SRO Performance**

Supervisors complete semi-annual and annual reviews of each SRO. For both reviews, supervisors give a performance management rating of "exceeds standard," "meets standard," or "fails."

Following the department's procedure in its General Orders for all personnel, if an SRO gets a less than satisfactory rating on an item, the supervisor can give the officer 30, 60, or 90 days to bring the work up to a satisfactory level.

- A supervisor gave an SRO who got an unsatisfactory rating on "coming to work on time" 30 days to come on time every day. The supervisor then went to the school periodically over the next two months and checked with the school principal to make sure the SRO arrived on time. If the SRO had failed to improve his performance, he would have received additional counseling from the supervisor, then a written reprimand, then termination from the program.

- A patrol officer once wrote a reprimand on an SRO he saw swear at a student and "get in his face." The SRO supervisor gave the officer 60 days in which to have no complaints filed against him for profanity; counseled him on the need to behave in a professional manner; and explained why swearing was not acceptable. Because the SRO admitted to having "lost it" and sworn at the student, and apologized for his behavior, the supervisor recommended to Captain Tim Carney that the officer not lose a day's pay, and the captain agreed.

**Involving the Schools in Evaluating the SROs**

At the end of each school year, supervisors give school administrators an SRO Evaluation Form on which to record their assessments of their SROs. The form provides the opportunity to rate the officers as poor, fair, good, and excellent in 20 different areas, such as "Availability" and "Amount of Classroom Participation" (see the box "School Administrator Criteria for Rating SRO Performance"). The form also provides space for a written description of the officer's strengths, suggestions for improvement, and additional comments.

***Program supervisors must receive evaluations by at least three administrators for each SRO***—for example, a principal, assistant principal, and teacher. If the forms are not returned, Sergeant Tim Enos reminds the administrators to complete them. Supervisors total the ratings for an overall score and discuss it with the SROs.

The previous year, in his evaluation and year-end discussion with the SRO, an elementary school principal noted the need for the officer to get more comfortable with younger kids and relate to them—"Little kids are afraid of cops," the principal observed. The SRO needed to get into the lower grade classrooms, have a targeted program for them, and establish rapport with their teachers. The principal reported that the following year the SRO had improved considerably in this area. "Last year's evaluation meeting was very beneficial in producing this change." The principal also commented that teachers in effect give feedback on the SRO's teaching because "for them to give up a class a week to the SRO in this age of teacher accountability suggests that the SRO must be good."

***Robyn Marinelli, the school district's supervisor of student services, periodically attends the captain's regular meetings with the SROs.*** "One big problem [that she brought up at these meetings] is that high school principals forget the SROs don't work for the school district. For example, the administrators want the SROs available for evening activities but can't make them come, so they call me and I call Captain Carney."

Marinelli and Carney also review each school at the end of the year but, because they talk regularly throughout the year, there are rarely any surprises in June.

| School Administrator Criteria for Rating SRO Performance |
|---|
| **Judgment:** Ability to accurately assess situations and act accordingly. <br> **Dependability:** Can be counted on to perform assigned duties with little supervision. <br> **Availability:** Is accessible when needed and makes self visible on campus. <br> **Handling of Non-Criminal Incidents:** Handles miscellaneous incidents appropriately. <br> **Conflict Resolution:** (Students, Staff, Parents) Able to deescalate conflict situations. <br> **Teamwork/Relationship with Faculty:** Has established a rapport with, and is considered a part of, the administrative team. <br> **Amount of Classroom Participation:** Promotes SRO presentations, good classroom resource. <br> **Involvement in School-Related Activities:** (active in clubs, conferences, athletics, programs, etc.) Is active during and after school. <br> **"Going the Extra Mile":** Goes beyond what is expected. |

Finally, the school district conducts an annual survey of students, parents, and teachers on school climate, including fear of crime. However, because usually 80-90 percent of respondents report feeling safe, Marinelli has never raised the survey results with Carney.

## Case Study: Maury County, Tennessee, Sheriff's Department (61 sworn)

A captain spends about 20 percent of his time supervising the administration of the Maury County program, while two sergeants (who are also SROs) provide day-to-day supervision for nine SROs each. The department had tried having one lieutenant supervise the whole program but found that one person could not supervise 20 officers across the county's 612 square miles.

The sergeants are responsible for answering questions from their SROs, dealing with serious incidents at the schools, visiting the schools, and conducting SRO performance reviews. While all sergeants in the department are promoted through *the civil service process, the department added a requirement that candidates for SRO supervisor have experience as SROs to increase their competence*.

Supervisors monitor the SROs through:

• bi-weekly activity logs;
• weekly meetings; and
• annual evaluations that include participation by school administrators.

**SRO Logs**

The program monitors the day-to-day activities of SROs using detailed, comprehensive bi-weekly activity reports prepared by each officer. The 29 pieces of information called for in each report range from the number of offense reports completed, to the number of gang-related incidents investigated, to the number of advisory sessions held with students, parents, and teachers (see appendix F).

Supervising sergeants and the captain review the reports, making comparisons over time and across schools. The supervisors use the reports to identify potential problems. For example, when the number of assaults in a school increased and the number of hours the SRO was spending teaching decreased, a sergeant suggested the SRO spend more time teaching conflict resolution in an effort to decrease the level of violence in the school.

***The department submits the reports to the county board of education and the county commission to document how SROs are spending their time.*** A county commissioner said, "The reports help the commission understand how productive the SROs really are and also demonstrate that SROs are not just dealing with students but also with the public."

**Weekly Meetings**

Every Wednesday for an hour the department holds a mandatory meeting at headquarters for all SROs and SRO supervisors that the sheriff also often attends. The primary purpose of the meeting is to bring all staff together to share information and discuss department and program-specific issues. The department also uses the meetings to provide brief presentations regarding recent trends or to invite a local service provider, such as the fire department, to discuss safety presentations that could be made at the schools at the SROs' request. The meetings serve an important supervisory function because ***they give SROs the opportunity to ask supervisors questions—and vice versa—and have in-person discussions about problems or trends***.

**Performance Reviews**

The sergeants review the SROs' performance twice a year, once informally and once formally (using a generic county government form used with all department deputies). During both reviews, sergeants meet with school administrators to discuss any problem areas and request that the administrators complete an SRO Development Report. This report asks administrators to rate the SROs on a 1-3 scale in 10 areas and to provide written comments as needed (see the box "Areas in Which School Administrators Rate SRO Performance").

| Sample Evaluation Areas on Which School Administrators Rate SRO Performance |
|---|

**Attendance:** Presents on job assignment when required; attends extracurricular activities

**Human relations skills:** Tactful with staff, children and the public

**Personal appearance:** Cleanliness and neatness of uniform

**Knowledge of responsibilities:** Understands and keeps current on laws, administrative orders, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations

**Practical judgment:** Capacity to handle self in routine and complicated situations, independent functioning

**Problem-solving:** Completes tasks without specific instruction and supervision

**Instructional:** Actively instructs safety, law related, or drug education classes

**Advisor:** Makes self available to meet with students, staff, and parents

**Law enforcement:** Takes appropriate action when necessary

**Team-oriented:** Motivates self to be a part of the overall school environment

## Case Study: Palm Beach County, Florida, School District Police Department (149 Sworn)

Because the program must cover a 40-by-50 square mile area, the Palm Beach School District Police Department divides the county into geographic zones for supervision purposes, with one lieutenant each (the department has no sergeants) assigned to supervise 8-12 SROs and 10-15 schools in a single zone. A single lieutenant supervises most of the elementary school SROs regardless of zone.

**Supervision**

Supervisors monitor SROs in a number of ways, using:
• weekly activity logs;
• reviews of arrest reports;
• visits to schools;
• annual evaluations; and
• assessments from school administrators.

*SRO Logs*

Members of the department have to turn in to their supervisors a daily log of where they have been and why. SROs log in their time and place as they change activities and travel. SROs fax or drop off the logs on Mondays. According to one SRO, "My lieutenant has never questioned my logs, but having to fill them in makes sure SROs are where they're supposed to be."

*Review of Arrest Reports*

SROs submit all their arrest reports to their lieutenants, who may provide comments such as, "This was not well written," "You didn't provide enough evidence to sustain probable cause for this arrest," or "Maybe in the future you don't want to make an arrest again in this situation." Supervisors make SROs fix inadequate reports and, if necessary, require them take a course on report writing at a community college.

According to one supervisor, some new SROs were writing sub par reports and were reluctant to improve their writing, but he has been able to get them to write better reports. After one SRO had reread an old report he had written, he thanked the lieutenant because he saw the dramatic improvement between the earlier report and in his most recent reports.

*Visits to Schools*

Supervisors visit schools regularly. Some talk only with the SROs, but most visit school administrators while at the school. One administrator reported that he sees supervisors coming by frequently to check up on the SROs in his school.

*Annual Evaluation*

Each supervising lieutenant completes an annual evaluation for each SRO under his or her supervision (see appendix C in chapter 5, "Training SROs"—this is the same form that FTOs fill in daily and supervising lieutenants complete for 16 months while new SROs are still on probation). The evaluation covers 12 areas, ranging from appearance, to report writing, to interpersonal effectiveness with peers, administrators, students, and the community. Supervisors use a 7-point rating scale with 1 "not acceptable," 2 "development needed," 3-5 "acceptable," and 6-7 "superior." As illustrated in the box "Sample Guidelines for Completing Performance-Based Evaluation," there is an 11-page set of detailed guidelines that FTOs and supervisors follow in filling in the evaluation form. The supervisor shares his or her evaluation with the SRO, and both sign it before it goes up the chain of command.

## A Day in the Life of an SRO Supervisor in the Palm Beach School District Police Department

Lieutenant Rob Woods supervises 10 SROs in 7 schools, plus their elementary feeder schools. Woods typically starts work between 7:00-7:30 a.m. by going to the high school, the busiest of his schools, to meet with the two SROs there to review any problems they may be experiencing, such as a gang-related problem or a shooting on a beach the night before that may spill over into the school. He also reviews any upcoming events to make sure there will be enough officers scheduled to cover them and to set up a plan to supervise the officers.

At 9:00 a.m., Woods goes to the next school, picking one that has had recent problems. Later in the day, he meets with the principals at the elementary schools on their needs and concerns—for example, a number of vehicle burglaries in one school, parents demanding things at another school, and parents wanting more police involvement at a third school. Sometimes, elementary principals call him with a problem, and he assigns an SRO to handle it.* Elementary school principals are told to call dispatch or him if they need help so that the SROs cannot claim, "I never got called"—an effort at holding the SROs accountable. Woods gets to about six schools on a typical day, driving 60-70 miles a day.

While at each school, Woods reviews the SROs' arrest reports to check their accuracy (e.g., application of the correct statute) and comprehensiveness ("some cops try to use shortcuts in reports, so I sometimes have to ask them to expand on them"). He reviews the reports at the schools with the SROs so he can give the officers immediate comments.

Wood's day officially ends at about 4:00 p.m. But at home he finishes paperwork that he usually does not have time to take care of during the day, ranging from nominating SROs for awards to memos to the captain on his exam schedule.

Woods also goes to after-school events, sometimes staying all evening or day (on weekends) at a single event or moving from event to event. In the case of a game involving two long-time rivals, he supervised 30 SROs handling 10,000 kids, making sure the SROs were appropriately assigned and looking out for potential danger. Woods coordinates with administrators or teachers assigned to the events, with access to the administrators' home phone numbers in case something happens.

*Because of geographic considerations, Woods is the only lieutenant responsible for the elementary schools in his geographic area along with the area's middle and high school SROs. Another lieutenant is responsible for the SROs in all the other elementary schools throughout the county.

*Involvement of School Administrators*

Supervisors meet with each school's principal at the end of each school year for an assessment of their SRO's performance that year. However, according to Kathleen Weigel, a high school principal, "While the lieutenant sits with me at the end of every year to evaluate my SRO, **there is usually nothing new to say because the supervisor is at the school two or three times a week and, if there are issues, we talk about them at that time**. So there are no surprises when the annual evaluation comes."

| Sample Guidelines for Completing Performance-Based Evaluation |
|---|

**Appearance**

 *Unacceptable*—Dirty shoes and wrinkled uniform. Uniform fits poorly or is improperly worn . . . . .
 *Acceptable*—Uniform neat and clean, fits and is worn properly  . . . . Shoes are shined.
 *Superior*—Uniform neat, clean and properly pressed. Leather is shined and shoes are spit-shined. Displays command presence.

**Report Writing**

 *Unacceptable*—Is unaware that a report or form needs to be completed/does not know what reports or forms to utilize.
 *Acceptable*—Is aware of commonly used forms/reports and understands their function  . . . . Completes with reasonable accuracy and thoroughness  . . . .
 *Superior*—Consistently makes accurate form selection and completes them without assistance  . . . .

**Interpersonal Skills**

 *Unacceptable*—Unable to properly establish communication lines with other [individuals whom the SRO has to work]  . . . . Participates in conduct that has the potential to/or places the department in a negative light  . . . .
 *Acceptable*—Actively works at establishing positive relationships  . . . .
 *Superior*—Establishes excellent rapport with others  . . . . Displays mastery in the resolution of conflicts.

**Supervisor Selection and Training**

As noted above, all supervisors are lieutenants—the department has no sergeants. Because lieutenants must come up through the ranks, all are former SROs with the department; about half have been FTOs in the department. Lieutenants have to have been in the department for at least two years and have earned 30 additional education credits.

Incentives to become a supervisor include unmarked take-home cruisers and a five percent pay raise. However, supervisors are on a 12-month schedule, because they have to cover summer schools, all of which are served by one or two department SROs.

To become eligible as a supervisor, an SRO has to:

(1)    be recommended by his or her supervisor (typically, a captain);

(2)    pass a written test on State and county law, the department's general orders and policies and procedures, and exercising leadership (the chief gives the applicant a reading list to study for the 100 multiple choice and true/false questions developed by a training consultant he hired to do the screening to keep himself out of the testing process);

(3)    role play scenarios in front of an interview panel of supervisors from other law enforcement agencies (see below); and

(4)    be interviewed and scored by a panel of department captains (the chief observes but does not score the applicant).

***The department contracts with a professional assessment center to assemble the oral panel consisting of ranking officers from other nearby law enforcement agencies.*** Candidates respond from beginning to end to four scenarios. Scenarios have included:

• counseling a problem SRO,
• giving a presentation to parents,
• dealing with a disgruntled SRO,
• managing a shooting scene, and
• responding during a town hall meeting that erupts into a fight.

Applicants simulate the entire problem-solving exercise from planning to paperwork to final presentation. Panel members score applicants on a rating of 1-25 on each scenario.

Each of the four steps is a pass/fail test. When a position opens up, the chief interviews all the candidates and selects one to fill the opening. ***The newly appointed supervisor does a ride-along with experienced lieutenants for four days before assuming his or her new responsibilities*** and attends 40 hours of management training.

# Appendix A

## Plain Local School District, Stark County, Ohio, SRO Performance Rating Guidelines

### PLAIN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
### APPRAISAL OF PERFORMANCE FOR SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

Name _____

Date: _____

Appraisal Period: From _____ through _____

*******************************************************************

EVALUATION TERMS
1 = Meets standard of school district
2 = Sometimes meets the standard
3 = Needs improvement

*******************************************************************

| | GOHS CC | TAFT MIDD | PVSA AVON | BARR DAY | FRAZ PC | WARS | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**I. PROTECTIVE ROLE**

1. Provides security in and around building, particularly at the arrival and departure of students.

2. Investigates threats, incidents, reports of bodily harm and property damage to all students, employees, and properties.

**II. OFFICER ROLE**

1. Applies expertise in presenting various subjects to students, such as basic understanding of laws, the role of the police office, conflict management strategies, etc.

2. Teaches students, school staff, and parents about law enforcement.

3. Maintains physical presence at school. The practice of eating lunch at the schools on a rotating basis enhances visibility.

4. Attends conferences and evening events as requested and prearranged by principal or administrative team.

**EVALUATION TERMS**
1 = Meets standard of school district
2 = Sometimes meets the standard
3 = Needs improvement

| | GOHS | CC | TAFT | MIDD | PVSA | AVON | BARR | DAY | FRAZ | PC | WARS | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **III. CONSULTANT ROLE** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Consults with school administration and staff on safety matters. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Investigates excessive absence of students. In consultation with the student's parents, discuss and advise them of legal requirements for school attendance. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **IV. COMMUNITY RELATIONS ROLE** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Serves on the safe schools community committees to serve as a liaison between school and law enforcement agency. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Maintains contact with Plain Local students who must appear in Juvenile Court by authorities for criminal or alleged criminal behavior. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **V. CRISIS INTERVENTION ROLE** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Assists in mediating disputes in a non-violent manner. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Assists in revising, monitoring and implementing crisis intervention plan. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Assists in time of crisis. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **VI. PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Adjusts to changes in procedure. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Accepts criticism or recognition gracefully. | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**EVALUATION TERMS**

1 = Meets standard of school district
2 = Sometimes meets the standard
3 = Needs improvement

| | GOHS | CC | TAFT | MIDD | PVSA | AVON | BARR | DAY | FRAZ | PC | WARS | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Grows professionally through study and participation in professional activities. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Works understandingly and cooperatively with teachers, administrators, fellow workers, and parents | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Promotes respect and takes pride in the profession. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Is loyal toward school policies and procedures. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Avoids taking negative comments into the community. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. Is discreet concerning confidential material and information. | | | | | | | | | | | | |

~ SUMMARY OF APPRAISAL ~

Signature of Appraisee: _____     Date: _____

Signature of Evaluator: _____     Date: _____

## Appendix B

## Olympia, Washington, Police Department SRO Evaluation Form

### OLYMPIA POLICE DEPARTMENT
### SRO EVALUATION FORM

S.R.O. NAME:
Date:
School:
Rating Period From:        To:
Evaluator's Name:

### INSTRUCTIONS

After carefully reading the performance traits listed below, the evaluator should rate the SRO by placing a check in the space provided. The evaluator may write related comments in the space provided beneath each factor.

At the conclusion of the evaluation, there is space available for the evaluator to include additional comments concerning the SRO's overall performance, this evaluation instrument, or the SRO program.

1.    **Job Knowledge: The information concerning work duties which an SRO should know to satisfactorily complete job assignments.**

   ❑    Effective
   ❑    Needs Improvement
   ❑    Not Effective

   Comments:

2.    **Attitude: The SRO's personal orientation, disposition, and general outlook toward work assignments, school employees, students, and the public.**

   ❑    Effective
   ❑    Needs Improvement
   ❑    Not Effective

   Comments:

3.   **Dependability: The SRO is prompt, regularly in attendance and communicates his work schedule.**

   ❑   Effective
   ❑   Needs Improvement
   ❑   Not Effective

   Comments:

4.   **Uses Effective Instructional Methods:**

   ❑   Effective
   ❑   Needs Improvement
   ❑   Not Effective

   Comments:

5.   **Does the SRO perform appropriate non-instructional functions necessary to the total school program:**

   ❑   Effective
   ❑   Needs Improvement
   ❑   Not Effective

   Comments:

6.   **Does the SRO intervene with students in an effective manner:**

   ❑   Effective
   ❑   Needs Improvement
   ❑   Not Effective

   Comments:

7.   **Evaluator's overall comments concerning SRO Program, SRO's performance, or evaluation suggestions:**

Appendix C

Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Police Department SRO Evaluation Form

# School Resource Officer Evaluation
To be completed by the Principal, or designee, of SRO's assigned school.

Officer _____     School _____

Date _____     Reviewer _____

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Dependability** | | | | | |
| Officer is at school when scheduled? | | | | | |
| Officer notifies personnel of schedule changes? | | | | | |
| Officer is on time for scheduled events? | | | | | |
| Can be counted on to perform duties with little or no supervision? | | | | | |
| **Availability** | | | | | |
| Officer is accessible to Staff and Students? | | | | | |
| Responds to requests in a timely manner? | | | | | |
| **Attitude** | | | | | |
| Displays positive, optimistic attitude? | | | | | |
| Officer presents a professional appearance? | | | | | |
| Officer is self-motivated / willing to take on new tasks? | | | | | |
| Officer works well with Staff and Administration? | | | | | |
| Officer appears committed to the School and Community? | | | | | |
| Officer accepts advice and criticism well? | | | | | |
| **Officer is an effective Teacher...?** | | | | | |
| A. Control of classroom | | | | | |
| B. Content of classes | | | | | |
| C. Preparation | | | | | |
| D. Interest in students | | | | | |
| **Officer as an effective Counselor....?** | | | | | |
| A. Officer is a good listener? | | | | | |
| B. Has good communication skills? | | | | | |
| C. Effective problem solver? | | | | | |
| Officer takes a proactive approach when appropriate? | | | | | |
| Officer uses good judgement? | | | | | |

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Don't Know | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Officer is knowledgeable...?** | | | | | |
| A. About State and Local Law | | | | | |
| B. About School Rules | | | | | |
| C. About the Criminal Justice System | | | | | |
| D. About local resources | | | | | |
| E. Job and duties on campus | | | | | |
| Officer takes proper law enforcement action when appropriate? | | | | | |
| Officer provides acceptable level of visibility? | | | | | |
| Officer's presence contributes to a higher perception of safety? | | | | | |
| Officer encourages input from the School and the Community? | | | | | |
| Officer meets the expectations of the faculty and Administration? | | | | | |

Comments or Concerns:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please return this form to:

Supervisor        _____        Received Date _____
Department        _____        Reviewed By   _____
St. Address       _____        Reviewed Date _____
City / State / Zip _____
Telephone         _____        Action Taken:
                                                   Filed ____
                                                   Filed & Forwarded Up-line ____

**Appendix D**

**Sarasota, Florida, Sheriff's Office StarTrac Crime Statistics for One High School**

**Sarasota Sheriff's Office**

**STARTRAC**

*Excellence Through Accountability*
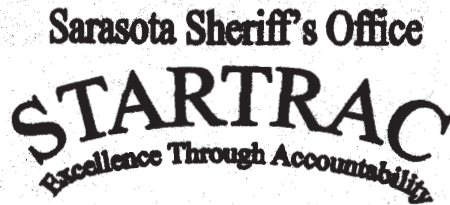
## CRIME STATISTICS FOR BOOKER HIGH SCHOOL

| | CURRENT REPORTING PERIOD ASSIGNED | PREVIOUS REPORTING PERIOD ASSIGNED | DIFF +/- | YTD ASSIGNED | PREVIOUS YTD ASSIGNED | DIFF +/- | PERCENT CHANGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alcohol | 0 | 1 | (1) | 1 | 0 | 1 | #DIV/0! |
| AOA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Arson | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Assault | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | #DIV/0! |
| Baker Act | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | #DIV/0! |
| Battery | 2 | 4 | (2) | 8 | 4 | 4 | 100.00% |
| Bomb Threat | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | (1) | -100.00% |
| Burglary - Structure | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Burglary - Vehicle | 0 | 1 | (1) | 1 | 0 | 1 | #DIV/0! |
| Child Abuse | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Criminal Mischief | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | (1) | -100.00% |
| Dis.School Function | 0 | 1 | (1) | 1 | 0 | 1 | #DIV/0! |
| Disturbance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | (1) | -100.00% |
| Drugs | 1 | 2 | (1) | 4 | 11 | (7) | -63.64% |
| Firearms | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Grand Theft | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Homicide | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Kidnapping | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Lewd & Lasc. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Missing/ Runaway | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | (2) | -100.00% |
| Petit Theft | 0 | 1 | (1) | 3 | 17 | (14) | -82.35% |
| Robbery | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Sexual Battery | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Suspicious Inc. | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | #DIV/0! |
| Trespass | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | (2) | -50.00% |
| Truancy | 0 | 5 | (5) | 5 | 0 | 5 | #DIV/0! |
| Weapons-Other | 0 | 1 | (1) | 1 | 0 | 1 | #DIV/0! |
| Other: | 1 | 3 | (2) | 7 | 8 | (1) | -12.50% |
| **TOTALS:** | 8 | 20 | (12) | 38 | 49 | (11) | -22.45% |

# Appendix E

## Sarasota, Florida, Sheriff's Office StarTrac Crime Statistics for Schools Countywide

**Sarasota Sheriff's Office**

STARTRAC
Excellence Through Accountability

### CRIME STATISTICS FOR SCHOOLS COUNTYWIDE

| | CURRENT REPORTING PERIOD ASSIGNED | PREVIOUS REPORTING PERIOD ASSIGNED | DIFF +/- | YTD ASSIGNED | PREVIOUS YTD ASSIGNED | DIFF +/- | PERCENT CHANGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alcohol | 1 | 3 | (2) | 5 | 0 | 5 | #DIV/0! |
| AOA | 26 | 25 | 1 | 63 | 63 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Arson | 0 | 1 | (1) | 1 | 7 | (6) | -85.71% |
| Assault | 3 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 10 | (3) | -30.00% |
| Baker Act | 9 | 7 | 2 | 25 | 20 | 5 | 25.00% |
| Battery | 34 | 28 | 6 | 100 | 180 | (80) | -44.44% |
| Bomb Threat | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | (2) | -50.00% |
| Burglary - Structure | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | (7) | -100.00% |
| Burglary - Vehicle | 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 25.00% |
| Child Abuse | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (1) | -25.00% |
| Criminal Mischief | 13 | 13 | 0 | 35 | 58 | (23) | -39.66% |
| Dis.School Function | 16 | 23 | (7) | 59 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Disturbance | 51 | 39 | 12 | 104 | 278 | (174) | -62.59% |
| Drugs | 17 | 17 | 0 | 40 | 74 | (34) | -45.95% |
| Firearms | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Grand Theft | 3 | 4 | (1) | 15 | 14 | 1 | 7.14% |
| Homicide | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Kidnapping | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Lewd & Lasc. | 2 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 11 | (5) | -45.45% |
| Missing/ Runaway | 7 | 4 | 3 | 23 | 24 | (1) | -4.17% |
| Petit Theft | 70 | 64 | 6 | 194 | 192 | 2 | 1.04% |
| Robbery | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Sexual Battery | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | #DIV/0! |
| Suspicious Inc. | 17 | 27 | (10) | 59 | 91 | (32) | -35.16% |
| Trespass | 15 | 13 | 2 | 38 | 51 | (13) | -25.49% |
| Truancy | 4 | 15 | (11) | 39 | 24 | 15 | 62.50% |
| Weapons-Other | 10 | 6 | 4 | 19 | 9 | 10 | 111.11% |
| Other: | 16 | 27 | (11) | 61 | 89 | (28) | -31.46% |
| TOTALS: | 320 | 320 | 0 | 903 | 1214 | (311) | -25.62% |

## Appendix F

## Maury County, Tennessee, Sheriff's Department SRO
## Bi-Weekly Activity Report

**Maury County Sheriff's Dept. - School Resource Officer Bi-Weekly Activity Report**

School : _____     Pay Period: _____

| Activity: | | Wk 1 | Wk 2 | TOTAL | Last Total | YTD TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Offense Reports, Supplements, (All Case# Reports) | 1 | | | | | |
| 2. Juvenile Activity Reports, General Incidents | 2 | | | | | |
| 3. Adult Felony Arrests | 3 | | | | | |
| 4. Adult Misdemeanor Arrests Including Citations | 4 | | | | | |
| 5. Adult Drug Arrests | 5 | | | | | |
| 6. Juvenile Felony Arrests | 6 | | | | | |
| 7. Juvenile Misdemeanor Arrests Including Citations | 7 | | | | | |
| 8. Juvenile Drug Arrests | 8 | | | | | |
| 9. Traffic Citations Issued | 9 | | | | | |
| 10. Traffic Warnings Issued (Verbal & Written) | 10 | | | | | |
| 11. Trespass Warnings Issued | 11 | | | | | |
| 12. Gang Related Incidents | 12 | | | | | |
| 13. Assist Other Officer | 13 | | | | | |
| 14. Advisory Sessions with Students (School Related) | 14 | | | | | |
| 15. Advisory Sessions with Students (Family Related) | 15 | | | | | |
| 16. Advisory Sessions with Students (Law Enforcement Related) | 16 | | | | | |
| 17. Advisory Sessions with Parents | 17 | | | | | |
| 18. Advisory Sessions with Teachers/School Staff | 18 | | | | | |
| 19. Conflict Resolution/De-escalations | 19 | | | | | |
| 20. Classroom Lectures | 20 | | | | | |
| 21. Call-outs from Class | 21 | | | | | |
| 22. Special Events Attended (Games,etc.) | 22 | | | | | |
| 23. Meetings Attended (School,Community,Busisness,etc.) | 23 | | | | | |
| 24. Referrals or Assist Other Agencies (YSO, DHS, etc.) | 24 | | | | | |
| 25. Suicide or Other Crisis Interventions | 25 | | | | | |
| 26. Court Appearances (Including depositions) | 26 | | | | | |
| 27. Motorists Assists (Jump starts, escorts, etc.) | 27 | | | | | |
| 28. Other: _____ | 28 | | | | | |
| 29. POV Mileage  *Do Not us in Column Activity Calculation! | 29 | | | | | |

**Total Calls for Service:**

Weapons Confiscated  ( Type, date, case # ): _____
Value of Reported Stolen Property: _____
Value of Recovered Stolen Property: _____
Comments/Significant Events: _____
_____

Deputy: _____     Deputy Signature _____

Most programs are funded from two or more sources, making the responsibility for program support more equitable and less burdensome than if one entity alone had to pay the entire cost. This chapter discusses the shared funding arrangements of several of the programs in the study and then describes innovative funding approaches several programs have discovered. The following chapter, "Maintaining Program Funding," discusses how programs have gone about motivating potential funding sources to contribute money—or to maintain or increase the amount of money they were already contributing to the program.

## Who Pays for the Program

Whether program costs are shared among two or more entities does not appear to depend on how much the program costs. Some of the least expensive programs have been funded from multiple sources, while some costly programs have only a single funding source.

### Develop a Realistic Estimate of Program Costs

Whether a single entity pays the entire program's costs or the expenses are shared among different groups, agencies need to get a good grasp on how much their programs actually cost. This is not as simple as it sounds. Obviously, program costs vary according to the number of SROs in the program. However, **other factors make it difficult to calculate program costs or to compare costs among programs**.

- Starting salaries, as well as average salaries, for police officers and sheriff's deputies vary widely among jurisdictions. Fringe benefits also vary significantly. Taken together, these differences can result in one program's costs being double those of another program even with a similar number of SROs.

- SRO salaries also vary among programs depending on the officers' length of employment with the department: SROs who have been with the agency for many years have higher salaries than do new recruits. Furthermore, in some programs the SRO position is considered a specialty assignment that requires a salary increment, or the agency voluntarily provides SROs with a salary stipend (see the discussion of "Providing Incentives" in chapter 2, "Recruiting SROs"). When combined with differences in salaries and fringe benefits, the cost per SRO may be under $45,000 or over $100,000.

- Program costs also vary among sites depending on whether the salaries of supervisory and support staff are included in the budget. Some supervisors devote only a small percentage of their time to the program, but others spend full time on it. A program's purported budget may not take account of the proportion of these supervisors' salaries that reflects the time they spend on the program.

- Training, overtime pay, equipment, and other miscellaneous costs are not calculated in determining some programs' total costs. Some of these expenses also represent one-time costs that need to be "amortized" over several years-for example, cruisers.

As a result of these considerations, the program's budget in Terrebone Parish, Louisiana, is $280,000 for 9 SROs, but in Fontana, California, the budget is over $969,000 for only 8 SROs. Similarly, program costs in Pasquotank County, North Carolina, are $175,000 for 4 SROs but almost $4,000 more ($178,834) in Boone, North Carolina, for only 3 SROs. The box "Costs, Sources of Funding, and Personnel for Selected Programs" presents the budgets of selected programs included in the study to further illustrate the difficulty predicting—and comparing—program costs.

**Explore Options for Sharing Program Costs**

In some jurisdictions, a single source provides the program's entire funding. However, ***increasingly funding sources—whether law enforcement agencies or school districts—that were previously providing all the money have been insisting that other groups share the costs*** (see chapter 8, "Maintaining Program Funding"). In fact, as illustrated in the box below, funding arrangements among the programs studied are a patchwork quilt of different configurations.

Most commonly, program costs are shared between the law enforcement agency and the school district. However, while it may appear that a police agency or school district is contributing some or all a program's funding, ***the money may in fact come from one or more other sources***. For example, the law enforcement agency's or school district's contribution may represent a supplement provided by the county or municipality to augment the agency's standard operating budget.

- The Boone, North Carolina, Police Department is reimbursed for its single SRO by the school district, which, in turn, receives the money from the State.

- In Virginia Beach, Virginia, the city council adds the cost of the 30 SROs' salaries and equipment to the police department's annual budget to support the program.

In some communities, several school districts contribute money to the program because, when the law enforcement agency's jurisdiction includes more than one school district, SROs serve the schools in these multiple school districts.

The Delaware State Police and the King County, Washington, Sheriff's Office, provide SROs to interested school districts or local governments through somewhat different cost-sharing arrangements as described in the box "Samples of Cost Sharing Arrangements."

| Costs, Sources of Funding, and Personnel for Selected Programs | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Program Sponsor** | **Total Annual Cost in Recent Years** | **Funding Source(s)** | **Funded Full-Time Personnel** |
| Terrebone Parish, Louisiana, Sheriff's Office | $280,000 | Sheriff's Office: $80,000 School District: $200,000 | 9 SROs |
| Tucson, Arizona, Police Department | $2,141,050 | Police Department: $2,000,000 | 23 SROs 3 supervisors 1 secretary |
| Stark County, Ohio, Sheriff's Office | $200,000 | Federal Government: $200,000 | 5 SROs |
| Sarasota County, Florida, Sheriff's Office | $2,413,426 | Sheriff's Office: $1,239,713 School District: $1,173, 713 | 27 SROs 3 supervisors 1 office manager 2 SROs |
| Salem, New Hampshire, Police Department | $100,000 | Police Department: $100,000 | |
| Marshall, Minnesota, Police Department | $80,000 | Federal Government: $40,000 Police Department: 26,000 School District: $14,000 | 1 SRO |
| Fontana, California, Police Department | $949,600 | Federal Government: $252,000 Police Department: $507,200 School District: $190,400 Private Sources: $20,000 (provided over a period of several years) | 8 SROs |
| Lakewood, Colorado, Police Department | $694,982 | Police Department: $694,982 | 7 SROs 1 sergeant 1 secretary |
| Pasquotank, North Carolina, Sheriff's Office | $175,000 | Sheriff's Office: $78,000 School District: $97,000 | 4 SROs |
| Boone, North Carolina, Police Department | $46,927 | School District: $46,927 | 1 SRO |
| Delaware State Police | $2 million | State Police: $1 million School Districts: $1 million | 25 SROs |

## Samples of Cost Sharing Arrangements

Two law enforcement agencies charge school districts or local governments a fee for each SRO the programs provide. The fee established by the Delaware State Police covers only half the cost of the service, while in most cases the fee the King County, Washington, Sheriff's Office charges covers the entire cost of the service.

**Delaware State Police Program**

The Delaware State Police serves all counties in the State. Interested school districts submit a formal request for a specific number of SROs, agreeing to pay the salary of a newly hired state trooper—$48,724—for each SRO requested.

The school district must specify how it intends to pay for the SROs. If it plans to use grant funding, it must specify the length of the grant and any requirement that the SRO be retained after grant funding ends. The State Police reviews this information carefully to ensure that it will not be responsible for paying the officer's full salary after the grant has ended.

If the funding sources are sound, the department then considers its current and authorized strength levels—that is, the number of sworn officers employed versus the number of positions authorized by the State legislature—to determine whether it has enough vacancies to meet the school district's request. If not, the department asks the legislature to authorize additional positions in the State Police budget to support the request.

The department must also request additional funds from the State legislature before it can meet a school district's request for an SRO or another SRO, because the agency places a seasoned—and relatively expensive—officer with at least five years' experience in the school as the SRO but is reimbursed by the school district for the entry-level salary of the new recruit the department uses to replace the SRO. As a result, the police department contributes the approximately $40,000 difference between the two salaries, including the new SRO's training and equipment costs. The State Police estimates that, as a result, it pays for half each new SRO's actual total costs.

**King County, Washington, Sheriff's Office Program**

No SRO program funding comes from the King County Sheriff's Office general budget. While in the past Federal funds have been a major source of program support, the program currently receives no Federal funding either. Instead, each interested incorporated city within the county, in partnership with its school district, pays the sheriff's office $121,641 for each full-time SRO the jurisdiction wants to "hire." The annual fee includes the cost of the SRO's salary ($57,730) and fringe benefits ($20,477), anticipated overtime ($4,524), vehicle and operating costs ($8,331), department administrative charges ($8,602), precinct support staff ($2,855), and other expenses. The program requires unincorporated areas to reimburse the sheriff's office only about one-third of the total cost of each SRO with the understanding that the department will assign the officer to regular patrol or other duties during the summer months.

A few law enforcement agencies pay the entire cost of the program **by choice** because they believe they might lose complete control of its operations if the school district contributed some of the costs.

• When one SRO program began, the deputy chief of the police department did not ask the school district to contribute to the program. He maintained this stance even after the department's budget was cut by over $1 million and he had to return the SROs to patrol, because he did not want to give up control over the officers to the schools—"they would dictate when the SROs should make arrests."

• The SRO supervisor and an assistant chief in another jurisdiction rejected the idea of asking the school district to contribute funding to the program because "We lose control. They will call and ask you to do things that you can't then refuse to do." Even when its COPS in Schools grants expired, the police department picked up the entire cost of the program.

While another law enforcement agency bills each participating school district monthly for 75 percent of the cost of each SRO, the agency deliberately pays 25 percent of the officer's cost itself to be able to have some control over the officers. For example, the program supervisor feels he has the right to reassign the officers to patrol on days when school is called off because of snow storms, in-service faculty training, or other reasons.

When law enforcement agencies and school districts share program costs, the two entities negotiate each party's share, with some costs sometimes paid for by still other sources.

• In Terrebone Parish, the school district pays half the salaries of five SROs and the entire salaries of four SROs. The sheriff's office pays the other half of the five SROs' salaries. Since in 2001 an SRO's annual salary was about $30,000, the school district's contribution was about $200,000 and the sheriff's department's contribution about $80,000.

• In Chula Vista, California, the police department and secondary school district split the cost of 12 of the current 18 SROs and one field agent, with each entity in 2004 contributing $545,912. The elementary school district pays 40 percent of the cost of the remaining 6 SROs and one field agent—$300,671—while the police department pays the remaining 60 percent—$439,916. The program costs are supplemented by a $246,410 COPS in Schools grant.

• The Fontana program's eight SROs are supported by a combination of police department ($507,000), school district ($190,400), and Federal funds ($252,000). Some of the positions are paid for entirely by the police department, others are split between the police department and two school districts, and one is funded

entirely by a third school district. Throughout the program's history, several SRO positions have been funded with COPS in Schools grants. The program has secured private sector contributions of over $20,000 (see the case study at the end of the chapter).

- Schools in some jurisdictions do not share in the program costs at all. The Garner, North Carolina, Police Department has three SROs. Each year, the town supports the full cost of one SRO's salary and equipment, with the State reimbursing the town for approximately 75 percent of his salary and equipment costs ($37,838) and the county reimbursing approximately 25 percent of his salary and equipment ($18,919). The town of Garner pays the entire cost of the other two SROs ($121,477).

In several programs, because both parties recognize that the SROs will not be working at the schools year-round, the school district covers their salaries only for the months that school is in session. For example, in Schaumberg, Illinois, the school district used to pay only three-quarters of the SROs' salaries because the SROs return to their regular juvenile officer duties during the summer.

The ostensible sharing of program costs between a law enforcement agency and a school district may be misleading because the school district is reimbursing only salaries, but the actual cost of the program to the department includes equipment and training. In other cases, as in Delaware, the school district reimburses the department the cost of an officer's base or entry-level salary but, because the SROs are seasoned—and, therefore, higher-paid—officers, the department ends up paying the balance.

Some school districts pay part or all of the SROs' overtime.

- In Terrebone Parish, because school sports have to pay for themselves through fund raising, some of these funds are used to pay the SROs' overtime to supervise these events. For non-sport related assignments, the school district uses its activity fund to pay SROs $11 an hour overtime.

- In Palm Beach County, Florida, if a school function or sports event charges an admission fee, the school has to pay for the SROs' overtime.

In a few cases, jurisdictions have built a mechanism into their memorandums of agreement or contracts for automatic modifications of each contributor's share of program costs (see the box "The Scottsdale Police Department's Automatic Cost Shifting"). In Marshall, Minnesota, as the COPS in Schools grant decreased each year from 75 percent to 60 percent to 55 percent of the program's costs, the school district's and city's share increased correspondingly from 8 to 14 percent for the school district and from 17 to 30 percent for the city.

| The Scottsdale Police Department's Automatic Cost Shifting |
|---|
| The 14 Scottsdale, Arizona, Police Department SROs provide services to two different school districts. The department established an Intergovernmental Agreement with one school district to cooperatively cover the costs for 10 SROs and another agreement with the second school district to cooperatively cover the costs for 3 SROs.<br><br>Both agreements include graduated payment plans that over time increase the school districts' share of the SROs' salaries, based on an average officer's salary. For example, one of the agreements began with the school district reimbursing 60 percent of an SRO's base salary; by 2003, the district was expected to cover 70 percent of the cost; and the goal is for the district to pay for 80 percent of the cost by 2006. |

When not provided for in the initial memorandum of understanding or contract, shifting costs is typically an arduous, drawn-out, and sometimes acrimonious undertaking. For example, while for the most part ultimately successful, programs in Stark County and Schaumburg experienced severe difficulties agreeing on the proportion of program funding each involved entity would contribute (see the case studies at the end of chapter 8, "Maintaining Program Funding").

## How to Find the Money

COPS in Schools grants have been the sole or partial funding source for more than 6,567 SROs. However, when the three-year grants end, the law enforcement agency either has to pick up the cost of the program or ask local school districts or government agencies to pay for a share, or a larger share, of the expense. In addition, when many law enforcement agencies—and their participating school districts—included in the study suffered severe budgets cutbacks in the early 2000s, they tried—often successfully—to find additional funds from their own budgets, tap into nontraditional sources of funding, or shift some of the costs to their partnering agencies and to local government. The discussion below, summarized in the box "Finding Innovative Ways to Help Pay for the Program," identifies the creative ways these programs have been able to find money.

| Finding Innovative Ways to Help Pay for the Program | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Law Enforcement Agencies** | **School Districts and Schools** | **Local Governments** |
| • explore nontraditional Federal sources of funding*<br>• cut back and transfer funds from D.A.R.E.<br>• secure business contributions<br>• apply for foundation grants<br>• solicit funds from charities and fraternal organizations<br>• host fundraisers<br>• find free or low-cost sources of training (see chapter 5)<br>• certify an SRO as a trainer (see chapter 5)<br>• train other agencies' SROs for a fee | • use athletic event fees<br>• increase fees for parking lot passes or extracurricular activities<br>• host fund raisers<br>• reallocate 1% from other budget line items—e.g., technology, supplies, sports, capital expenditures<br>• apply for foundation grants<br>• solicit funds from charities and fraternal organizations | • reallocate 1% from other budget line items—e.g., recreation, highway department, libraries, public works<br>• merge two departments (e.g., public works and highways) into one to save money<br>• cut back on hiring plans<br>• apply for foundation grants<br>• solicit funds from charities and fraternal organizations |
| * As explained in the text, programs have obtained money from the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program and the U.S. Department of Justice's Byrne Formula Grant Program and Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grants. | | |

### See If the School District Can Contribute Additional Funding

Much of this chapter has already illustrated how law enforcement agencies have been able to arrange for local school districts to provide funding or increase their funding for the program. Below are two additional examples:

• Although the Marshall Police Department began funding the SRO program using a COPS in Schools grant, Robert Yant, the chief of police, told the school district when he applied for the grant that he expected it to pick up more of the cost when the grant ran out. While the share of the cost the school district contributed during the three-year grant period ($1,637, $5,384, and $6,511) was small, Yant "wanted school buy-in and to get it used to contributing to the cost." Before the grant expired, he asked the school district to increase its share of the cost to 50 percent after it ran out. According to Yant, "the program would have been dropped [if the school district had not agreed]. It's partly a philosophical issue—if the school district doesn't feel it's important enough to pay, then it's not important enough for the police department to fund it." The school district agreed to pay half the costs.

• The Stark County Sheriff's Office had been experiencing budget cutbacks since 2002, resulting in the layoff of 60 correctional officers and road deputies that year. While they were all called back in 2003, only 40 returned. As a result, the sheriff told the participating school districts that he would have to recall the SROs unless the school districts agreed to pay for most of the officers' salaries. Four of the five school districts came up with the funds (see the case study at the end of chapter 8, "Maintaining Program Funding").

Some school districts, after the local law enforcement agency pulled out its SROs from the schools because of budget cutbacks, have on their own requested the officers be returned—and found a way to pay for them. The superintendent of schools in one community said, "When the grant ran out, we tried to go it on the cheap—without an SRO—but in three weeks all heck broke loose. So we cut each school line item budget by 1-2 percent—football and basketball, classroom supplies, technology—to come up with the $30,000 to pay for the officer to come back." A high school in King County found some of the money needed to retain its SRO by adding a surcharge to the fees it charges for parking lot passes. The school district executive director provided the additional money from its parking lot supervisor fund since "the SRO does some lot supervision."

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### Sometimes Adequately Funded Programs Seek Additional Money to Expand

Some programs have secured additional funding from other sources to increase their number of SROs, not because of budget cutbacks. In Terrebone Parish, the sheriff's department initially paid for the SROs. However, the sheriff eventually told the superintendent of schools that he needed help financing the program if it was to expand, and the superintendent requested additional money from the school board. The board unanimously approved the funds. As a result, the school district pays half the salaries for five SROs and the entire salaries for four SROs.

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### See If Local Government Can Provide (or Increase) Support

Some local governments have increased their funding for their programs—or provided funding for the first time.

- Captain Mike Rogers of the West Orange Police Department asked the city council for increased funding for the program, recognizing that the town had to cut recreation and library expenses, as well as public works, to support increases to the police department's budget. Despite these sacrifices, the council approved the increase in funding.

- All 30 of the Virginia Beach Police Department SRO positions started out as grant-funded positions. At the conclusion of the grants, the police chief and school superintendent made a presentation to the city council to pick up the funding. Because the program had become so popular, council members agreed to pay for the entire program.

**Examine Possible Funding From Federal Government Sources**

The ***Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (the COPS Office)***, part of the U.S. Department of Justice, has provided three-year grants to over 3,000 law enforcement agencies to cover entry-level salaries for SROs. The so-called COPS in Schools grant program provides up to $125,000 per SRO. Agencies must commit to continuing the grant-funded SROs for a fourth year without COPS Office funding. Information about the grant program may be found at: www.cops.usdoj.gov.

A 2002 National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) survey (available at Resourcer@aol.com or 888-31-NASRO) found that "Almost two-thirds (65%) of SROs were unaware that U.S. Department of Education Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program funds can be used to pay for SRO training  . . . ."  Under Title IV of the Safe and Drug Free Schools Act formula grants (Public Law 107-110), each school district receives a sum of money based on student enrollment and other factors. The act expressly allows school districts to spend up to 40 percent of their Title IV money to train and hire school security personnel (see www.ed.gov/nclb/overview/intro/progsum/sum_pg9.html).

Three programs in the present study have obtained Safe and Drug-Free Schools grants for their SRO programs.

• The Virginia Beach Police Department receives a $10,000 reimbursement from the school district through its Safe and Drug-Free Schools grant to cover the time SROs spend teaching either of two safety courses—Aggressors, Victims, and Bystanders, or Options, Choices, and Consequences.

• The Maury County, Tennessee, Sheriff's Department covers some of its training costs using school district Safe and Drug-Free Schools grant funds.

• Several school districts in King County, Washington, use Title IV funds to reimburse the Sheriff's Office for providing SROs to their schools (see the box above, "Two Programs Have Established Cost Sharing Arrangements").

The ***Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program*** (Byrne Formula Grant Program), funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, provides funding to States and units of local government to support personnel, equipment, training, technical assistance, and information systems to improve the criminal justice response to violent and serious crimes. Maury County funded 75 percent of two SRO's salaries for three years with Byrne grants. See www.ojp.usdoj.gov or call (800) 421-6770.

The Tucson, Arizona, Police Department has made use of $1,802,757 in **Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grants** from U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to establish and maintain accountability and prevention programs, and to provide overtime for SROs to participate in activities that involve interacting with students after hours. See www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org or call (800) 638-8736.

**Be Creative in Seeking Funding Sources**

Several programs have obtained funds from businesses, charities, and foundations, and by hosting fund-raising events.

• A January 6, 2004, Lansing State Journal article, "Mason [Michigan] schools regain resource officer," written by Trout Sally, reported that when a COPS in School grant ran out in the middle of the 2003-2004 school year, city officials agreed to pay $23,000 of the SRO's $35,000 cost if the school district paid $12,000—about one-third the cost. Because the school district reported it did not have the money, a former president of the Kiwanis Club of Mason initiated a Kiwanis fundraiser to find the money so the officer could finish out the school year. The club raised $4,500, mostly from local businesses, which was supplemented by a United Way contribution of $3,500 and a contribution from the American Legion.

• After the Columbine tragedy, Jim Marshall, the SRO in Marshall, Minnesota, asked his supervisor to host an active shooter course for him and the patrol officers. Because paying for the course would have been too expensive, Marshall suggested the supervisor talk with someone at the alternative school who, he knew, had grant money for violence prevention in the schools. The supervisor met with the person, who agreed to contribute $2,500 for a trainer to come to Marshall to offer the course; the police department had to contribute only $500.

• The Maury County Sheriff's Department has raised funds through a nonprofit entity the department created in 1999 called the Fraternal Order of Police Club. The club hosted a rodeo to raise money for the SRO and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) programs to pay for training and to purchase educational materials, pencils for students, and other materials the programs needed.

• The Fontana Police Department developed its own in-house basic SRO training course (see the case study at the end of chapter 5, "Training SROs"), arranged for the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training to certify it, and then offered the training to other law enforcement agencies, charging a $175 registration fee per participating SRO. After deducting expenses, the department made almost $2,000 on the class. It used the money to buy new equipment for a program its SROs conduct in the elementary schools.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="1"><b>Some Agencies Have Cut D.A.R.E. to Protect Their SRO Programs</b></td></tr>
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A few law enforcement agencies in the study, when forced to make cuts, have put their Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) officers back on patrol in order to retain their SROs in the schools.

• When four officers left the Marshall Police Department (one went to the National Guard, two resigned, and one retired), school administrators and police department commanders agreed to return the D.A.R.E officer to patrol duty rather than reassign the SRO. Command staff did not want to lose the SRO because, before he took up his position, patrol officers were constantly being called to the schools to handle problems.

• After the 9/11 tragedy, the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Police Department lost nearly 10 percent of its sworn officers to the military. As a result, department divisions that lost officers sought to make up for their reductions in personnel by asking the chief to transfer personnel from elsewhere in the department to their divisions. In response, the police chief abandoned the D.A.R.E. program, transferring its officers to the depleted divisions in order avoid having to cut back the SRO program.

• To be able to continue its SRO program, the Lakewood, Colorado, Police Department, dropped its D.A.R.E. program, using the funding to support its SROs.

Some programs have been especially creative in providing their SROs with free training.

• In Palm Beach County, the school district's police department arranged for trainers from other law enforcement agencies to teach its SROs classes on religious terrorism and biometrics (thumb scans, retinal scanning) at no cost to the department in exchange for the department's having provided their departments with training in such areas as crisis response and by allowing their officers to attend recertification courses along with the Palm Beach County SROs.

• Sergeant Richard Davies, a former SRO in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, on his own initiative and expense took a course with Corbin & Associates to become certified as an SRO trainer. Davies then developed a 40-hour training syllabus, which he taught during the summer to officers who might apply for any SRO positions that might open up the following school year. In the long run, this approach saved the agency money by avoiding the registration fees and travel expenses involved in sending SROs out of town to be trained by professional organizations.

\* \* \*

The case studies below describe how the Fontana, California, and Saratoga County, Florida, programs have been especially diligent and innovative in securing funding.

• The Fontana program makes use of various cost-sharing arrangements with the schools and has secured funding from multiple sources, including from the private sector.

• The Saratoga County program has obtained money from foundations and community groups, by sponsoring its own fund-raising events, and from in-kind contributions.

## Case Study: Fontana, California, Police Department (151 sworn)

In addition to tapping multiple funding sources, the Fontana Police Department arranges different funding formulas with different school districts.

**The Program Developed Different Cost Sharing Arrangements**

A combination of police department, school district, and grant funds support eight SROs. The police department funds some of the positions fully, while the costs of other SROs are split between the department and two school districts. A third school district provides all the funds for another SRO. Throughout most of the program's history, at least one SRO position has been funded through COPS in Schools grants. *The department also signed memorandums of agreement with the school districts guaranteeing the required fourth year of local funding for the federally funded positions before submitting the grant applications.*

Because the department's jurisdiction is not contiguous with school district boundaries, it offered to place SROs in all of the middle schools that children who live in the department's jurisdiction might attend, proposing to split the funding of the officer's salary with the school districts. The city (through the police department) offers to pay the same percentage as the percentage of the school population that lives in the city of Fontana.

**Program Funding Increased to Support Eight SROs**

Starting with a single SRO in 1994, the police department has managed to obtain additional funding to the point where by 2004 the program had eight SROs.

(1)    The SRO program began in 1994 with a grant from the COPS Office *for a single SRO*—not, however, a COPS in Schools grant but a grant for increasing community policing in Fontana. Under the grant, the police department assigned an SRO to extend community policing into schools. In 1997, the city assumed the costs of the program after the COPS Office grant expired.

(2)    In 2000, the city received funding from a COPS in Schools grant to fund *two additional positions*. The needed local matching funds for the grant program were shared by the Fontana Unified School District and the city of Fontana. In addition, the city and the school district signed a contract to share the cost of funding both positions fully for at least one additional year after the grant was over. As a result, these positions have been supported with city and  school district funds since the grant expired in 2003.

(3)    In 2002, the police department received a second COPS in Schools grant *for a fourth SRO* to work in a new middle school built in the city of Fontana

but served by the Etiwanda School District. The police department provided the local match.

(4) **An additional SRO** was funded under an agreement with the Colton Unified School District to place an SRO in a middle school outside Fontana. The police department pays 55 percent of the cost of the officer, because that is the percentage of students in the school who live in the city, while the Colton School District pays the other 45 percent, representing the students who live in the unincorporated areas outside the city.

(5) The Fontana Unified School District Police Department fully funds **a sixth full-time officer** who is assigned to work in one of the middle schools.

(6) In 2002, the police department funded **two more positions**, bringing the total to eight full time SROs.

**Private Funding Supports Several Program Initiatives**

The department has secured and continues to seek funding from national and local businesses for special SRO events and activities such as DRY2K (a multimedia alcohol prevention program) and Dream Builders (a mentoring program designed to link at-risk students with professionals in the community). In addition to benefiting from the relatively small but still helpful financial support, program supervisors capitalize on the donations in other ways.

• Program supervisors view these business contributions that support innovative SRO activities as another way to increase the officers' motivation to develop creative solutions to school problems.

• Program supervisors use the recognition for the program provided by the corporate awards to further bolster their case for the program's excellence.

• In turn, the supervisors parlay the program's national reputation for innovation and distinction into helping to maintain funding from the city and the school districts.

The program uses corporate contributions to pay for the cost of programs, and for materials related to programs, but not for SRO salaries. For example, **about $15,000 has been donated over the years** to duplicate and buy equipment for the DRY2K program and train other agencies to implement the program. **Major donors include Microsoft, Toyota Motor Sports, and the Auto Club.** Fontana SROs have taught the program in all three high schools within the Fontana Unified School District. Corporations also support the Dream Builders program. **Local businesses contribute about $5,000 per year** to pay for field trips and other expenses (excluding SRO salaries) related to the initiative.

## Case Study: Sarasota County, Florida, Sheriff's Office Program

The Sarasota County program's annual budget of more than $2,400,000 is split almost equally between the sheriff's office and the school district. Nevertheless, despite relatively guaranteed funding (see the Sarasota County case study at the end of chapter 8, "Maintaining Program Funding"), the program leaves no stone unturned in attempting to secure additional funding.

Even though the school district contributes roughly half the program's costs, the program still asked the school board to contribute an additional $10,000 in 2004 for SRO registration fees for training and the associated out-of-state per diem and travel expenses. In addition to providing the funds, the school board agreed to split the $3,015 cost of maintaining a dog for the program.

While each high school and middle school SRO in Sarasota County had an office in his or her school equipped with a computer, elementary school SROs did not have offices—and therefore did not have computers. As a result, *the program asked for— and received—a grant from the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice, the largest community foundation in Florida, for $11,000 to purchase seven laptop computers with extended warrantees*.

Networking sometimes results in funding leads. While attending a meeting of the Association of Communities, Sheriff William Balkwill was told by a community group that it wanted to donate money for the benefit of kids in the county. When he returned to his office, Balkwill passed on the information to Tim Carney, the captain in charge of the SRO program. Carney contacted the group, which ended up making a $1,000 contribution to the program. As word about the donation spread, the Elks decided it would raise money for the program; not to be outdone, the Moose held a dance to raise money.

The sheriff's office itself has held fundraising events to raise money for the program. When he was an SRO, Captain Tim Carney held several golf tournaments, each of which raised about $5,000 for the Youth Services Division, which houses the SRO and D.A.R.E. programs (elementary school SROs are dually trained as D.A.R.E. officers). In 2003, as the division commander, *Carney organized a golf tournament that raised $13,000, which he used to pay the SROs' travel expenses to attend a NASRO training in Orlando, Florida*.

The program has secured *in-kind space from the school district worth tens of thousands of dollars*. The superintendent of schools and sheriff decided together to house the SRO program in the building owned by the school district and used for its headquarters. Because space is tight in the sheriff's office building, the department would have had to rent space and furniture to house the program. However, the school district donated space to the program for free, including a large reception area and two offices.

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This chapter discusses **how programs have successfully convinced law enforcement agencies, school districts, and elected and appointed municipal and county officials to provide funding**. The chapter concludes with four case studies of programs that have been especially innovative, hard working, or successful in maintaining funding.

## How to Motivate Law Enforcement Agencies to Maintain Funding

Police departments and sheriff's agencies report they provide funding for SROs because the program:

(1)     reduces the workload of patrol officers or road deputies;
(2)     improves the department's image and the image of its officers among juveniles;
(3)     creates and maintains improved relationships with the schools; and
(4)     improves and maintains the department's reputation in the community.

### Reduce the Burden on Patrol Officers or Road Deputies

SRO programs reduce the burden on their patrol officers:

(1)     by making it unnecessary for principals and assistant principals to call 911 or the law enforcement agency's nonemergency number to handle problems in the schools and

(2)     by preventing problems in the schools that otherwise would have required a police response.

*Reduce the Number of Time-Consuming 911 and Nonemergency Calls From the Schools*

Before they began their SRO programs, many police and sheriff's departments contacted for the study reported that they had had to send patrol officers or road deputies to schools to handle problems several times a week or even several times a day, sometimes tying up the officers or deputies for hours at a time. As a result, law enforcement administrators felt, or subsequently discovered, that **placing officers in the schools as SROs would—and did—reduce and even eliminate 911 and other calls for service for regular patrol officers**. The drastic reduction or complete elimination of these calls from schools is a major reason some departments in the study are willing to help pay for their programs.

• The chief of the Garner, North Carolina, Police Department reported that the number one reason he fought so hard for the SRO position was that road officers "were already having to spend a number of hours a week investigating crimes at the school; it only made sense to position an officer at the school full time."

- According to Sergeant Paul Marchand, the program supervisor in Salem, New Hampshire, "We pay for the program because, by assigning officers to the schools, we free up manpower on the street. Before we had SROs, we were constantly sending patrol officers to the schools. It makes sense from a deployment point of view to have officers in the schools rather than send over patrol officers whenever there is a problem. The high school has 2,300 kids and 200 staff; it's a small town."

- Based on an analysis of 911 calls in 1999 before the program began and again in 2001 after the SROs were in the schools, the Stark County Sheriff's Office in Ohio documented that that road deputies were spared having to respond to approximately 280 calls in 2001 because SROs handled them (see the discussion on "Empirical Evidence" below for additional information about these data).

- The assistant chief of a police department reported that, at a meeting on department budget cuts that he was going to be attending, he was not going to even raise the idea of cutting the SRO program. "While some department personnel feel the program takes too many officers away from patrol duties," he observed, "they don't realize the calls SROs take and prevent. SROs deal with problems which would otherwise go to 911."

The program may benefit other bureaus in the agency. West Orange, New Jersey, Police Department administrators reported that funding three additional SROs to work full time at the middle and high schools reduced the juvenile bureau's workload. SROs now initially respond to many incidents that detectives previously handled. As a result, the bureau's officers have more time available to respond to other juvenile problems. Some SROs are able to pass on to the detective bureau or patrol division valuable information about crimes in the community that students— and even staff—with whom the SROs have a good rapport are willing to report.

*Prevent Crimes That Would Have Required a Police Response*

In addition to freeing up patrol officers from responding to 911 calls from the schools, Salem, New Hampshire, Police Chief Paul Donovan expected the SROs to be proactive and *prevent* problems. Indeed, many agencies in the study have concluded that, ***because SROs prevent trouble that would have ended up resulting in a 911 or nonemergency call, the program reduces the burden on patrol officers even more***.

SROs prevent problems that might otherwise result in 911 or nonemergency calls in three ways.

- Students come to realize that, with an SRO stationed in the school, ***they are likely to be arrested if they commit a crime*** because an officer is there to witness it—or because faculty or other students are quick to report the behavior to the SRO without the need to call the police department or sheriff's office (an important element of effective community policing—involving the community in crime prevention).

- SROs report over and over again that "good kids"—and even some troublemakers—will tell the officers when they feel a crime is going to happen so it can be prevented because ***they feel a sense of duty to protect their schools or for their own personal safety they do not want criminal behavior occurring in their schools***. Former high school principal Paul Houlihan in Palm Beach County said, "I can't count the number of times in the past that this kind of prevention work with student informants has prevented more serious problems from breaking out on campus."

- ***The improved communication that an SRO program creates between the law enforcement agency and school district results in "extracurricular" sharing of information that helps to prevent crime***. An SRO in West Orange said, "The transfer of intelligence between the schools and the [juvenile] bureau has allowed the department to respond proactively to potential youth-related problems. If there has been a fight between students over the weekend and the bureau believes the dispute may carry over to school on Monday, the SRO reports this to school administrators even before classes begin so they can take steps to prevent anything from developing."

**Improve the Image of the Police Among Juveniles**

Many law enforcement administrators contacted for the study report that one of their most important goals in putting SROs in the schools is ***to improve juveniles' attitudes and behavior toward police officers*** (e.g., in terms of reporting crime). Most of these police administrators report that their programs accomplished this goal. Chief Paul Donovan reported that "I have walked through school hallways with the SRO, and kids come up to me asking to talk about problems—I was amazed kids would do that; it showed a lot of respect."

**Create and Maintain Improved Police-School Relationships**

A number of police and sheriff's departments support SROs in part because ***they value the improved relationships that typically result between the agency and the school district***. For example, the Salem police chief, captain, and program supervisor all report that the program changed what was an adversarial relationship between the two entities into a collaborative one. According to Chief Donovan:

I can pick up the phone and talk right away to the superintendent [of schools]. There's a trust because they know us, so they are much more comfortable bringing the department into the schools. They also bring us problems they might not have shared with us in the past. Principals and the superintendent now call the captain about potential issues that could come up, such as problems with a teacher: "Here's what we've got; what should our next steps be?" Before the SRO program began, the schools would have handled the problem on their own and maybe ruined a chance to do a decent investigation. When the superintendent gets calls from elementary school principals on these types of issues, he now tells them to call us. If we didn't have SROs, the school department would not have invited the captain to serve on the Best Schools Initiative for the middle school with teachers, administrators, and parents, to develop goals for the schools.

## Maintain or Improve the Agency's Reputation

Finally, personnel in several departments testified that **the program has improved the agencies' image** in three different respects.

*Provide Positive Publicity for the Chief or Sheriff*

Although no sheriff made this observation, other agency personnel said that **the program enhanced their sheriff's bid for reelection**. According to a member of one sheriff's office, "There are a large number of school employees who vote in the county." Another member of the agency reported that the sheriff benefits from the national attention the program gets as an exemplary program.

*Avoid Courting Public Criticism If the Program Is Cancelled*

A number of program personnel reported that **the public would hold it against any chief or sheriff who stopped supporting the program**. When one police department's COPS in Schools grant ran out, the department absorbed the cost. When later in the year the city manager ordered a five percent cut in every department, the chief decided to axe the crime prevention unit completely. Why did he keep the SRO program? According to a staff member, "He took tremendous flak for cutting the prevention unit; taking cops out of the schools would have resulted in an even worse backlash from the community."

## Accommodate the Wishes of Local Government

Some agencies continue to fund the program because **local government officials want to see it maintained**. For example, just as some sheriffs may feel that terminating the program is politically dangerous because voters could object, some police chiefs find dropping the program risky because the town officials who

appoint them want to keep it going. When one police department's COPS in Schools grants expired, the chief picked up the entire cost of the program. According to a member of the department, one reason the chief was willing to foot the bill was because "it helps a lot that the mayor supports the program—he provides the department's money. Since the mayor appoints the chief, the chief accepts the elected official's request."

## How to Motivate the Schools to Contribute (More) Funding

As the previous chapter documents, many programs have been supported partially and, in some cases, substantially with school district funding. Indeed, *support from school administrators has been crucial to keeping some programs afloat*:

• According to Al Weidner, budget director for the Sarasota County School Board, "I have never turned down funding for the program . . . . because schools say they don't know how they would function without it. I want to make sure we could not be spending the money on something else and getting a better return on our investment, but principals go out of their way to single out the program to me." Weidner adds that if the budget director gets negative comments from the schools on a program, "I will highlight that to the assistant superintendent. Conversely, I highlight programs that the schools support."

• When the Chula Vista, California, Elementary School District's budget was in dire straights and the budget committee considered making cuts in the SRO program to save money, the principals expressed strong opposition to the idea, and cuts were avoided.

• Albuquerque Chief Public Safety Officer, Nicholas Bakas, reported that, when the SRO program was in jeopardy because the city was $50 million in the hole, parents and school administrators telephoned him, the mayor, and the media to protest the planned cut—but the school administrators were the most vocal—'you can't take these guys away from us!' "

• When county commissioners in Maury County, Tennessee, tried to reduce the number of SRO positions, board of education members, school administrators, and teachers joined parents and the sheriff at the budget meetings to support continued funding of the program. The commissioners kept all the SROs.

• Jim Aquilo, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools (and a former principal for 12 years) for Plain Township School District in Stark County, said that "when the sheriff pulled out the SROs due to funding cuts, the schools went without the SRO for three weeks. The principals had a revolt because they appreciated the SRO's preventive role even more [than the feeling of security the officers created], including handling calls from parents for help. As a result, the superintendent [hired

by the Plain Township Board of Education and County Superintendent] felt the SRO's presence was vital to the school's mission and made the decision to pay for the SRO."

Even school board members who already support the program can feel the pressure.

• A school board member in one jurisdiction said that, when one particular SRO retired, "people [i.e., school administrators] were more upset at losing him than they are at losing a teacher. School administrators have told me how much they benefit from the SROs' presence [in the schools] and work with the kids."

• Robyn Marinelli, Sarasota County School Board supervisor of student services, said that, although she is one of the program's major supporters in the school district, the crucial support is from the grass roots. "Principals would be extremely upset if the program was cut—they would complain at principals' meetings and by e-mailing the superintendent and board members."

Programs can gain school administration support, however, *only if they provide a good quality "product"—talented and dedicated SROs*. James Bailey, Maury County Mayor, said that the key to his program's success (in addition to strong leadership at the sheriff's department) is "recruitment of quality officers who are leaders and who are genuinely interested in doing a good job." This, of course, is why carefully screening and training the SROs—topics addressed in chapters 3 and 5—is so important. It also means that programs need to evaluate their effectiveness to ensure that they are meeting the schools' needs.

If the program does a good job, most school administrators and teachers gain three significant benefits from SROs *that sometimes the program needs to remind school personnel they are gaining in order to motivate them to continue to support program funding*:

• increased safety in the schools,
• the feeling of increased safety, and
• improved response time.

**Provide Increased Safety in the Schools**

SROs improve safety in the schools by handling violence and preventing violence.

*Handle Violence*

SROs take care of violent incidents in the schools by handling situations involving fights, assaults, and weapons, and by helping to develop the schools' crisis response plans.

Take care of fights, assaults, and weapons. Most school district administrators support the program because they believe it improves safety in the schools—and protecting students is part of their job.

• Four of the five school districts in Stark County, Ohio, that took on at least partial funding for their SROs after the sheriff said he could no longer pay the entire cost said they did so primarily to maintain safety in the schools and because students, parents, and teachers all feel safer with a deputy in the schools.

• When a high school principal in another jurisdiction was asked what he might tell other school administrators about the SRO program, he simply stated, "If you have the opportunity to have an SRO at your school, '*how stupid of you to say no.*' It is an awesome responsibility to be a principal and in charge of the safety of students today. We are very vulnerable."

Several school administrators specifically highlighted how ***SROs serve to keep principals and assistant principals, and even teachers, out of harm's way*** (see the box, "Administrators Appreciate That SROs Protect Them From Physical Encounters"). In particular, several assistant principals reported they had discovered that irate parents show more respect to SROs than to administrators. Some administrators call in the SRO to mediate disputes between a furious parent and an assistant principal.

• A high school assistant principal, reported that "when parents get belligerent—and they can get very nasty—I ask the SRO to sit in to 'observe,' and that usually calms them down."

• On a day when the SRO at a Sarasota County middle school was at a training, the principal called Robyn Marinelli, supervisor of student services, to report that an angry parent who had walked into the school had just gotten into a fight with girls who were holding her daughter hostage. Marinelli called Tim Carney, the captain in charge of the program, who, with a supervisor and two SROs, rushed over to the school, evacuated the front office, and locked down the building. After the SROs had issued a no-trespass order to the parent, she left peaceably.

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**Administrators Appreciate That SROs Protect Them From Physical Encounters**

• Austin Garofalo, a former Salem, New Hampshire, high school assistant principal, observed that "the SRO is extremely important for me to be able to do my job because I know I have the back-up— someone who is skilled in dealing with belligerence and use of force that I am not trained to do and do not want to do."

• In Louisiana, Terrebonne Parish School Board member L.P. Bordelon confirmed that "I was a school principal and I got into some scrapes breaking up fights, and I don't like to fight, so the SROs' presence is important [to making it unnecessary for administrators to have to break up fights]."

• Cynthia Celander, a Marshall, Minnesota, high school assistant principal, says that she has the SRO sit in with her when she has to discipline a student and feels the situation may potentially escalate.

<u>Help develop crisis response plans.</u> Many SROs contribute to their schools' safety by developing, or participating in the preparation of, their schools' crises management plans.

- An SRO in Stark County sits on the school board's security committee and has assessed the physical safety of each building. He has helped devise crisis plans to implement during various types of emergency situations; as a result, according to a school official, the SRO had proven immensely helpful and resourceful during a meningitis scare during which he coordinated communication and contact among public health experts, parents, students, and school district personnel.

- Dan Genest, the Salem middle school SRO, reported that he learned about conducting school safety surveys at an advanced National Association of School Resource Officer (NASRO) training. Based on what he learned, over the summer he conducted a survey of every room in his school documenting safety hazards such as windows that did not lock, rooms that were not clearly marked with a number, and lack of coverings on door windows that are needed if there is a lockdown. He reported his findings to school administrators who fixed some of the deficiencies, including installing shades on all door windows. He also learned how to run a lockdown at a school. As a result, he identified deficiencies in his school's lockdown procedures—for example, the procedure did not address what to do if there were students in the gym or cafeteria. Again, he brought the information to the assistant principal, who changed the school's procedures.

*Prevent Violence from Occurring*

School administrators, as well SROs, agree that SROs are a valuable presence because **they routinely prevent crime and violence from happening**. This is one of the main reasons so many administrators in the study report that they support the program (see the box "School Administrators Cite the SROs' Ability to Prevent Crime and Violence as a Major Reason for Supporting the Program").

Similarly, the mere presence of police officers and deputies in the schools probably prevents some crime. L.P. Bordelon, the Terrebonne Parish School Board vice president in Louisiana, said that:

Most school board members feel we are getting our money's worth because the SROs . . . . are a great deterrent. Kids do stupid things because of peer pressure, a dare, to take risks, etc. Seeing a uniformed police officer in the school deters them. So it's preventive discipline in the best sense of the word.

| **Administrators Appreciate That SROs Protect Them From Physical Encounters** |
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According to Sergeant Rochelle Thompson, supervisor of the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office SRO program, after the COPS in Schools grant ended in January 2004 and Crooked Oak, one of five participating school districts, could not find the money to support its SRO, the department pulled the SRO out of the school.

> But, in February, Shannon Goodsell, the new superintendent of schools, called me to ask to reinstate the SRO—and said he would find the money—because there were guns being brought into the schools, gangs reappearing, and an administrator had been attacked in the month since the SRO had left. According to Goodsell, when the grant ran out, we tried to do it on the cheap—without an SRO—but in three weeks all heck broke loose. So we cut each school line item budget by 1-2 percent—football and basketball, classroom supplies, technology—to come up with the $30,000 to pay for the officer to come back. As a new administrator, he had not been aware that it was the SRO program that had "kept the lid" on the schools.

A school district administrator in another State tells a similar story:

> The school district evaluated the program—administrators, counselors, and faculty discussed whether we needed it to help kids. At the high school, the SRO headed off a lot of the drinking that we had a problem with because of what he learned—for example, kids would warn him that a keg party was going to take place. We have a lot of kids involved in DWI—several have been killed—so drinking was a concern to all of us and we felt he was good in helping with that. That's what tipped the scale in favor of paying for him.

Local school administrators in Tucson tell school district officials that the mere presence of the cruiser on patrol or parked outside a middle or elementary school helps deter high school students from trespassing on school grounds and child molesters from approaching.

Most principals and assistant principals contacted for the study agree that ***SROs also prevent crime and violence by counseling and mentoring kids so that they do not get into trouble***. According to L.P. Bordelon, "SROs do a lot of counseling that keeps kids straight."

**Provide the Feeling of Increased Safety**

To many high ranking school administrators, almost as important as providing safety in the schools is providing *the feeling* of safety. According to one superintendent of schools, "Kids need to feel safe, and the SRO's presence makes a difference in their feeling of safety. He sends a message about creating a safe environment." Many school administrators support continued program funding in large measure or in part because SROs have this effect.

• Paul Houlihan, a former high school principal in Palm Beach County who in the past served on budget review committees, consistently objected to any cuts in the SRO budget. Houlihan explained that "because the media often focuses on lack of safety, there is a need to provide parents with a sense of safety. Students," according to Houlihan, "need to feel that they are in a safe environment, and parents need to feel that they are sending their children to a safe school. There needs to be the appearance, as well as the reality, of a safe campus environment."

• Marshall school board member Kathy Reiber reported that "We did surveys of students, and safety is one of their top concerns. So the district needs to make kids feel safe—and the program is a small price to pay to help do that."

**Improve Response Time**

Over and over, administrators reported that they benefited tremendously by the quick response they got from their SROs in crises in comparison with how long it had taken them in the past to get an officer or deputy on scene by calling 911. The quick response relieves administrators from having to hold and pacify an often agitated, accused student for a long period of time.

• Cynthia Celander, a Marshall high school assistant principal, reported that "if I called 911 every time a violent incident occurred, I'd have to wait for a patrol officer to arrive. Instead, Jim [Marshall, the SRO] handles it immediately."

• Paul Houlihan said, "On more than one occasion in the past, it would take much too long for the sheriff's department to respond to school calls for assistance. This is not longer a problem for schools when the SROs are already there."

Several school administrators said they supported continued program funding primarily for this reason.

• When the Chula Vista budget committee considered making cuts in the SRO program to save money, the principals opposed the cutback because their major concern was preventing disruption and having an immediate capacity to deal with it when it occurred.

- A town council member in one jurisdiction said that the town has accepted the SRO program as part of the police department's budget because the high school principal and chief of police convincingly demonstrated to council members that an officer assigned to the school full time reduces the response time for incidents.

To gain support from these administrators for continued program funding, programs must do their utmost to **make sure that SROs are in fact—to the extent possible—immediately available to the schools**. As a result, many programs are careful not to pull their SROs out of the schools for special assignments or in-service training except when schools are not in session (see chapter 5, "Training SROs"). Otherwise, Chief James Kelly of the Palm Beach County School District Police Department, observes, "administrators say, 'they're never here anyway when we need them, so what's the big deal?' "

**When Possible, Accommodate Schools—Go the Extra Mile**

Programs can help ensure their survival **if SROs go out of their way to make themselves useful to school administrators and teachers**. Sometimes the extra effort is trivial—but still appreciated; at other times, it can involve a significant investment of time, effort, and even frustration—but the payoff can be strong lobbying for the program by school officials.

Sarasota County Sheriff's Office SROs, program supervisors, and even the sheriff have gone out of their way to accommodate the schools. The case study at the end of the chapter documents their efforts. The result has been tremendous support for the program among school district officials, including providing the program with free space in the school district's headquarters—a significant financial savings to an agency with an acute space shortage.

## SRO Programs Provide Other Benefits to Schools

Some school board members, school administrators, and teachers support the SRO program at least in part because of three other benefits they feel SROs provide.

### Help Reduce Truancy

Some school districts were initially interested in having SROs in the schools because administrators needed to reduce truancy levels.

- During the process of planning and setting goals for the SRO program, school administrators from all but one of the five Stark County school districts participating in the program identified truancy as a major area of concern because their graduation and promotion rates had fallen well below the State's mandated levels. The administrators hoped that, with the consistent follow-up that the presence of an SRO would facilitate, chronic truants would grow tired of being "hassled" and begin to attend classes more regularly. Graduation rates began to improve markedly for all five districts (see the discussion under "Empirical Evidence of Effectiveness" in the text).

- Nicholas Bakas, the Albuquerque Mayor's Chief Public Safety Officer, reported that "the possibility of cutting the program is always raised at budget time. But [in addition to its other benefits] the program is also seen as having the benefit of reducing truancy, which also reduces crime."

### Reduce Liability and Lawsuits

Some school board members and school district administrators in the study appreciate that *the program reduces their legal liability*. A superintendent of schools observed that "assistant principals are always concerned about liability—that's why the windows on their doors are never covered. We have kids who are much bigger than deans, and we have female students being dealt with by male deans. So there is concern about liability, including the use of force."

### Save Time

Several administrators and teachers reported that *SROs save them significant time and stress*.

- Kathy Reiber, a school board member in Marshall (and a former classroom teacher), reported, "We put in more money because . . . . it saves staff—faculty and administrators—considerable time. They have told me that, when there is an incident, because the SRO is there and knows the requirements and procedures for an investigation, it takes the weight off their shoulders."

- A Maury County commissioner reported that "Having officers to worry about safety and discipline reduces the burden on teachers and allows them to spend more time teaching."

Other programs, too, go out of their way to be helpful to school administrators and teachers.

• One SRO registers student and faculty cars so that, if there is a problem with a vehicle, administrators can go to him to find out whose car it is. When an assistant principal saw a shotgun in a car in the school parking lot, he asked the SRO to investigate. Using his registry, the SRO was able to learn in a matter of minutes that the student and his father had gone hunting and had forgotten to remove the gun.

• Some SROs perform background checks for administrators on faculty and other school employees—for example, when a staff member is suspected of stealing. The police or sheriff's department either will not provide the service or cannot do so as quickly as the school district wants.

• The Palm Beach County program has trained 6,000 school staff in de-escalation and physical restraint techniques for which the faculty express considerable gratitude (see the box "Teaching School Personnel 'Verbal Judo' and Restraint Techniques").

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## How to Motivate Public Officials

Typically, local elected and appointed officials, including town and city council members, mayors, and town managers, as well as school committee or school board members, decide on the funding for the local law enforcement agency and school system. As such, they are in the best position to make sure the program continues—or to drop it.

When public officials support an SRO program, it is generally because:

• they want to ensure that students are safe in their schools;
• they risk the public's ire if they fail to support the program; or
• school administrators have lobbied for its retention.

### Stress the Program's Contribution to Safety in the Schools

Public officials with responsibility for schools are concerned about ensuring safety for students and faculty. This concern can take two forms:

• recognition that they are responsible for keeping kids safe—it is part of their job—and
• wanting to avoid being blamed if a tragedy occurs.

Many public officials contacted for the study support continued funding for their SRO programs because, as West Orange, New Jersey, councilman John Skarbnik said, "They give additional security for the schools." According to Albuquerque's Chief Public Safety Officer Nicholas Bakas, he and the mayor decided to continue to fund the SRO program after the COPS in Schools grants ran out. "In light of the need to provide homeland security, it's the mayor's responsibility to be in a position to protect the 100,000 students in the city and have a liaison in the schools."

According to program participants in many jurisdictions, some school committee members also continue to fund the program because, as one program supervisor said, "the school board supports the program in part because, if there were a tragedy at a school, it would become a political disaster if it had cut or killed the program." Kathy Reiber, school board member in Marshall, acknowledged that "I would be concerned about cutting the program and then a critical incident occurs and constituents say, 'Why did you cut the SRO?' "

### Generate or Channel Public Support for the Program

These same public officials are, of course, responsive to their constituents, especially parents. In several communities, *the potential for objections by angry parents if the officials cut back the SRO program appears to help motivate*

***them to continue to provide funding***. For example, one principal said, "Parents would object if we lost our cops—I could make two calls [to influential members of the community] and have 100 parents vocally irate after telling the two [community members] whom else to call [to generate a protest]." The threat—and effectiveness—of complaints from parents is not just theoretical.

• Because the Tucson city council can vote on individual line items in the city's budget, it could drop the SRO program. However, a member of the city council said that "constituents call me if an SRO is going to get moved—one had surgery and, when a high school liaison officer filled in for him, the world fell apart—the principal called, residents called—the PTA organized it. They were concerned that the SRO's leaving [was not temporary but] would be a long-term loss."

• Albuquerque Chief Public Safety Officer Nicholas Bakas reported that when he and the new mayor came into office in 2001, "the city was $50 million in the hole. So the SRO program was on the chopping block. But . . . . parents and school administrators telephoned me, the mayor, and the media to protest the planned cut. So we kept the program—but the mayor also recognized that school safety was his responsibility."

• Maury County Mayor James Bailey said that in 2003, when the county commission tried to reduce the number of SRO positions in the elementary schools, the county "rose up in arms." School administrators, teachers—and parents—attended the budget meetings to support continued funding.

Officials, of course, can also be influenced by constituent praise for programs. West Orange councilman John Skarbnik reported, "I've heard positive things about the SROs from parents—the issue comes up when there are problems [in the schools] and the SROs are there [to handle them]." As described in the box "Generating Public Support for the Program," ***programs can take the initiative to help ensure that positive assessments of the program reach the ears of public officials***.

## Generating Public Support for the Program

Many programs do not leave it to chance to get the word to officials that their SROs are doing important work in the schools.

• Elementary school principal Christopher Renouf in Sarasota County said, "Safe and orderly schools is a hot topic with parents. Last night at a monthly parent advisory council meeting, members raised the issue. ***The SRO volunteered to stay and attend the meeting on his own time***." [emphasis added]

• The Maury County program believes that its efforts to generate public support paid off when ***a coalition consisting of parents, school administrators, and the sheriff convinced the county commissioners not to reduce the number of SROs***. The program's activities designed to create community support include:

— attending every community event—according to Captain Nathan Johns, it helps when a community member can say, "You work in my son's school, and now you are directing traffic during the county fair!"

— marketing the program through news media and presentations to clubs;

— inviting parents to schools for extracurricular activities, because the SROs are present and parents can see the interactions between the deputies and their children and can ask the SROs questions; and

— providing monthly activity reports to the county commission—one commissioner reported that all the commissioners appreciate the sheriff's concerted efforts to keep them informed of program activities.

• The Fontana program actively seeks recognition for its program and then publicizes the approval and awards it receives to those who hold its purse strings.

— With funding from Microsoft, the program developed and implemented a high school program called DRY2K designed to reduce underage drinking and driving. Based on part on the program's success, the department then applied for and received awards from the California League of Cities and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The department ***highlighted the awards in meetings with the city council, school board, and community organizations***.

— The program received a Model School Resource Officer Agency Award from the National Association of School Resource Officers. The program arranged for a local trophy company to produce replicas of the award plaque and ***gave copies to every city council member and school district administrator***.

## What Motivates Everybody

There are two strategies that can motivate every type of funding source to continue to provide money for an SRO program:

(1)     scientific evidence (especially when provided by independent evaluators) that the program is achieving its goals (or at least those goals that the people who hold the purse strings care about); and

(2)     documentation that SROs are productive and doing what they are supposed to be doing.

**Develop Empirical Evidence of Program Effectiveness**[3]

Administrators of any program are often understandably reluctant to evaluate their efforts because they lack time or expertise, or have concerns about violating confidentiality. Most of all, they may be apprehensive that the evaluation results will not show that they are doing a good job. However, SRO programs ***may need the results of an evaluation to provide compelling evidence to funding sources of the need to continue the program***. Program staff may also need the results to convince ***their own agency heads*** to continue to provide or request funding for the program.

Program supervisors contacted for the study usually evaluate their programs in two ways:

(1)     look at statistical data to see if the program has been responsible for any improvements; and

(2)     conduct surveys to find out if program "consumers" are using and benefiting from the program.

*Examine Statistical Data*

As shown in the box "Sample Statistical Data Program Supervisors Can Consider Examining to Evaluate the Program," program supervisors can study a range of data to document program effectiveness. In general, supervisors should examine data that will show the program is achieving what school administrators, school board members, local town officials, as well as the police chief or sheriff, want the program to be doing. Of course, the data need to be available or easily generated, and programs need to have access to them.

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[3] *Program evaluation is also essential to find out whether the program needs improvement and, if so, what specific changes are needed. Chapter 6, "Supervising SROs," addresses this component of program evaluation. Of course, many program evaluations address both goals—assess effectiveness and identify the need for improvement.*

| Sample Statistical Data Supervisors Can Consider Examining to Evaluate the Program |
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| Number of students SRO advised<br>Number of students SRO taught<br>Police calls for service<br>Arrests and citations<br>Weapons and drugs seized<br>Number and types of safety or disorder problems solved<br>Crime incidents in school by type of incident (e.g., fights, bullying)<br>Crime incidents in vicinity of school<br>Noncriminal disorder incidents in school<br>Noncriminal disorder incidents in vicinity of school<br>Victimization in school and in vicinity of school<br>Truancy rates<br>Suspensions (in-school and out-of-school) and expulsions<br>Student tardiness<br>Student levels of fear<br>Student satisfaction with the SRO |

The discussion below gives examples of how programs have used specific data to assess whether their goals were being achieved.

Crime rates. Perhaps the most common statistic that school boards and community members contacted for the study want to see decline is the crime rate in schools.

• In Terrebonne Parish, the most important original purpose for establishing the SRO program was to reduce the number of fights in the schools. Data suggest that this goal was achieved at South Terrebonne High School at least in part because of the SRO program. The number of suspensions for fighting at the school declined from 72 to 48 and then to 32 for two school years starting with the year the program began and then in the following school years remained relatively constant at about one-third the original rate (24 to 29 suspensions per year).

• From the 1991-92 school year to the 1994-95 school year (the year the SRO program began), the number of reported incidents at a junior high school in another jurisdiction increased from 8 to 19, and 19 to 78. The number remained relatively constant for the next three school years and then declined significantly during the 1998-1999 school year to 34 incidents, with a further drop to 22 incidents during the 2000-2001 school year (see appendix A). The increase during the SRO's initial years may be attributable to the officer's recording incidents that previously were not reported to the police department; the decline beginning with the 1998-1999 school year may reflect a decrease in student misconduct due to the SRO's consistent presence and intervention.

• The Delaware Department of Education commissioned an evaluation of the State Police SRO program in 1998 that compared the number of incidents, number of students involved in incidents, and number of incidents resulting in police charges in schools with and without SROs in 1994-95 (before any SROs had been placed in the schools) and in 1997-98. The evaluation found that schools that never had an SRO had a statistically significant increase in the number of police charges in 1997-98 compared with 1994-95, while there was no significant increase in schools with SROs. Despite limitations of the evaluation, ***the Department of Education was able to use the results to support continued and expanded funding of the program by both the legislature and school districts***. The department has also used the results to obtain funding from other sources.

Truancy rates. During the process of planning and setting goals for the SRO program, school administrators from all but one of the Stark County Sheriff's Office partner school districts hoped that the SROs would reduce truancy because the schools' graduation and promotion rates had fallen well below State-mandated levels. The SROs counseled truant students, met with their parents or guardians, and, in some cases, conducted home visits. Graduation rates generally increased for the three-and-one-half year period since the program began compared with the four-year period before it began. Of course, to suggest that the work of a single officer serving numerous schools would, in and of itself, improve attendance, would be to oversimplify the explanation. Nonetheless, the figures do show the positive results of the districts' sustained campaigns to tackle truancy, efforts in which the SRO program has played an integral role. As a result, ***the Plain Township School District in Stark County presented the data to the town's chief administrative officer and to the three elected trustees who appoint him***.

Discipline rates. Many programs expect SROs to reduce discipline rates. Data collected over two years from Stark County showed that, as the officers became more fully integrated in their high schools, there was a decrease in the number of disciplinary actions per 100 students (in-school suspensions, Saturday schools, out-of-school suspensions, expulsions). A similar decline occurred in some of the middle schools. By and large, other data showed that the school districts imposed fewer of the strictest punishments (out-of-school suspension or expulsion) in the 2001-02 school year than they did in 2000-01. Principals suggested two explanations for the improvement:

• With a fuller integration of the SRO program, administrators were able to intervene in cases before they developed into more serious infractions.

• The SROs' presence may have helped to de-escalate student misbehavior by calming tensions already in progress.

Fairless High School in Stark County tracks changes in a number of measures of school safety and performance to assess the effectiveness of its Community Care Team—of which the school's SRO is an integral part—that seeks to overcome barriers that prevent at-risk students from obtaining an education. The data from 1991 to 2002 (the program began in 1996) showed a significant improvement in discipline rates as well as in a number of other areas (see below). As a result of this evidence of the team's effectiveness, when the Stark County Sheriff, facing massive layoffs due to a budget cut, asked the school district to increase its share of the SRO's cost, the school board contributed an additional $16,000 from its general fund to continue to maintain the SRO on the team. Richard Hull, the high school principal at the time who set up the Care Team, was able to make a convincing case for the funding in part because he had data showing that the team was contributing to significant improvements in student proficiency and school safety.

| Selected Measures of Effectiveness of the Fairless High School Before and After Community Care Team Became Operational | | |
|---|---|---|
| Measure | 1991 | 2002 |
| graduation rate | 66% | 91% |
| reading proficiency | 74% | 95% |
| writing proficiency | 66% | 96% |
| math proficiency | 39% | 84% |
| delinquency rate | 60 students | 2 students |
| severe discipline rate | 111 students | 27 students |

Free up patrol officers. The Stark County sheriff was interested in knowing whether placing a deputy in the five school districts had freed road deputies to perform other vital patrol functions in the county. Data showed that the number of incidents that deputies other than SROs responded to at schools within its partnering districts decreased dramatically from 197, or 75 percent of incidents in 1999, to 93, or just 25 percent of incidents in 2001. Without the SRO program in place, even if one expected a level number of incidents at the schools, sheriff's office deputies would have had to leave their other patrol areas to respond to approximately 100 more incidents at schools. If the number of incidents that required a response rose to the level actually reported in 2001, then deputies would have had to spend even more time away from their other patrol duties, responding to approximately 280 calls (75 percent of 373).

*Conduct Surveys*

Several program supervisors have surveyed students, teachers, school administrators, and parents to find out if they have used and benefited from the program—and then used the findings to help convince funding sources to continue

to fund the program. Many school districts routinely conduct "school climate" or "school quality" surveys of parents, students, or school personnel that include questions about school safety. In Oklahoma County, in conjunction with the Plain View School District's overall safety planning process, the school superintendent's office developed and distributed a survey to teachers and students in the spring of 2002 that specifically addressed the SRO program's performance. The survey provided two important findings:

- More staff and students from all three grades in the middle school reported that they would feel more comfortable discussing an unsafe situation with the SRO than with reporting it to a principal or teacher.

- Of the various safety measures in place at their schools, staff and students most often rated the SRO as the most effective.

Furthermore, when asked their opinion of their building's SRO, students checked off positive descriptions much more frequently than negative ones:

- The top five responses were "Cares About Kids," "Fair," "Likes His/Her Job," "Good Role Model," and "Problem Solver." No more than eight percent of the students said they perceived their SRO as "Unavailable," "Useless," or someone who "Doesn't Like or Trust Kids."

- Half the participants from both county school districts reported that their opinion of police had improved since the SROs' arrival, with only one percent reporting that their opinion of the police had gotten worse.

The Palm Beach County School District conducts an anonymous annual survey among its principals in which school administrators assess 40 different school district departments in six different areas on a scale of 1-5, with 5 the highest rating. School district departments range from the school board, to information technology, to the assistant superintendent for curriculum and learning, to employee benefits and risk management. The department's ratings address six areas: cooperation, image, planning, communication, management, and overall performance.

In 2003, among 125 of the district's 160 principals who responded to the survey, "School Police," with a rating of 4.38, had the eighth highest score among 40 school district functions rated (see appendix B). While the police department is responsible for other important activities in addition to the SRO program, it is likely that most principals rate the department based primarily on their experience with the SROs in their schools. The school district also tracks changes in these ratings over time: the police department's rating has increased steadily in the past several years from 3.64 in 1996 to 4.38 in 2003—an improvement of 20 percent.

| Focus Groups can Provide Useful Evidence of Program Effectiveness |
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| Focus groups make it possible to explore in depth student feelings and perceptions about a program. When in 1996 the Schaumburg program first expanded beyond a pilot school to three schools, the school board wanted empirical evidence that the program was working. As a result, school administrators hired a researcher from a local university at the end of the program's second year to conduct focus groups with students. The focus groups showed that, between the spring of 1996 and the spring of 1997, student perceptions of safety were unchanged. However, as the researcher noted, "Lack of a particularly strong impact by the school resource officers during the first year should not be surprising . . . . one cannot expect a single staff member to counter in just one year the effects of normal developmental changes and the intensity of peer pressures." In short, while programs need to evaluate the SROs' work as early as the first year of operation to identify any problems with the program, the results in terms of outcomes should be treated with caution until after the program has been in operation for at least two years.<br><br>As described in detail in the case study at the end of the chapter, until 2003 school guidance counselors in Schaumburg also conducted annual focus groups at each grade level at each of the five junior high schools with an SRO. The groups included random samples of 10 seventh graders and 10 eighth graders, as well as a group of about 10 combined seventh and eighth graders who had dealt with the SRO personally. |

## Document SRO Activity

Individuals in a position to sustain the program, or who can recommend that others continue to fund it, are often unaware of how active SROs are and what they do. For example, in Sarasota County community groups had been asking to be allowed to bring their own education programs into the schools—which would have supplanted some SRO activities. As a result, during an annual presentation of the budget to the school committee, members asked what the SROs were teaching at each grade level. After the SROs briefed the members on the officers' wide-ranging activities from prom night to teaching about Internet safety, the committee decided to protect the program against attempts by community groups trying to take over some of SRO program's activities in the schools.

As discussed in chapter 6, "Supervising SROs," most programs require SROs to submit logs of their activities. While these logs are an important means of monitoring SRO activity, **programs can also use them to document that their SROs are busy—and busy doing the right things**. For example, Wade McKittrick, the Marshall high school principal, reported that "Jim [Marshall, the SRO] does a great job keeping data on his hours, which kids he's talked with, and presentations he's given. This is a very data-driven school district—we evaluate the value of things and make budget reductions based on that. Jim's data help sustain the program."

In Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the main reason the police department's community services division adopted a free incident tracking software program called *School COP* (see the box "*School COP* Enables SROs . . . .") was to document conclusively how busy and productive the 10 SROs were as a means of avoiding the possibility of other divisions in the police department, such as patrol, traffic, or detectives, "raiding" the SROs to increase their own personnel. Although the community services division is acting proactively in case other divisions should try to "steal" its officers, there is historical precedent in the department for being concerned. After the 9/11 tragedy, the agency lost nearly 10 percent of its sworn officers to the military. In response, the department divisions that lost officers sought to make up for their reductions in personnel by asking the chief to transfer officers from elsewhere in the department to their divisions. As a result, the chief did disband the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program and transferred its officers to the depleted divisions— but he left the SRO program unscathed.

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**School COP Enables SROs to Document Their Activities Effortlessly**

*School COP* is a free software package for entering, tracking, tabulating, and analyzing incidents that occur on school campuses. Since 2001, *School* COP has been downloaded over 5,500 times from its website (see below). It has also been distributed to over 7,000 police officers, sheriff's deputies, and school administrators at over 40 COPS in Schools conferences sponsored by the COPS Office.

SROs say that *School COP* saves them time by making it easy to produce reports for supervisors, school administrators, and school boards. The software also helps SROs preserve their positions. As one SRO put it, "I document everything I've been doing— meetings, counseling activities, etc. This helps me create my own job security . . . . and helps sell the program."

• In one community, the police chief presented *School COP* graphs and summary reports to the school board. The SRO supervisor reports that "now they [city officials] are asking, 'Where are we going to find the funds to keep the SRO program going,' rather than wondering, 'Do we really want to continue this program?' "

• An SRO program supervisor in a sheriff's office with over 20 SROs serving several school districts reports that the software "has been a tremendous asset to us. I currently enter all data from incident reports generated by the SROs as well as any done by patrol officers after school hours. I generate annual reports by district and individual school for the superintendents of each district for justification purposes to continue the SRO program within their districts."

*School COP* and an instructional manual may be found at: www.schoolcopsoftware.com and downloaded for free. Included with the materials is a sample database that novice users can test out with impunity—that is, without losing any of their own data.

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The Palm Beach County School District Police Department keeps a chart that compares the number of times SROs conducted each of 11 activities each school year. Activities include student counseling, parent conferences, and arrests. The chart indicates that, while the student population increased by 7,372 students from 2001 to 2002, the number of arrests decreased by 9 percent; similarly, while the number of students increased 5,083 from 2002 to 2003, the number of arrests again declined by 9 percent.

| **Personal Experience With the Program Can Also Generate Support** |
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| Personal experience with the program can sometimes supplement empirical evidence of effectiveness—or substitute for it. According to Major Skip Rossi, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office budget director (and a former SRO), "When I teach at FASRO [the Florida Association of School Resource Officers], I tell SROs in new programs, 'First and foremost, the program is built on relationships.' " Indeed, because Sarasota County central office staff and SRO program staff share office space in the same building, SRO supervisors and school district staff stop to talk informally when they run into each other on the sidewalks or in the corridors.<br><br>In several other jurisdictions, individuals in a position to help continue program funding have had first-hand experience with the SRO program that has contributed to or sealed their willingness to support it.<br><br>• As an elementary school teacher from 1971-1975, Tucson's assistant superintendent of schools had worked closely with the SRO in his school and never forgot the officer's help in finding lost children and addressing neighborhood squabbles that spilled over into the school.<br><br>• A school board member in another jurisdiction said that her best friend's son was in trouble, but the SRO had helped him to go straight—the boy has graduated from college. She personally observed her son, who has Downs Syndrome, socializing comfortably with the SRO, who took an interest in the boy.<br><br>• Kathy Reiber, Marshall school board member (and former classroom teacher), recounted that "I sat in on a D.A.R.E. class that my daughter was in and I saw Jim [Marshall, the SRO] work with kids and saw the rapport he has with them."<br><br>• Councilman John Skarbnik in West Orange observed, "I have kids in the schools, and I've asked them about the SROs. They're very well selected and coach teams. My kids have become friendly with them—the SROs are almost like a teacher."<br><br>Program staff can sometimes set up these personal experiences: Detective Kevin Nolan, the original SRO in Salem, used to invited school board members to shadow him; several took him up on the offer and saw first hand how productive and well liked Nolan was. |

The four case studies that follow illustrate some of the same approaches programs used to maintain program funding discussed above, but each program also used distinctive strategies that may be worthy of replication.

- The Marshall, Minnesota, Police Department illustrates how a law enforcement agency with only 21 sworn officers and a single SRO in a very small community can maintain funding for its program despite a fiscal crisis if the agency works hard and creatively to build support, including making use of a citizens' academy attended by school officials.

- The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office program has endured for over a quarter of a century through a combination of approaches, including providing a service that principals and assistant principals tell the school district budget director is absolutely essential; benefiting financially from free office space (and close interpersonal contact) in the headquarters building owned and occupied by the school district; and accommodating reasonable requests from the schools for services that are technically outside the scope of its contract.

- Empirical evidence of the Schaumburg program's effectiveness, including periodic focus groups with students, that indicated the program was working, along with widespread support for the program among voting parents, helped convince the town to increase its financial contribution to the program when the school district could no longer pay most of the cost.

- When budget cutbacks forced the Stark County Sheriff's Office to reassign its five SROs to patrol, four of the five school districts found the money to have the officers returned to the schools. In one district, a "revolt" by the principals at losing their SROs, coupled with statistics showing that student expulsions had declined and graduation rates had increased, helped convince the school district and elected town trustees to find the money.

## Case Study: Marshall, Minnesota, Police Department (21 sworn officers)

By providing a service school officials value highly, and by creatively promoting the program, the Marshall Police Department kept its SRO program afloat when it had to ask the school district to increase its share of the costs.

### The Chief Builds Support Through a Citizens Academy

Robert Yant, the Marshall police chief, in part because he anticipated the need for support for the SRO program from the school district after he had submitted a grant application to the COPS Office, instituted a citizens' academy and encouraged school administrators to attend. The chief felt that administrators who were more familiar with the nature of police work, with the operations of his department, and with key members of the department would provide increased support for the program that would not only make the SRO's job easier but also improve the chances of the school district's maintaining, and even increasing, its financial contribution to the program after the COPS in Schools grant ran out. Initially, the grant covered half of the officer's wages and benefits for three years, with the city contributing 35 percent of the cost and the school district 15 percent.

*Yant went out of his way to invite school administrators to participate in the academy.* Eventually, the high school principal and assistant principal, one of the two elementary school principals, two-thirds of the school board members, and some city council members attended. Their participation represented a significant commitment—27 hours spread over one evening and a Saturday every other week, culminating in a ride-along with the officer who became the SRO.

Later, as Chief Yant had hoped, the administrators suggested to other administrators, teachers, and secretaries in their schools that they attend a future academy. As a result, at the recommendation of Cynthia Celander, the high school assistant principal who attended the first academy, the high school principal, Wade McKittrick, attended the second academy after the SRO program had begun. While he says that having worked in a Minneapolis suburb previously that had an SRO had already made him a believer in the program, "I needed to understand how the Marshall Police Department understands and addresses issues—it was essential for me to know the intricacies of the department. Every police department looks at things differently." He also met people in the department—for example, the dispatchers and the chief—so he could later call them and be immediately recognized. "Relationship building," he says, "is an important consideration in a school-police collaboration."

Chief Yant continued to build support for the SRO program in other ways. For example, he arranged for one of his detectives to give a presentation to the school board on gang- and drug-related activity in the town and on campus to make sure

that the administrators would accept the SRO's prevention and enforcement activities in the schools related to gang activity such as graffiti, signals, clothing, and tattoos. More generally, the presentation was designed to help the board realize the need for an officer in the schools.

### Funding Cutbacks Force a Change in the Funding Ratio

According to Marshall senior high school principal Wade McKittrick, at the same time that the COPS in Schools grant was going to expire in 2002, at a bimonthly school administrators meeting with the superintendent, attended also in this instance by the school district financial officer, it was clear that the district had to make cuts. "Knowing that the grant was running out, the question was raised, 'Do we want to contribute more [than the 15 percent they were already contributing] for this program?' The answer was 'Yes.' "

Cynthia Celander, assistant principal at Marshall high school, remembers that "***The superintendent of schools, financial director, and business manager had heard enough positive comments about the program to fund it.***" However, providing funding for the SRO program meant reducing money in other places even more than the school district had already planned. While the school district was able to avoid cutting personnel in 2002-03, it did increase fees for some extracurricular activities and reduced expenditures for capital budgets and supplies. According to Celander, "This year [2003-04], we had to cut teachers, in part because enrollment is down. But cutting the SRO was not discussed: the business manager just shook his head and said, 'I'll figure something out.' "

### Why the School District Was Willing to Increase its Contribution

The school district decided to increase its contribution to the program for four reasons.

*Concern to Enhance School Safety*

Several school district administrators made clear that they felt that Jim Marshall's presence in the schools made it less likely that there would be a safety problem and that, if a problem occurred, it would be dealt with much more swiftly than if administrators had to call 911.

*Helping Students to Feel Safe*

School administrators believe that the SRO contributed significantly to helping students to feel safe.

- According to Kathy Reiber, a school board member, "We did surveys of students, and safety is one of their top concerns. So the district needs to make kids feel safe—and the program is a small price to pay to help do that."

- Another school official said, "Kids need to feel safe, and the SRO's presence makes a difference in their feeling of safety. He sends a message about creating a safe environment."

*Concern about Liability*

According to one school district official, in addition to concerns about protecting students, "A factor at the back of people's minds is that, if the SRO was removed and a critical incident occurred, parents would blame the school district for dropping the program. The program is good PR for the school district because it shows that we are concerned about the kids' safety and we are spending money to do something about it. Some school killings elsewhere in Minnesota last year created concern about school safety. We'd be hard pressed after those killings to take away the SRO."

*Benefits to School Administrators*

***Most administrators feel it is not the program that helps them, it is this particular SRO, Jim Marshall, who helps them.***

- The SRO eases the burden on school administrators by helping to handle certain problem situations or taking care of them entirely. For example, Wade McKittrick says, "If a teacher can't get a student who is disruptive to leave class, Jim can do this."

- Another school administrator reported, "There's no question he makes my job easier. For example, he can take a kid I'm so frustrated with and he puts a different spin on things and calms the kid down. He also reduced recidivism with some kids."

- According to Kathy Reiber, "We put in more money because the program was working. It saves staff—faculty and administrators—considerable time."

### Case Study: Sarasota County, Florida, Sheriff's Office (500 sworn)

The Sarasota County SRO program, administered by the sheriff's office and funded almost equally by the sheriff and the school district, has survived—and expanded—for over a quarter of a century. The program appears to have sustained itself not because of any single component but through a combination of features.

**The Program Provides Substantial Benefits to the Sheriff's Office**

The sheriff's office considers the program a showcase, a particularly bright spot in the department that gets national attention. In addition, according to Major Skip Rossi, a former SRO and currently the department's budget director, *"If we dropped the SRO program, we'd be sending road deputies to the campuses all day because the principals are now conditioned to have immediate help."*

The school district provides the sheriff with in-kind services. The superintendent of schools and sheriff decided together to house the SRO program in the building owned by the school district and used for its headquarters. Because space is tight in the sheriff's office building, the department would have had to rent space and furniture to house the program. However, the school district donated space to the program for free, including a large reception area and two offices.

**The Schools Realize Important Benefits From the Program**

Because the SROs are well versed in how to deal with kids and because of the officers' knowledge of safety issues, the chance of a tragedy occurring in the schools is reduced. For the same reason, the school district's liability is reduced.The program also eases the burden on school administrators, who are concerned about liability, too: "What do I do if a kid has a gun?" one of them wondered. "They prefer to have an SRO available to handle the problem." Some principals have stated that they would prefer to give up a teacher rather than lose their SRO.

Because the program is housed in the building owned by the school district and used for its headquarters, *the school district has immediate access to program staff*—something it has made use of during crises or just for in-person meetings instead of phone calls. When a teacher was arrested, the superintendent was able to meet immediately with the SRO administrator to discuss the matter. Furthermore, by their mere accessibility, SRO supervisors can provide security for school district employees in the building. Robyn Marinelli, supervisor of student services, recounted that "when the school district received word late one night that an employee might become extremely upset and act out, the executive director asked me to have an SRO in the lobby at 7:30 a.m. and remain all day. I called [Tim] Carney [the captain in charge of the program], who posted one there." The year before, the program stationed an SRO outside the superintendent's office when it appeared that an angry school district employee might try to hurt him.

**The Program Accommodates Reasonable Requests From the Schools**

The program frequently honors school district requests for assistance even though it is not strictly speaking required to do so by the contract.

- A school principal called Robyn Marinelli about an irate parent who had come to the school swearing and unwilling to budge because her daughter had been struck by another student. Because the school's regular SRO was at a training at the time, school officials had called road deputies—who locked the parent in the office. As a result, Marinelli called Sergeant Tim Enos, one of the three supervisors, who immediately dropped what he was doing and raced to the school, where he defused the situation.

- When Marinelli has called Enos to report rumors suggesting there might be gang activity at a particular school at the end of the day, the sergeant has sent four or five SROs to help keep the peace. Marinelli has asked Enos, "Can you go direct traffic at the beginning-of-the-school-year teachers' meeting?" The program does not have to do this, but he agrees.

- A principal asked for extra details for his graduation to handle the 500 cars that would be showing up at the school. Captain Carney arranged for a couple of substitute SROs who are not assigned to specific campuses to help park the cars and showed up himself to help out.

- SROs provide security at school board meetings. On one occasion, an SRO had to arrest an irate parent who refused to leave the podium; the officer then shut down the building.

- The sheriff's office had been removing the SROs from the schools during the summer to do beach patrol. As a result, at a principals' meeting several years ago it was agreed that, because there were summer schools going on, the SROs were needed on campus. The group assigned a principal to take up the concern with the sheriff, who arranged to have an SRO in the summer schools or on call at all times.

***The sheriff has personally been helpful to the school district.*** In 2002, the county held a referendum to increase the millage on the property tax to provide an additional $33 million for each of the following four years to increase funds for the schools. To support the Sarasota County School District's efforts, during the campaign the sheriff told community groups and the press about the importance of approving the referendum. He never mentioned the SRO program, which stood to benefit only slightly from the additional monies (the schools would use a very modest amount to pay for SRO overtime), instead campaigning primarily in an effort to provide support to the schools.

The result of this willingness to accommodate administrators—within reason—increases support for the program throughout the entire school district community because word of how pleased principals, teachers, and school district administrators are with the program travels to the people in charge of allocating the money. As a result, the budget managers in the school district who decide whether they will continue to contribute money to maintaining the program consistently approve each year's new contract. According to Al Weidner, the school district's budget director:

> Even in hard times in the 1990s when the system lost State funding, we increased the program's funding because schools say they don't know how they would function without it. The feedback I get from principals is that the SROs are visible and teach. The principals go out of their way to single out the program to me. I want to make sure we could not be spending the money on something else and getting a better return our investment, but none of the administrators ever suggested cutting the SRO program. ***I recommend to the assistant superintendent what to spend the district's money on and, if I get negative comments from the schools on a program, I will highlight that to the assistant superintendent. Conversely, I highlight programs that the schools support***. [emphasis added]

**Neither Partner Feels the Other Is Not Paying Its Fair Share**

The school district has paid about half of the program's costs from when the initiative first began in 1980, and this has never changed. With only two significant exceptions, the sheriff's office and the school district have split the program costs ($2.34 million in 2004): first, the sheriff's office currently pays the $66,000 for the office manager; second, while during the program's first year the two agencies split the cost of one SRO's cruiser, the sheriff's office has paid for the officers' cruisers ever since.

When the sheriff's office requested funding for two additional SROs for the 2004-05 budget, the school board agreed to pay half the cost and the county commissioners approved the expenditure. The department and school board also agreed to split the $3,015 cost of maintaining a dog in the program. The school district agreed to contribute $10,000 for SRO training expenses for registration fees, per diem, and, when out of state, travel expenses. According to Al Weidner:

> When Robyn [Marinelli] and [Tim] Carney negotiated for the 2004-2005 contract, Robyn came to me to ask for the $10,000 for training the SROs. I had no problem approving the funds because the program is very important and we had the money—the schools like the program and want to expand it.

**Personal Experience With the Program and Program Staff Helps Ensure Everyone Supports the Program**

There are very senior administrators in the sheriff's office who, as former SROs, have a first-hand appreciation for the program. The current sheriff—one of the founders of NASRO—was the program's second SRO, and the department's current budget director was the third SRO. Three captains are former SROs.

The program has resulted in a close professional and even personal relationship between a number of sheriff's and school district personnel. Major Rossi goes fishing with one school principal who is a long-time program supporter. Because they are housed in the same building, SRO supervisors and school district staff talk informally all the time, sharing concerns and gossip, squeezing arms, and ribbing each other. "This [close proximity] is a big advantage," Sergeant Tim Enos said. "Now, we can connect a face with the name if we have to communicate by telephone." But, more typically, people pop into each other's offices or call to ask, "Can I come down to talk?"

## Case Study: Schaumburg, Illinois, School District 54 (140 sworn)

Until 2004, School District 54 paid for three-quarters of the five SROs' salaries and, because of the perceived quality of the program that was in part based on empirical evidence and in part due to the program's perceived benefits to administrators and students, for eight years there was never a question about cutting it back. Examples of empirical evidence included declines in tobacco use and the continued failure of gangs to gain a foothold in the schools.

- *Possession of cigarettes and smoking declined dramatically.* Detective John Jameson, the program's first SRO, along with Ward Nelson, then an assistant principal, rediscovered an existing town ordinance that empowers officers to fine students $75 for possession of cigarettes. Using the ordinance, the SRO ticketed some students, whose parents had to pay the fine. In addition, in the first few cases the students and their parents had to go to court. The other SROs began using the ordinance, as well. As a result, within two years, cigarette possession and smoking ended in and around the middle schools. According to one principal, "The school used to have to suspend several kids for having cigarettes on them; that has stopped." Without the SROs issuing the citations, it would have been too cumbersome for school administrators to have repeatedly called 911 to have a patrol officer come over to issue them.

- *Gang activity remained out of the schools.* Both the school district's SRO coordinator and the police department's SRO supervisor believe that local police departments had already done a good job of making it difficult for gangs to establish a foothold in the community. However, they believe that the SRO program continued to keep them out of the schools. Among the reasons students in focus groups (see

below) gave for the absence of gang activity were the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program taught by the SROs and the presence of SROs in the buildings.

**Focus Groups Showed the Program Was Working—but Could Be Improved**

Until 2003, ***the school district conducted annual focus groups at each grade level at each of the five junior high schools***. The groups included a random sample of 10 seventh and 10 eighth graders, and a group of about 10 combined seventh and eighth graders, selected by the principal, assistant principal, and SRO, who had dealt with the SRO personally. School guidance counselors moderated the groups, which included a significant focus on the SRO program.

The results for the school years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 suggested that the focus group participants generally found the program helpful. The students participating in the 2000-2001 focus groups said that they—and their parents—overwhelmingly liked having an SRO in school and felt safer because of his presence. Comments from students included statements like "They [other students] feel good about John Jameson and safer" and "He's very visible."
***These findings—which the school district shared with school board members—helped convince school district administrators to continue to ask the school board each year to maintain funding for the program***. The results also pointed out the need for improvements in the program (see the box "By Identifying Needed Improvements . . . .").

| **By Identifying Needed Improvements, Focus Groups Made It Possible to Make the Program Even More Attractive to School Administrators** |
|---|
| School District 54 gives the results of its annual focus groups to each school for purposes of goal setting. For example, the early focus groups showed that students saw the SROs as law enforcers. As a result, the program coordinator reminded the SROs of the need to spend more time on building relationships with students. The focus groups also indicated a need to address bullying and sexual harassment. As a result, the SROs added these topics to their classroom offerings. |

The focus groups were discontinued after the 2001-2002 school year because they had served their purposes of convincing the board of the program's value and identifying areas needing improvement when the SROs were new at the job. In addition, the process and logistics for conducting the focus groups are arduous. However, the district may resume them for the 2004-2005 school year because there will be two new SROs.

**Because of a Budget Deficit, the School District Asked the Police Department to Pay a Larger Share of the Program Costs**

When a budget crunch forced the school board in 2002 to discuss laying off teachers, the idea of dropping or cutting back the SRO program was never raised. However, things changed in 2003. That year, the school district approached the Village of Schaumburg (which funds the police department) to explain that, because of a severe financial crisis and the resulting need to try to save teaching positions, it could not longer contribute three-quarters of the program's funding. (A nearby school district had already abandoned its SRO program.) The district had already frozen its instructional budget for six years, and it was retiring teachers with 30 years' experience and either not replacing them or replacing them with entry-level—and less expensive—teachers. The school district's funding, derived largely from property taxes, was curtailed by a cap on its ability to raise taxes; in addition, State aid for schools had declined.

Initially, the school district asked the police department to obtain grant funding for the SROs, but the department pointed out that COPS in Schools grant cannot be used to support existing SROs. Furthermore, the village was experiencing fiscal problems itself because it was committed to funding a new convention center and at the same time confronting a decline in sales tax revenue.

The school district then surveyed some other SRO programs in Illinois and discovered that program costs were split evenly between the police department (or town) and the school district. As a result, the school board in a presentation to the village council's health and safety committee and in a meeting with the village manager (who proposes the budget to the village council) asked the village to adopt the same formula. Sergeant Jerry Thommes, the police department's program supervisor, also made a presentation to the village trustees and safety committee urging them to retain the program. The negotiations lasted several months.

Eventually, the village agreed to increase its contribution to half the program's costs *because of the widespread support for the program among parents that would have made it politically unwise to abandon the program*. Furthermore, the village and police department still had a financial incentive to continue the program because the school district would continue to fund 50 percent of five SROs for nine months of the year, making it possible to in effect keep these officers for about half price.

In turn, the elected school board members agreed to continue to fund the other half primarily for the same reason the village did—*widespread program support among parents who might have objected vociferously (and at the ballot box) if the program were abandoned*. According to one participant, "No one wanted to

be singled out in the media as having to accept responsibility for the program's demise." Another participant said that, if the program were dropped, "There could have been a backlash from residents." In addition, some school board members with children in the schools had an especially informed understanding of the program's value. Finally, according to one participant, "the school board is comfortable with having cops in the building in case an incident arises—and the SROs do a great job of anticipating problems."

The police department itself lost no money or personnel despite the school district's reduced contribution, because the department's funding level from the village did not change. According to one source, although the village lost 25 percent of the contribution that the school district had been paying into its general fund, it was able to achieve economies elsewhere to offset the loss, for example, by merging the health and public works departments into a single department. In addition, because of a hiring freeze in the police department, several positions were unfilled whose salaries, as a result, were not being funded.

## Case Study: Stark County, Ohio, Sheriff's Office (100 sworn officers)

In the process of designing its SRO programs, the Stark County Sheriff's Office requested suggestions from school administrators in its partnering school districts, as well as from leaders at other area schools, on the types of problems that a deputy might help them to manage. School administrators have continued to play a significant role in the program's operation, participating in the screening and selection of SROs and in defining the officers' roles and responsibilities. ***The administrators' involvement contributed to their willingness to support funding the program after the COPS in Schools grant ran out.***

**Budget Cutbacks Forced the Sheriff to Stop the Program**

In January 2003, a fiscal crisis, a weakening economy, and a shrinking county budget combined to endanger the program's continuation. After voters defeated a proposed sales tax increase, the sheriff's office was forced to lay off over 40 employees as well as the entire detective bureau. These cuts prompted the agency to recall its five SROs to redeploy them to conventional patrol. In turn, the sheriff's office also had to give up its COPS in Schools grant after only two-and-one-half years in the middle of the 2002-2003 school year because the grant cannot be used to pay for road deputies.

As a result, the sheriff's office told the school districts that they would have to pick up most of the cost of SROs if they wanted the program to continue. The department and the school districts then engaged in protracted negotiations over the amount of the schools' contributions, with each side trying to pay as little as possible (with the exception noted below). According to Major Rick Perez, the program supervisor who conducted the negotiations, "There was a chance the school districts would not fund the deputies. It went down to the wire."

Four of the five school districts found the money. Their motivation was concern to maintain safety in the schools and because students, parents, and teachers all felt safer with a deputy in the schools. In addition, one school district that had reduced its serious truancy rate significantly at least in part as a result of the efforts of its SRO to catch truants was concerned the rate would go back up without the SRO.

The one school district that did not continue the program would have had to lay off a teacher to afford the SRO. In addition, residents in the school district have a history of resisting tax increases to enhance school programs and services. Only after many years of attempts by the school district did local residents recently approve its first tax levy to fund a badly needed new high school.

**Plain Local School District Managed to Find the Money—Three Times**

One of the four school districts that found the money illustrates the difficulties and possibilities school systems face in trying to sustain an SRO program. According to Major Perez, after the schools in the district had gone without their SROs for three weeks *"the principals had a revolt because they had become dependent on the SROs over the preceding two-and-one-half years*. They liked the real sense of security the SRO brought to the staff even though he was spread out over 11 buildings. They did not want to go through the second half of the school year without an SRO in the schools. They appreciated the SRO's preventive role even more, including handling calls from parents for help."

Still, there was a lot of negotiating among the sheriff's office, town trustees, and superintendent over who could pay what to fund the SRO for the rest of the school year. The township said it could not pay because it was facing cuts after residents of the town had defeated a special tax. As a result, the superintendent of schools made the decision to pay for the SRO. The town treasurer, hired by the board of education as its fiscal manager, approved the $20,851 needed for the remainder of the 2002-2003 school year.

The next school year, 2003-2004, the superintendent and treasurer convinced the three town trustees and the township administrator that it was "their turn" to provide the funding "for protecting the students." According to Mark Cozy, Chief Township Administrative Officer of Plain Township, who is appointed by the township's three elected trustees, *the schools kept statistics that they presented to the trustees and chief administrator officer documenting that*, although arrests had gone up since the SRO began working in the schools, *expulsions had gone down and the graduation rate had increased*. In addition, school administrators strongly advocated for retaining the SRO. Finally, the sheriff's office (with which the township contracts for general law enforcement services) strongly supported the program. As a result, the trustees and administrator agreed to provide the $42,000 for the 9-month school year, with the sheriff's office paying the SRO's salary during the three summer months.

The school board and trustees agreed to split the cost of the SRO for the 2004-2005 school year. The trustees pay the sheriff the full cost of the SRO, and the school board reimburses the trustees half the expense. Each party sacrificed to be able to contribute its share: the school board cut back on its hiring plans, while the trustees decided to lease, instead of buy (as originally planned), the new cruisers the sheriff's office needed.

**Fairless Local School District Found Money From Diverse Sources**

In 1996, Richard Hull, when he was the high school principal, developed a Community Care Team for the Stark County Fairless Local School District high school. The team consists of teachers, a mental health counselor, a drug prevention expert, a truancy officer—and the school's SRO. The team seeks to overcome the obstacles that prevent at-risk students from obtaining an education.

When the sheriff told the district it would have to increase its contributions to its SRO's salary and fringe benefits, Hull was able to come up with the funds from multiple sources. First, he was able to secure one-third of the total needed contribution—$16,000—from the school district's general fund. Hull raised the remaining funds from the David Foundation, which provides grants to public charities that assist underprivileged and disadvantaged children in Stark County, the local chapter of the United Way, and an individual donor.
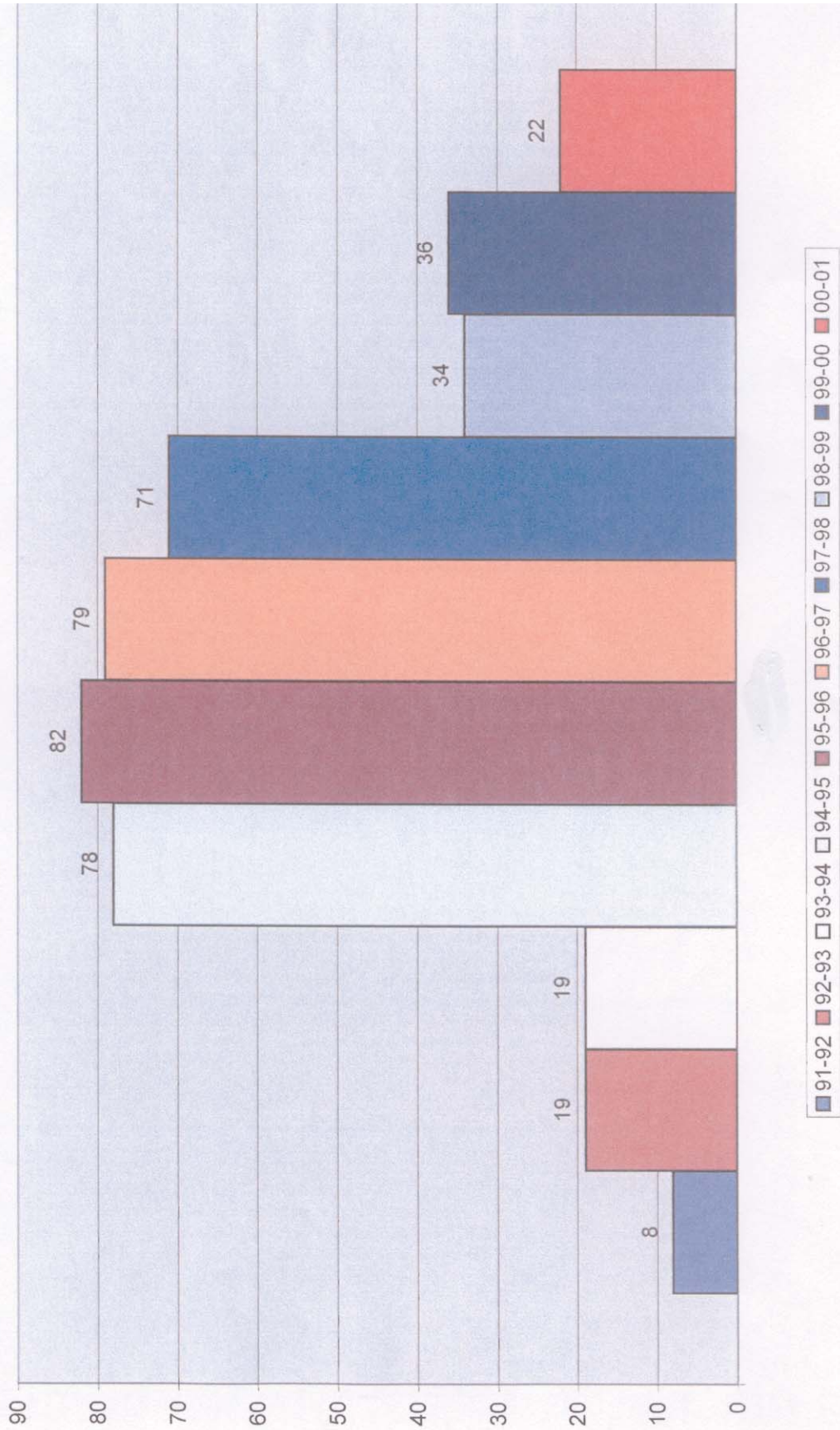
# Appendix A

## Graph of Reported Incidents by Year at One Junior High School
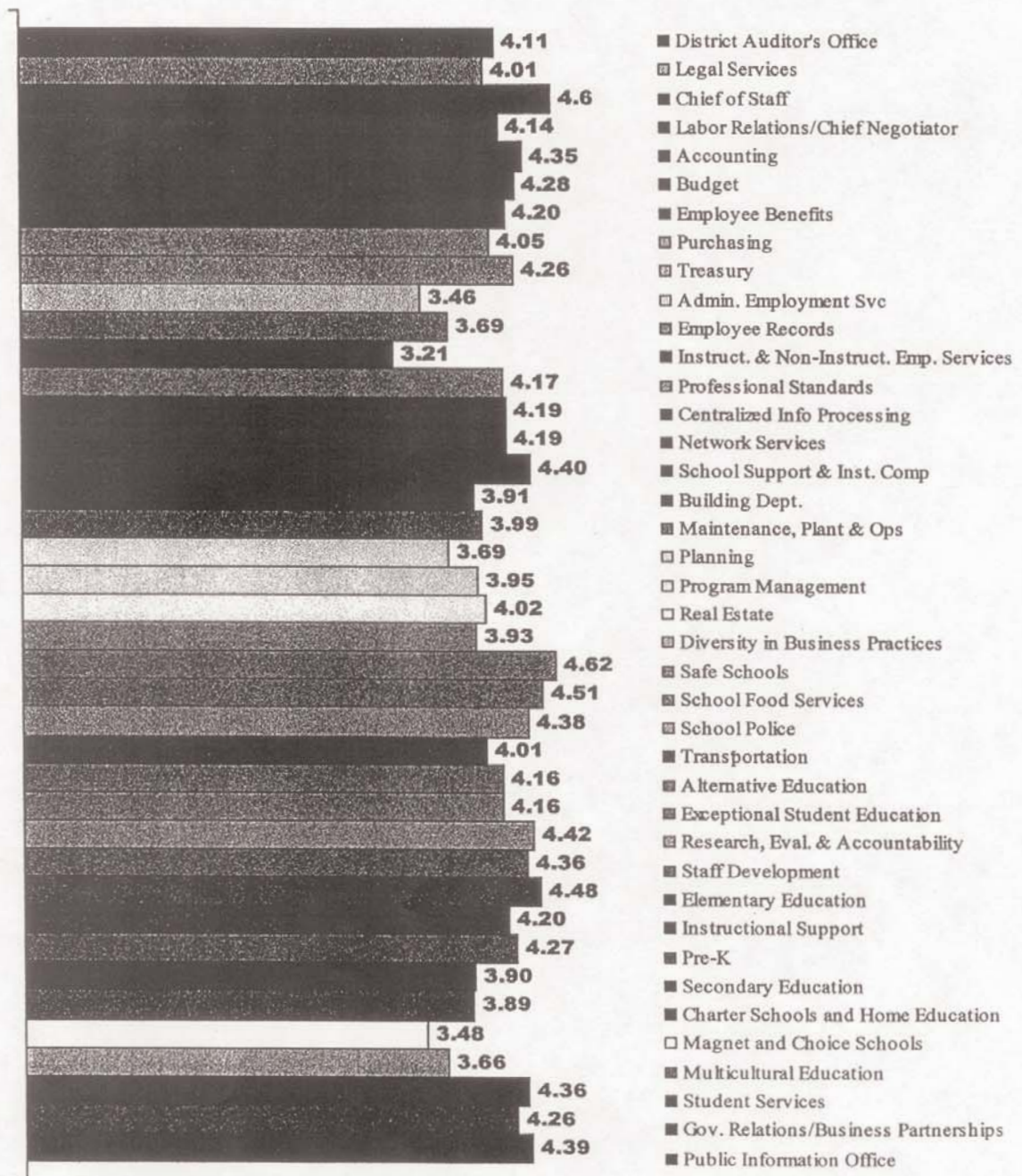
### Reported Incidents

March 1991 / April 2001



Legend: 91-92 | 92-93 | 93-94 | 94-95 | 95-96 | 96-97 | 97-98 | 98-99 | 99-00 | 00-01

Note: Program began during the 1994-95 school year.

## Appendix B

### Comparison of Performance Scores among Palm Beach, Florida, School District School Support Services

## Overall Performance Scores of Support Service Areas
## FY03 Survey of Support Services to Schools

(The overall performance score is calculated based a range of 1-5 with 5 being the highest score.)

| Score | Support Service Area |
|-------|---------------------|
| 4.11 | District Auditor's Office |
| 4.01 | Legal Services |
| 4.6 | Chief of Staff |
| 4.14 | Labor Relations/Chief Negotiator |
| 4.35 | Accounting |
| 4.28 | Budget |
| 4.20 | Employee Benefits |
| 4.05 | Purchasing |
| 4.26 | Treasury |
| 3.46 | Admin. Employment Svc |
| 3.69 | Employee Records |
| 3.21 | Instruct. & Non-Instruct. Emp. Services |
| 4.17 | Professional Standards |
| 4.19 | Centralized Info Processing |
| 4.19 | Network Services |
| 4.40 | School Support & Inst. Comp |
| 3.91 | Building Dept. |
| 3.99 | Maintenance, Plant & Ops |
| 3.69 | Planning |
| 3.95 | Program Management |
| 4.02 | Real Estate |
| 3.93 | Diversity in Business Practices |
| 4.62 | Safe Schools |
| 4.51 | School Food Services |
| 4.38 | School Police |
| 4.01 | Transportation |
| 4.16 | Alternative Education |
| 4.16 | Exceptional Student Education |
| 4.42 | Research, Eval. & Accountability |
| 4.36 | Staff Development |
| 4.48 | Elementary Education |
| 4.20 | Instructional Support |
| 4.27 | Pre-K |
| 3.90 | Secondary Education |
| 3.89 | Charter Schools and Home Education |
| 3.48 | Magnet and Choice Schools |
| 3.66 | Multicultural Education |
| 4.36 | Student Services |
| 4.26 | Gov. Relations/Business Partnerships |
| 4.39 | Public Information Office |

The following publications and Web sites provide additional information—or sources of additional information—about planning, improving, or maintaining an SRO program and about school safety issues.

## Publications

*Addressing School-Related Crime and Disorder: Interim Lessons from School Based Problem-Solving Projects*
This report is based on the activities of COPS School Based Partnership grantees. Tips and recommendations are provided for developing successful school-based, problem-solving efforts. Available from
http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=574

*Bomb Threats in Schools*
This publication summarizes knowledge about the problem, reviews factors that increase the risk of bomb threats in schools, and reviews responses to the problem and what evaluative research and police practice have suggested about the effectiveness of these responses. Available from www.cops.usdoj.gov

*Bullying in Schools*
There is ongoing concern about school violence, and police have assumed greater responsibility for helping school officials ensure students' safety. As pressure increases to place officers in schools, police agencies must decide how best to contribute to student safety. Will police presence on campuses most enhance safety? If police cannot or should not be on every campus, can they make other contributions to student safety? What are good approaches and practices? Available from http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=272

*The COPS Collaboration Toolkit: How to Build, Fix, and Sustain Productive Partnerships*
This toolkit provides practical guidance to law enforcement agencies as they develop and sustain partnerships that support community policing. The toolkit will benefit law enforcement personnel, community-based organizations, educators, youth, government officials, and others seeking to combine efforts to reduce crime and social disorder problems. Available from
http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/default.asp?Item=344

*COPS Gangs Toolkit*
The COPS Gangs Toolkit is an interactive CD, which consists of five publications that provide details of community policing solutions to youth crime and school violence. Each publication can be downloaded from the disk or ordered from the U. S. Department of Justice Response Center at (800) 421-6770. Available from http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/default.asp?Item=1309

*Creative Partnerships: Supporting Youth, Building Communities*
This COPS Innovations piece highlights community policing approaches to developing partnerships with youth. Three youth-focused programs funded by the COPS Office illustrate partnerships that law enforcement, schools, and community organizations can form to address juvenile crime and victimization issues. Available from http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=573

*School COP Software Package*
As described in the section on documenting program activity in Chapter 8, Maintaining Program Funding, this free, downloadable software program makes it possible to quickly and simply enter, track, tabulate, and analyze incidents that occur on school campuses. Available from www.schoolcopsoftware.com

*School Crime: K-12*
This document provides an overview of problems facing schools today: firearms, drug and alcohol abuse, gangs, sexual crimes, hate crimes, domestic violence, and homicide. The publication also highlights the general security measures recommended by the National School Safety Center. Available from http://www.ncvc.org/ncvc/main.aspx?dbName=DocumentViewer&DocumentID=32368

*School Critical Incident Planning: An Internet Resource Directory*
The resources gathered on this Internet site are intended to assist law enforcement and school personnel to prepare for, respond to, and resolve critical incidents in schools. Available from http://www.nlectc.org/assistance/schoolsafety.html

*SRO Performance Evaluation: A Guide to Getting Results*
This publication is a step-by-step guide to help law enforcement and school personnel use SRO performance evaluation differently than they have in the past in an effort to better address school crime and disorder problems. This publication is forthcoming and will available on the COPS Office website: www.cops.usdoj.gov

*Victim Services in Schools*
This document discusses the creation of school-based victim service programs as and effective way to prevent victimization in schools and to address the needs of those who are victimized. The document also provides a bibliography, additional resources, and more information on school-based action plans. Available from http://www.ncvc.org/ncvc/main.aspx?dbName=DocumentViewer&DocumentID=32373

**Web Sites**

Center for Safe Schools
www.safeschools.info/

Center for the Prevention of School Violence
www.cpsv.org

Circle Solutions
www.circlesolutions.com

Corbin & Associates
www.copsite.com/corbin/main.html

National Association of School Resource Officers
www.nasro.org

National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/

National School Safety Center
www.nsscl.org

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), U.S. Department of Justice
www.cops.usdoj.gov
www.copsinschools.org

**www.cops.usdoj.gov**