



School Resource Officer (SRO) Programming Information

Board of Education Meeting
September 11, 2023



Timeline to Date

August 7th: Safety Committee

- Identified School Resource Officer programming as an area to explore,
- Discussed pros and cons.
- Identified SRO Task Force members- administrators, teachers, District Education Association representatives, and police officer representatives from Des Plaines, Arlington Heights, Mt. Prospect, and Elk Grove Village

August 7th-28th: Conversations with police department representatives in preparation for the task force.

August 28th: SRO Task Force

- Review of guidance
- Discussion of need
- Role
- Advantages/ disadvantages
- Possible programming



Superintendent Survey

25 Responses

- **10 districts responded that they have SROs.**
 - **Two were high school districts**
 - **Eight were junior high or middle schools**
 - **Six have full time SRO's**
 - **Two have part time SRO's**
- **Of those with SROs, payment obligations varied.**
 - **District paying full cost**
 - **District sharing costs with Village**
 - **District paying for salary not benefits**
 - **Village paying for a shared SRO between schools**
- **Two districts have discontinued their SRO programming due to:**
 - **Reallocating the positions to social work, and after**
 - **A team analysis that cited concerns of over-policing students.**
 - **Others did not feel it was a need in their district**



Guidance Review

Joint Guidance: Framework for Safe and Successful Schools, 2013

*Schools must work towards integrating services (academic, behavioral, social, emotional, and mental health) through collaboration using a multi-tiered system of support. Schools should strive to increase access to mental health services, increase the number of school employed mental health staff, and ensure that measures to improve school safety **balance physical safety with psychological safety**. To further support student safety, schools must develop effective emergency preparedness and crisis prevention, intervention, and response plans that are coordinated with local first responders.*

Reports School Resources officers as an important role that requires specialized training, supportive approaches, a focus on education of students, and serving as a role model.

Guidance Review

Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois Attorney General
Joint Guidance to School Districts, 2021:

Research does not show that police in schools enhance student safety. To the contrary, Black and Brown students have reported feeling less safe in schools with a police presence. Students with disabilities may be disparately impacted when officers lack training and knowledge regarding disability issues. As a result, students with disabilities are disproportionately likely to be arrested or referred to law enforcement at school.

Instead of SROs or security officers, research suggests that schools should address student behavior concerns holistically through mental health professionals, counselors, social workers and an emphasis on creating a positive and safe school climate.

Guidance Review

US Department of Justice, Community Oriented Policing Services, 2022

*When students feel safe at school, they have a greater chance of thriving both academically and socially. Ensuring SROs carry out their responsibilities in a fair and impartial manner helps students feel safe at school. Indeed, school districts and the SROs working with them **must make sure their programs and activities do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, limited English proficiency, disability, or sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity) under federal civil rights laws.***

*We encourage jurisdictions to implement other evidence-based strategies that promote school safety, and these principles should not limit communities in their consideration of the range of programs and interventions that can help improve safety on school campuses. **Implementing an SRO program is a local decision, and communities should consider the range of options available that best fit their needs.***



Definition of SRO from Federal Statute

“a career law enforcement officer, with sworn authority, deployed in community-oriented policing, and assigned by the employing police department or agency to work in collaboration with schools and community-based organizations—

- A. to address crime and disorder problems, gangs, and drug activities affecting or occurring in or around an elementary or secondary school;
- B. to develop or expand crime prevention efforts for students;
- C. to educate likely school-age victims in crime prevention and safety;
- D. to develop or expand community justice initiatives for students;
- E. to train students in conflict resolution, restorative justice, and crime awareness;
- F. to assist in the identification of physical changes in the environment that may reduce crime in or around the school; and
- G. to assist in developing school policy that addresses crime and to recommend procedural changes.”



Task Force Discussion of SRO Role

Primary role: provide education and a resource to the partnering school(s).

- Coaching & mentoring students
- Building positive relationships
- Preventative education
- Educating staff on prevention strategies and community needs

Secondary role: Emergency Response

Emergency response time from police has always been very good.

SROs do not

- Regularly intervene in student behavior
- Become involved in student discipline
- Interview students without attempted parent consent or presence
- Act as security guards



Task Force Discussion of Need

The Task Force reached consensus on the following:

Current emergency call volume from D59 schools does not cause a need for SROs. Police are able to respond to schools quickly.

Current student behavior does not cause a need for SROs. SROs would not be involved in most student behaviors that occur at schools.

SRO programming provides added advantages that are not based on emergency calls or behavioral issues.

Task Force Discussion of Current Police Partnerships

Current practices include:

- Emergency response when called
- Follow up conversations with students
- Preventative education (officer friendly programs)
- Positive relationship building when possible
- Presence at events to build community partnership and share resources



Task Force Discussion of Potential Added Benefits of an SRO

- A more consistent officer to work with at our schools
- Opportunity to develop positive student-police relationships
- Increased efficiency in communication between school and police
- More specialized training than other officers
- There is increased possibility for trust-building

Safety Committee Discussion:

Advantages/Pros	Disadvantages/Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Consistency of the youth officer you are getting vs. just calling for support.● Building connections and positive relationships● Officer trained to work with school personnel, students, and families● Increased participation in school events● Opportunity to enhance or build upon current relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The presence of a police officer could trigger students and families (flight, fight, freeze response due to past experiences, immigration status, other outside factors, and beliefs)● Schools could become over dependent● Police presence could make some uncomfortable (students, staff, and families)● False perceptions that a SRO is there for discipline, consequences, arrests, and/or ticketing.● The optics of having a uniformed officer could make people feel unsafe

Safety Committee Discussion:

Advantages/Pros	Disadvantages/Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Enhanced instruction around police related issues, i.e. cyberbullying● Could shift the perception families and youth have about police officers to something positive● Having an officer who is the “right fit.”● Opportunities for students to feel comfortable coming to police for help in the future based on a positive relationship now	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● People could perceive that there are higher safety concerns than there really are● Putting an SRO in a school can be perceived as intimidating● Data cannot be measured on the relationships or preventative work● Not all police departments have positions immediately available for this● School Dist. pay for SRO salary (fiscal responsibility)

Required SRO Training

- Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board SRO training
- Juvenile Officer Training
- Youth Investigator
- Sexual Assault Investigator
- Investigative Interviewing Techniques



Considerations by Municipality

	Projected Costs to the District for a Full Time SRO	Staffing/ Availability	Timeline
Mt. Prospect	10 months officer salary ~\$105,000 Events included	May request additional position from village, current staffing taken into consideration	Following approval and training
Des Plaines	75% of officer salary ~\$120,000 Events not included	May request additional position from village, current staffing taken into consideration	Following approval and training
Elk Grove Village	9 months of officer salary ~\$128,000 Events not included	Can reallocate an officer	When needed
	\$353,000		

Steps to Creating an SRO Program

- Outlining purpose, intention, and measures of the program for educational outcomes
- Gather community feedback
- Approval of funds
- Memorandum of understanding
- Joint hiring
- Officer training and shadowing
- School staff professional development
- Student and family education
- Ongoing evaluation of effectiveness



Questions

