



BATH COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

AGENDA ITEM: INFORMATION { X } ACTION { } CLOSED MEETING { }

SUBJECT: SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT – PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATION

School Resource Officer – Sheriff Plecker

<http://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/forms/cple/sroguide.pdf>

April 3, 2012.....AGENDA ITEM: 11-12: 12.-B.





**These are provided for informational purposes only. They are not sufficiently specific and measurable to be used in a proposal for funding.*

Memorandum of Understanding and Operational Procedures

School Resource Officers (SROs) are employees of local law enforcement agencies, even when funding is being provided by the school division. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is developed to describe the partnership between the school systems and law enforcement agency. The understandings set forth in an MOU establish the framework in which the SRO Program operates.

In addition to the interagency MOU, SRO Operational Procedures which are clear and facilitate coordination of SRO functions with other law enforcement units are key to operational effectiveness and efficiency. Two model MOUs are provided in Supplement A.

Operational Procedures which are clear and facilitate coordination of SRO functions with other law enforcement units are key to operational effectiveness and efficiency.

Each of the following issues should be discussed and clarified in the process of developing the MOU. All items do not all have to be set forth in the MOU itself; some may be spelled out in the law enforcement agency's operational procedures. What is important is that both the school and the law enforcement agency are clear about these policy and operational issues.

- II SRO Program goals and objectives
- II Conditions of employment
- II Assignment of SRO
- II Duties and duty hours of the SRO
- II Chain of command
- II Basic qualifications of the SRO
- II Training/briefing
- II Dress code
- II Provision of supplies and equipment
- II Operating procedures (SOP) for the investigation of crimes and interrogation, search and arrest of students
- II Requirements for reporting of serious crimes
- II Arrest procedures for school-related crimes and crimes committed off campus
- II Procedure for handling critical incidents such as bomb threats, riots, and shootings
- II Access to education records





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- II Term of the MOU (time period)
- II Evaluation of the Program and the SRO

SAMPLE

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Excerpts addressing to chain of command

“The XYZ County Police Department shall provide for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of the School Resource Officer. ”

Excerpts addressing definitions of school/law enforcement roles and responsibilities

School Responsibilities:

All criminal activity that comes to the attention of the principal or school staff shall be reported immediately to the SRO when on duty. If an emergency situation exists and the SRO is not available, the principal shall notify the Department through the Public Safety Communications Center. Information that is not of an emergency nature may be held for the SRO.

The school shall provide a work area for the SRO that is equipped with a telephone. It is recommended that the areas have a locked storage area for securing contraband recovered in the schools by the school staff. The SRO shall be responsible for arranging for the destruction of any illegal substances that will not be used for prosecution.

The school system shall provide in-service training, when available, to the SROs in areas that will increase the effectiveness of the officers and their ability to accomplish their respective duties and responsibilities. Regular meetings will be established between School Operations and the Police Commander.

SRO Responsibilities

The SRO assumes primary responsibility in handling all calls for service from the school and coordinates the response of other police resources to the schools with the school principals.

As coordinated through the Youth Services Division, SROs may become involved in the school's curriculum and provide instruction that will enhance the student's understanding of the police mission.

The SRO shall also be responsible for assisting training for the school administration in law enforcement and related areas. Crime trends and changes of the Code of Virginia shall be disseminated to assist the school staff in effectively providing safe school environments.

SROs shall be responsible in monitoring cultural and social influences and activities to ensure prevention or early intervention with developing gang structures. All information concerning gangs shall be provided to the station's gang coordinator.





SAMPLE

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND
OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

Excerpts addressing communications

School Principal

The principal of the school shall ensure that a weekly meeting with the school resource officer is adhered to. The meeting shall not be delegated to other administrative staff on a regular basis.

The principal shall maintain the means to ensure effective communications exist between the SRO and the school staff.

The principal shall meet bi-monthly with the Unit Commander. Upon request, the school shall provide information to the Department to assist in the personnel evaluation of the assigned SRO. Any concerns regarding the performance of the SRO by the principal shall be addressed by the Station Commander.

SRO

A critical element of the SRO program is the relationship and communication between the school principal and the SRO. Each SRO shall meet weekly with the assigned school principal(s) for the purpose of exchanging information of current crime trends, problem areas, cultural conflicts, or any other area of concern that may cause disruption at the school (s) or in the community.

The Station Commander shall ensure that open lines of communication are in place between the schools and this Department. A weekly meeting with the SROs assigned to the station shall be arranged, and the commander shall meet with the principal on a bi-monthly basis.

The SRO, through the Youth Services Division, should be advised of all situations where other departmental entities are providing services to the school. Notifications of services (traffic safety classes, community liaison, peer mediation, etc.) should be made in advance to the SRO to prevent duplication of services and to ensure proper coordination of police services.

The SRO shall provide information to the appropriate investigative sections of any crime(s) or leads that come to the attention of the SRO. The SRO should keep advised of all investigations that involve students from his/her assigned school.





SAMPLE

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND
OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

**Excerpt from operational procedure
addressing SRO duties and responsibilities**

The School Resource Officer shall wear a regulation uniform during the assignment unless otherwise authorized for specific purpose. The goal of the program is to provide a visible deterrence of crime and to provide a positive impression of the police in a non-confrontational setting.

SROs should be visible in schools and patrol the exterior and interior grounds. Their appearance in and around schools is particularly emphasized during the opening and closing of school and during lunch hour.

Other duties and responsibilities of the SRO include:

Proper disposal of illegal substances recovered by the school not needed for prosecution.

Maintain familiarity with the school division's regulations regarding Student Responsibilities and Rights

Attend and provide testimony for school expulsion hearings upon request.

SAMPLE

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND
OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

Excerpts addressing key law enforcement procedures

Search And Seizure

School officials may conduct searches of student's property and person under their jurisdiction when reasonable suspicion exists that the search will reveal evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. The standards on the search is reasonable suspicion.

The SRO shall not become involved in administrative (school related) searches unless specifically requested by the school to provide security, protection or for the handling of contraband.

These searches must be at the direction and control of the school official.

At no time shall the SRO request that an administrative search be conducted for law enforcement purposes or have the administrator act as his agent.

Any search by an officer shall be based upon probable cause and, when required, a search warrant should be obtained. Stop and frisk will remain an option when there is reasonable suspicion that a criminal offense has been committed or may be committed, and that the suspect may be armed.





SAMPLE

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND
OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

Excerpts addressing key law enforcement procedures

Police Investigation And Questioning

The SRO has been given the authority to stop, question, interview, and take police action without the prior authorization of the principal. The investigation and questioning of students during school hours or at school events should be limited to situations where the investigation is related to school. Investigations and questioning of students for offenses not related to the operation of or occurring at the school should ordinarily be limited to those which delay might result in danger to any person, flight from the jurisdiction by a person suspected of a crime, or destruction of evidence.

The principal shall be notified as soon as practical of any significant enforcement events. An SRO should coordinate their activities so that action between the agencies is cooperative and in the best interests of the school and public safety.

Arrest Procedures

School Resource Officers are expected to be familiar with school rules and their application within the school system. Routinely, rule infractions will not be handled as violations of law, but rather referred to the principal for action. Any questions related to the enforcement of rules versus laws within schools should be discussed with the principal. This specifically applies to underage smoking and general standards of conduct.

The following procedures will be adhered to where arrests of students or staff become necessary:

1. The warrant arrest of a student or employee of the school should be coordinated through the principal, whenever practical.
2. Persons who have been deemed as non- students or those whose presence on school grounds has been restricted or forbidden shall be arrested for trespassing. This action will be supported by principals and employees of the school through court appearances when necessary.
3. Arrest of students or staff during school hours shall be reported fully to the principal as soon as practical.



III. THE SRO: FUNDAMENTAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES THE JOB

Four Key Roles

The roles of the School Resource Officer (SRO) in Virginia are identified as

- C. law enforcement officer,
- D. law-related educator,
- E. community liaison, and
- F. role model

Although there are variations in the way SRO programs describe the job an SRO is intended to carry out, some **commonalities** exist across the descriptions:

- Π most highlight three key roles used to define what SROs do in the schools: law enforcement officer; law-related educator, and community liaison.
- Π most highlight the close relationship SROs must create and maintain with principals; and
- Π most highlight that SROs must work closely with parents, students, and members of the community.





Examples of Job Descriptions

Typical SRO responsibilities are reflected in the following examples:

Example # 1

- Π Protect lives and property for the citizens and public school students.
- Π To enforce Federal, State and Local criminal laws and ordinances, and to assist school officials with the enforcement of Board of Education Policies and Administrative regulations regarding student conduct;
- Π To investigate criminal activity committed on or adjacent to school property;
- Π To counsel public school students in special situations, such as students suspected of engaging in criminal misconduct, when requested by the principal or the principal designee or by the parents of the student;
- Π To answer questions that students may have about North Carolina Criminal or juvenile law;
- Π To assist other law enforcement officers with outside investigations concerning students attending the school(s) to which the SRO is assigned;
- Π To provide security for special school events or functions, such as PTA meetings, at the request of the principal or the Safety Manager; and
- Π To provide traffic control during the arrival and departure of students when a school cross guard is absent.

Example #2

- Π To prevent juvenile delinquency through close contact with students and school personnel.
- Π To establish liaison with school principals, faculty, and students.
- Π To establish and maintain liaison School Security personnel and other SROs assigned to school campuses.
- Π To inform the students of their rights and responsibilities as lawful citizens.





ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ■

- Π To provide liaison between students and social agencies which provide needed services.
- Π To act as a liaison resource to the principal in investigating criminal law violations occurring in the school or on school property.
- Π To assist administration and faculty in formulating criminal justice programs.
- Π To formulate educational crime prevention programs to reduce the opportunity for crimes against persons and property in the schools.
- Π To participate in the Parent-Teacher-Student Association meetings as requested.
- Π To participate in campus activities, student organizations, and athletic events when invited and feasible.
- Π To be aware at all times of the responsibility to improve the image of the uniformed law enforcement officer in the eyes of the students and the community.

Example #3

- Π Coordinate all law enforcement response/service at their school.
- Π Prevent duplication of effort and provide coordination of police services.
- Π Act as a primary officer in handling all calls for service at their school.
- Π Ensure the investigation and enforcement of criminal law violations.
- Π Provide necessary follow-up investigation as required.
- Π Remain abreast of investigations involving students at their school.
- Π Develop an awareness of the demographics and distinctive characteristics of the student body.
- Π Provide a visible deterrence to crime while presenting a positive impression of a uniformed law enforcement officer within the school.





Qualifications and Selection of the SRO

Example #1

The selection of the officer is the most critical aspect of the program. Commanders shall select officers who have demonstrated ability, interest, and skills necessary to work with youth, school staff, and the public. The following criteria should be considered when selecting officers for the program:

- Minimum 5 years successful experience as an officer
- Demonstrated ability to work with diverse groups
- Knowledge of departmental resources
- Creative problem solver
- Conflict resolution skills
- Knowledge of the Juvenile Code and Juvenile Court procedures
- Supervisory recommendation

Example #2

Selection of the SRO should involve, whenever possible, school officials and possibly representative(s) of other interested organization(s).

Minimum qualifications:

- Associate degree with emphasis in criminal justice or human services
- Two years successful experience as a law enforcement officer
- Service record reflecting ability to work effectively with members of the community, including youth
- Demonstrated desire to work as an SRO
- Strong communication skills
- Understanding of Juvenile Court procedures
- Strong problem solving skills

Example #3

Basic qualifications:

- Shall be a commissioned officer and should have two years of law enforcement experience;
- Shall possess a sufficient knowledge of the applicable Federal and State laws, City and County ordinances, and Board of Education polices and regulations;
- Shall be capable of conducting in-depth criminal investigations;
- Shall possess even temperament and set a good example for students; and
- Shall possess strong communication skills which would enable the officer to function effectively within the school environment.





Summer Assignments

So what does a SRO do in the summer? Experience has taught that an effective SRO Program requires time allotted to **training, program development, and community interaction**. Training opportunities for SROs are typically offered in the summer and are critical to the SRO's professional development.

Time invested in planning to improve school security, law-related educational presentations, and developing linkages to community resources pay dividends in terms of a stronger, more effective SRO Program. Some law enforcement agencies have assigned SROs to special community-based and youth recreational and leadership development activities during the summer. These assignments complement and serve to reinforce the SRO role.

Time invested in planning to improve school security, law-related educational presentations, and developing linkages to community resources pay dividends in terms of a stronger, more effective SRO Program.

Experience has also taught that patrol and investigative assignments often result in subsequent court appearances which can interfere with SRO assignments when school resumes.

Supervisory Personnel

Experience has taught the importance of the SRO's immediate supervisor. Orientation of the new supervisor should include not only written information on the philosophy and operation of the SRO Program, but also opportunities to observe operations within the school; visits to observe established programs in other localities have been especially helpful. For newly established SRO Programs, it is strongly recommended that supervisory staff understand, and preferably be experienced in, community-oriented policing.





Overview of SRO Roles

I. Law Enforcement Responsibilities

- A. Differentiating crime from school conduct violations
 - School officials should take lead on school violations
 - Law enforcement should take lead on criminal violations
- B. Establish the incident: crime or school conduct violation
 - School officials are required to report certain crime
 - Law enforcement officers are encouraged to involve school officials in crime-related issues – intelligence, possible patterns
- C. Document all reported criminal offenses
 - Due process for all victims including staff and students
 - Suspects in school crime require due process
 - School safety and security is more than a standard
- D. School is a custodial setting based on the attendance mandate
- E. School is a public building and its occupants are due public safety
- F. SROs play a vital role in safety

Key SRO Roles:

- 1. Law enforcement officer
- 2. Law-related educator
- 3. Community liaison
- 4. Role model

II. SRO as Law-Related Educator

- A. Prevention programs: D.A.R.E., CLASS ACTION, Street Law
- B. In-service programs for school staff
- C. Parent presentations and programs
- D. Community presentations and programs
- E. Student assemblies on law-related issues
- F. Encourage high academic achievement among students

III. SRO Role as Community Liaison

- A. Become knowledgeable about school and community resources.
- B. Establish collaborative relationships with school/community resources.
- C. Get to know your students – involve yourself in their lives
- D. Network with school staff concerning student needs
- E. Work closely with the school counselors
- F. Encourage students to use positive alternatives in issues and concerns
- G. Be accessible to parent and community concerns

IV. The SRO as Positive Role Model

- A. Professional in appearance and demeanor
- B. Approachable for issues and concerns
- C. Compassionate to students and staff
- D. Open-minded while dealing with school issues





E. Effective communication style

SRO as Law Enforcement Officer

School Resource Officers are, first of all, sworn law-enforcement officers. Their central mission is to keep order on campus with the legal authority to arrest, if necessary. Order is necessary for learning to occur. When necessary, the School Resource Officer has the ability to intervene as a law-enforcement officer. Once order is restored, however, the SRO's other roles as law-related educator, community liaison, and positive role model are the more typical roles on a day to day basis.

It is mandatory that the school involve law enforcement when a student's conduct violates a criminal provision of the Code of Virginia.

An important first step in establishing the law enforcement responsibilities is to differentiate what incidents constitute crimes and what incidents are school conduct violations. Some incidents may be conduct violations but not criminal violations; virtually all criminal incidents will also be school conduct violations. The SRO should take the lead on criminal violations; educators should take the lead on school conduct violations.

When educators must involve law enforcement authorities . . .

In Virginia, it is mandatory that the school involve law enforcement when a student's conduct violates a criminal provision of the ***Code of Virginia***. The Virginia Department of Education recommends that school and law-enforcement officials, as partners in school safety, work together to determine the best procedures for referrals. The ***Code of Virginia***, §22.1-280.1 (A) and (C) lists certain incidents which school officials **must report** to local law-enforcement agencies. §22.1-280.1 (A) does not, however, include all serious offenses which may occur at school; other incidents may also need to be reported as determined by local school board authorities and law-enforcement agencies. Offenses listed in §22.1-280.1 (A), ***Code of Virginia***, are as follows:





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- (i) the assault, assault and battery, sexual assault, death, shooting, stabbing, cutting, or wounding of any person on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity;
- (ii) any conduct involving alcohol, marijuana, a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or an anabolic steroid on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity;
- (iii) any threats against school personnel while on a school bus, on school property or at a school-sponsored activity; or
- (iv) the illegal carrying of a firearm onto school property.

Where the conduct of the student is not illegal, school administrators may use their discretionary authority to take appropriate disciplinary action and to provide needed student support services in accordance with the student's problems.

SROs Sharing Information with School Authorities

Under §22.1-280.1 (B), ***Code of Virginia***, law-enforcement authorities may report and the principal or his designee may receive reports on offenses, wherever committed, by students enrolled at the school if the offense would be a felony if committed by an adult or would be an adult misdemeanor involving any incidents described in clauses (i) through (iv) of subsection A, listed above.

Penalties for failure to report offenses

Under §22.1-280.1 (B), ***Code of Virginia***, a school division superintendent who knowingly fails to comply or secure compliance with the reporting requirements is subject to fines, suspension or removal from office (§22.1-65). A principal who knowingly fails to comply or secure compliance with the reporting requirements is subject to sanctions prescribed by the local school board, which may include but need not be limited to demotion or dismissal.

