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Case Studies of 19 School Resource Officer (SRO) Programs

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Table of Contents

Case Studies of 19 School Resource Officer (SRO) Programs

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).

Introduction

There has been a growing interest in placing sworn law enforcement officers in schools as School Resource Officers (SROs) as a means of improving school safety and improving relations between police officers and youth. However, when this project began in May 2000, relatively little was known about SRO programs. The purpose of the National Assessment was to identify what program "models" have been implemented, how programs have been implemented, and what lessons they may have for other programs. To obtain this information, Abt Associates and its subcontractors collected implementation data by telephone and on site from 19 SRO programs. This information forms the basis of this case studies report.

Other Reports the National Assessment Prepared

The case study report is one of six reports that Abt Associates Inc. and its subcontractors and consultants (see the box "The Research Team") have prepared for the National Institute of Justice as part of the National Assessment. The other five reports, all available from the National Institute of Justice, are summarized briefly below.

1. 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.

2. An *Interim Report: Fear and Trust* summarizes preliminary impressionistic observations concerning (a) perceptions of fear about campus safety among school administrators, faculty, and students among 15 of the 19 sites and (b) trust in the police among these groups in the 15 sites.

3. *Comparison of Program Activities and Lessons Learned among 19 School Resource Officer (SRO) Programs* compares the 19 programs in terms of seven key dimensions, with a focus on lessons learned: choosing a program model; defining specific SRO roles and responsibilities; recruiting SROs; training and supervising SROs; collaborating with school administrators and teachers; working with students and parents; and evaluating SRO programs.

4. *Results of a Survey of Students in Three Large New SRO Programs* presents the results of a survey of nearly 1,000 students designed to identify the relationship between perceptions of safety and the SRO program.

5. The *Final Project Report* describes the activities Abt Associates conducted for the National Assessment and summarizes the study findings. The report has five sections: the mail survey; the process of selecting the 19 study sites; the conduct of the site visits; modifications to the research methodology; and data analysis and findings.

The Research Team

Three subcontractors assisted in collecting, analyzing, and reporting the data for the project:
- The Center for Criminal Justice Policy Research at Northeastern University
- The Justice and Safety Center, College of Justice and Safety, at Eastern Kentucky University
- The Center for the Prevention of School Violence in North Carolina

Two consultants assisted Northeastern University in collecting and analyzing the data:
- Timothy Bynum, School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University and Director of the Michigan Justice Statistics Center
- Scott Decker, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Missouri-St. Louis

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The Choice of Programs to Study

We selected the 19 programs through a rigorous screening process designed to include four different types of programs in terms of size and age (see the box "Defining Program Size and Age"):

- large established programs;
- large new programs;
- small established programs; and
- small new programs.

The national assessment included *five* programs within three of the four groupings. We included only *four* large new programs because we had to abandon (and it was too late to replace) the fifth site after it refused its COPS in Schools grant.

As the matrix at the end of this introduction shows, the 19 programs represent a wide range of characteristics and jurisdictions. However, the programs are not intended to be a representative sample of SRO programs. First, the number of programs studied is a fraction of all the programs in the Nation. Second, we did not select the programs at random. Rather, the selection criteria focused on including programs with a wide range of different features within the four broad size and age groupings identified above. Third, while the large established and large new programs are distributed across the country, for reasons explained in the Final Project Report the five small established programs are all located in North Carolina and the five small new programs are all located in Kentucky. Finally, because we also tried to select programs that seemed to be functioning well, the 19 programs may represent initiatives that are better operated, better staffed, and more effective than many other SRO programs in the Nation.

A complete description of the site selection process is provided in the Final Project Report.

Defining Program Size and Age

"Large" versus "Small"
We defined "large" SRO programs as those operated by law enforcement agencies with 100 or more sworn officers and "small" programs as those operated by agencies with fewer than 100 officers—the Bureau of Justice Statistics' definitions for agency size.

As these definitions indicate, "large" and "small" do not refer to the *number of SROs* in the law enforcement agency but rather *the size of the agency*. This definition was used because the Bureau of Justice Statistics' Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) database did not provide information about the number of SROs in each agency. As a result, we used agency size as a "proxy" for SRO program size because we anticipated (correctly) that by selecting agencies with a range of sworn officers we would identify programs with a range in the number of SROs. That is, large law enforcement agencies serve jurisdictions with a large number of schools and therefore could be expected to have more SROs than smaller agencies have.

"Established" versus "New"
We defined "established" programs as those that had been in existence since at least 1995—the median length of time for all large established programs that returned our mail survey (see "Report on the National Survey of SRO Programs and Affiliated Schools"). The definition of "new" that we used was that the site had not reported the placement of SROs in schools in the past on the 1999 LEMAS survey *and* the site was the recipient of a 1999 COPS in Schools grant from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services that provides funding for SRO salaries for three years with the expectation that the agency will take over their support after Federal funding ends.

During the initial telephone calls and site visits to the *large* new sites, while the law enforcement agencies and schools reported that they had indeed received Cops in Schools awards in 1999, they also reported that they had had police officers stationed part time in the schools for 2-1/2 to 25 years teaching classes and mentoring students. Furthermore, most of the "new" SRO officers were the same individuals who had already been working in the schools for several years. Finally, after the grant award the SROs often continued performing many of the same activities that as regular officers they had been conducting previously. As a result, although the large "new" SRO programs are of recent vintage, their experiences need to be seen in the context of previously existing relationships between the law enforcement agencies and the school districts that in important respects dilute their apparent "newness."

Organization of the Case Studies

The case studies are sequenced according to the four major program size and age

groupings—large established, large new, small established, and small new.

- The report begins with a *separate case study* of each of the **five large established programs**. Each case study begins with a capsule description of the program followed by a detailed account of its context, history, and operations. Although all five large established programs serve multiple schools, within four of these five programs the researchers singled out *a single school* for intensive study based on the recommendation of the program supervisor. As a result, much of the information in these four case studies is based on the experience of a single school.

- *Separate case studies* of each of the **four large new programs** follow. As with the large established program case studies, each case study begins with a capsule description of the program followed by a detailed account of its context, history, and operations. Although, like the large established programs, all four large new programs serve multiple schools, for the new programs we were able to study intensively and report on *many or all of the schools* served by the program in each site. In addition, because, as noted above, only four large new programs were included in the study instead of the anticipated five programs, it was possible to spend extra time on site at each remaining large new site. In addition, the study involved administering a survey of students in the three of the large new sites. As a result of both of these considerations, the large new site case studies present more information than do the large established site case studies.

- *A single "case study"* describes all five programs we examined in the **small established category**. The case study begins with capsule description *of all five programs* and a summary of the similarities and differences among the five programs. A detailed description of each of the five programs is then presented, followed by a discussion that compares and contrasts the five programs. The organization for this case study (and for the following case study of the five small new programs) was used because, as small programs, the sites' lack of complexity precluded the need for a lengthy description of each one. The discussions of the small established programs include *all the schools* served by each site's SRO program.

- Again, *a single "case study"* describes the **five small new programs** included in the study. This case study follows the same organization as the previous case study of five small established programs—capsule description, a detailed description of each the five programs, and a discussion of similarities and differences among the five programs. The case study also presents the findings for all the schools served by each site's SRO program.

As listed below, the descriptions of all 19 programs follow the same sequence of topics:

The Site
The Police Department
The School System
Program History
Origins
Budget
Planning and Implementation Obstacles
Program Coordination
The School Resource Officers
Recruitment
Training
Program Activities
Law Enforcement
Teaching
Mentoring
Program Monitoring and Evaluation
Monitoring
Evidence of Program Effectiveness
Community Support

There is, however, occasional variation from case study to case study in the subheaders because of the need to discuss topics that are of special importance to only one or two sites. For example, a few sites have other school safety personnel with whom the SROs interact, while turnover and the SROs' hours are important issues in a few other sites.

Finally, because, as noted above, only four large new programs were included in the study instead of the anticipated five programs, it was possible to spend extra time on site at each remaining large new site. In addition, the study involved administering a survey of students in the three of the large new sites. As a result of both of these considerations, the large new site case studies present more information, especially in the Evaluation of Program Effectiveness sections, than do the large established site case studies

Program/Jurisdiction	Location	Population of Community Served*	Agency Size (sworn)*	Date Begun	Number of SROs	Number of Schools Served and Grade Levels
Basic Site Information for 19 SRO Programs						
Large Established Programs						
Large Established #1 city	Mid-West	75,000	140	1995	3	3 junior high
Large Established #2 city	Southwest	500,000	1,000	1962	21	21 elementary middle
Large Established #3 county	South	100,000	250	1995	9	14 junior high middle senior high
Large Established #4 city	South	50,000	150	1995	3	3 junior high
Large Established #5 city	West Coast	200,000	200	1993	15	70 K-12
Large New Programs						
Large New #1 county	South Central	600,000	130	1999	5	5 K-12
Large New #2 county	Mid-West	400,000	100	1999	5	9 –- varies by county
Large New #3 city	Northeast	45,000	100	1999	3	3 middle high school
Large New #4 city	Southwest	250,000	600	1999	38	10 middle 20 high school
Small Established Programs						
Small Established #1 city	South	40,000	40	1995	1	1 high school
Small Established #2 city	South	20,000	50	1993	3	3 middle high school
Small Established #3 county	South	60,000	50	1992	3	5 middle high school
Small Established #4 county	South	27,000	30	1994	4	4 middle high school
Small Established #5 county	South	35,000	30	1995	4	4 middle high school
Small New Programs						
Small New #1 county	South	25.000	10	1999	2	1 high school
Small New #2 county	South	24,000	20	1999	1	1 high school
Small New #3 county	South	25,000	10	2000	1	1 high school
Small New #4 county	South	20,000	10	2000	1	1 high school
Small New #5 city	South	20,000	10	2000	1	2 middle high school

Large Established Site One

Capsule Program Description

Large Established Site One, a largely middle class town with a population of 75,000, is located about 25 miles northwest of a large metropolitan area in the Mid-West. The local school district, which includes Large Established Site One and six other towns, consists of 22 elementary and 5 junior high schools (no high schools). Three of the district's 5 junior high schools are in Large Established Site One.

After a pilot test in 1995 involving placement of an SRO in one of Large Established Site One's three junior high schools, the school district placed a second and then third SRO in each of the town's other two junior high schools.

Program Planning and Costs
Planning and implementation of the SRO program proceeded relatively smoothly. The most serious problems related to *planning* involved disagreements between the school district and the Large Established Site One police department related to using retired officers as SROs, arming the SROs, and working in civilian clothes. Problems related to *implementing* the program included local school administrators' misconception that SROs were supposed to focus on law enforcement and disciplining students.

Until recently, the school district tapped into its Tort and Immunity Fund to pay for the program, enabling the police department to replace the SROs with new officers. The cost to the school district for the three SROs' salaries in fiscal year 2002 was $193,296.

The SROs
Together, the principal and assistant principal, health teacher, and the police department's SRO supervisor interview applicants whenever an SRO position opens up. The school makes the final selection in consultation with the police department's SRO supervisor. While initially SROs learned their responsibilities by trial and error on the job, today they are trained thoroughly before they begin their new assignment.

Program Activities
With the exception of interviews with school district and police department supervisors, all of the observations and interviews for this case study were conducted at one Large Established Site One junior high school chosen for intensive study. This sample school had a 2001-2002 enrollment of about 700 seventh and eighth grade students. Three quarters of the students were white, 3.6 percent African American, and the rest Asian and Hispanic. Low-income families made up 3.5 percent of the community. In 2002, the school's SRO was in the last year of his four-year rotation.

The SROs in all three Large Established Site One junior high schools devote an estimated 10 percent of their time to law enforcement, 30 percent to advising students, faculty, and administrators, 40 percent to classroom teaching, and 20 percent to other activities (e.g., paperwork). From the outset, the school district has considered teaching and mentoring as important if not more important than the SROs' law enforcement responsibilities.

- *Law Enforcement:* Most SROs make only a few arrests a year because of a low crime rate in the schools, the program's focus on mentoring and teaching, and the juvenile court's discouraging of referrals of minor cases. Instead, SROs sometimes assign students to perform community service in the schools. Teachers, parents, and students, like school administrators, sometimes refer matters directly to the SROs that may involve criminal behavior.
- *Teaching:* Each SRO teaches the G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) curriculum to all seventh graders as well as classes on other topics. In addition to teaching G.R.E.A.T., the SRO at the intensively studied junior high school teaches classes on sexual harassment, babysitting, shoplifting, gangs, driving under the influence, drugs and alcohol, fingerprinting, and the law. Teachers leave a note in his mailbox with requests and dates for him to teach specific topics. Just as the school district intended, a teacher confirmed that the SRO " is like another staff person."
- *Mentoring:* The SROs are constantly available to students for informal chats and serious conversations about problems. The SROs also engage in activities, such as jogging with the track team, where they act as role models. The SRO's office at the intensively studied junior high school is crowded between classes and during all four 20-minute lunch periods with students who want to chat.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation
The program keeps extensive and meticulous qualitative and quantitative records, including a detailed monthly summary form completed by each SRO. The head of the police department's juvenile division supervises the SROs, making sure they complete the activity forms properly, observing them teach, and meeting with them individually.

While there is no empirical evidence that the SRO program is effective in reducing crime in the schools, there is promising evidence of its effectiveness.
- Smoking and possession of cigarettes, and gang activity, appear to have declined.
- Students report that they and their parents feel safer because of the SROs' presence.
- Students in focus groups report small but positive changes in attitude toward the police. Several knowledgeable individuals also report that the SRO program has increased trust in the police department.

The program's planners and current administrators were as interested in the SROs' mentoring and teaching roles as in providing security, and all observers report that the officers are effective in these two roles.

> The community's support for the program was indirectly confirmed when a budget crunch forced the school board in 2002 to discuss laying off teachers—and the idea of dropping or cutting back the SRO program was never even raised.

Large Established Site One has a full-time SRO from the city's police department in each of three junior high schools.

The Site

Large Established Site One, a largely middle class town with a population of 75,000, is located about 25 miles northwest of a major metropolitan area. The town is heavily residential but also has significant business and commercial activity, including hotels, a major mall, and several industrial parks.

The Police Department

The Large Established Site One police department has about 140 sworn officers and 140 civilians. As of 2000, all applicants must have a college degree; before 2000, they had to have a two-year college degree.

The department implemented community-oriented policing in 1996 when the chief created 10 beats. Beat teams meet monthly—with the public invited to attend—to identify problems and discuss resolutions within their areas. The department hired outside trainers to teach officers how to solve problems using the SARA model (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment). A new chief, appointed in 1999, continued the department's community policing orientation. He views the SRO program as an example of community policing.

The School System

The school district, which includes seven towns (each with its own police department), consists of over 20 elementary schools and 5 junior high schools. There were over 15,000 students enrolled in the district during the 2001-2002 academic year. Almost 70 percent of the district's students are white, while 15 percent are Asian, 10 percent

Hispanic, and 7 percent African American. Six percent of students come from
low-income families, and 5 percent of students qualify for the Federal Government's free
and reduced cost lunch program. The district's chronic truancy rate is zero and its
attendance rate 96 percent. The school district's budget was over $150 million in 2002,
of which Large Established Site One, as one of seven towns in the district, contributes
approximately one seventh—over $20 million. Three of the district's 5 junior high
schools are in Large Established Site One.

Aside from SROs, there have been no other security staff at Large Established Site One's
three junior high schools. While local high schools have had a police liaison program
since 1985, these officers, although posted full time in the school, do not teach or
mentor—they just enforce the law. Furthermore, the high schools are in a separate school
district. Because the K-8 and 9-12 school districts have no organizational relationship,
there is no contact between the SROs in Large Established Site One's three junior high
schools and the high school liaisons.

Program History

The program originated with the school district but met with strong support (not without
concerns) from the Large Established Site One police department.

Origins

The original concept for the SRO program came from two Large Established Site One
D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) officers who presented the concept at a
school board meeting in 1994. The school board initially rejected the idea because of the
cost and negative feelings about having a police officer stationed in the schools.
However, one board member, a former police officer and currently director of a local
junior college criminal justice program, was able to convince other members of the idea's
possibilities. As a result, the board agreed to test the program in one junior high school
with the SRO focusing equally on education, mentoring, and safety and security. The
supportive board member was interested in the concept as a means of breaking down
students' and teachers' negative stereotypes about law enforcement officers. "Kids don't

trust cops, and cops can't succeed if they aren't trusted," he says. "So you need to build trust at an early age." The board member also wanted students to feel safe. While there was no empirical evidence that students were fearful, there had been some burglaries, and some teachers had been asking how they should handle incipient bullying incidents.

The school board and district school administrators chose one of the three junior high schools in Large Established Site One as the pilot site for several reasons:

- The school's principal had helped promote the concept from the beginning and offered to pilot test it. He had also been dealing with gang graffiti and some race problems, with a fight almost breaking out at the school's 1994 graduation ceremony.

- School district administrators knew from experience that this principal would be especially conscientious about collecting the needed evaluation data and attending to the details of setting up and running a new program.

- The junior high school was known for its student-centered philosophy, and the school board and district administrators from the outset envisaged the SRO program as primarily an education and mentoring program, with safety as only the third leg of the program.

The school district's science/health education coordinator and the Large Established Site One school principal met with the Large Established Site One police chief, town manager, and trustees to hammer out the program's structure and funding (see below). The initial Intergovernmental Agreement between the town and the school district was signed on August 17, 1995, and the SRO program began at the pilot junior high school at the beginning of the 1995-96 school year. The agreement includes the budget, the required qualifications of SRO candidates, and the officers' responsibilities. While the agreement is renewed every three years, the budget is renewed annually.

After the pilot test, the school district expanded the program to the two other Large Established Site One junior high schools in 1996, to a fourth junior high school in another town in the district 1998, and to the fifth district junior high in a third town in 2000.

Budget

Neither the school board nor the Large Established Site One police department would have supported the SRO program if it had involved losing teachers or police officers to pay for it. As a result, until 2004, the school district was able to tap into its Tort and Immunity Fund to pay for the program. (The district increased the fund's tax when the SRO program began but not just because of the added expense of the SRO program.) The school board pays for three-quarters of the SROs' salaries, making it possible for the police department to recruit three new officers to replace the SROs. (Because the SROs return to their regular juvenile officer duties with the police department during the three months of the summer—when problems with youth in the town are the most frequent— the police department pays one quarter of their salaries.) The school district pays for any SRO overtime (e.g., supervising a dance).

The SRO program budget for the 1995-1996 school year, the program's pilot year, was $64,000. The budget was almost $200,000 for the 2001-2002 school year for the three SROs in Large Established Site One's three junior high schools.

Planning and Implementation Obstacles

Overall, planning and implementation of the SRO program in Large Established Site One proceeded relatively smoothly because of advance preparation, planning, and marketing before the first SRO ever walked through the school door (see the box "Marketing the Program"). Nevertheless, certain problems arose during the planning and early implementation stages of the program.

Planning Obstacles and Solutions

The most serious problems related to planning the program involved disagreements between the school district and the police department.

- Using a Retired Officer as the SRO. The police department wanted to use a retired officer, or an officer on disability, as the initial SRO. The school representatives objected, having been told by other school districts that these types of officers develop little if any rapport with kids. The police department agreed to use a regular officer as the SRO.

- <u>Arming the SRO.</u> The school board opposed the SRO's carrying a sidearm but accepted the police department's compromise that he carry a concealed weapon.

- <u>Working in Uniform.</u> While the police department wanted the SRO to work in uniform, the pilot school principal and the school board recommended that the SRO wear civilian clothes to reinforce the concept that, in the triad of SRO responsibilities, safety was only the third focus after teaching and counseling. They also wanted the SRO to feel and appear to be part of the school staff and believed that kids would establish better rapport with him if he were not in uniform. Both sides agreed to a compromise in which the SRO would be in uniform only when teaching the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearm's Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program designed to help students resist peer pressure, resolve conflicts without violence, and understand how gangs affect their lives. Over time, the initial and other two SROs stopped wearing their uniforms even when teaching G.R.E.A.T. because the school district offered to pay for T-shirts with the police department's name and logo on them.

Marketing the Program

The school district has disseminated considerable information to familiarize students, parents, faculty, and school administrators in Large Established Site One with the SRO program goals and activities.

Marketing to Students
- At the beginning of the school year, each SRO gives an orientation speech at an assembly to the students of his school.
- The SROs provide an orientation to the program, the SROs' responsibilities, and students' responsibilities to all language arts classes.
- Each school's entire seventh grade class is exposed to its SRO again at some time during the academic year when he teaches the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum.
- SROs market the program whenever they help supervise dances, the teen center, and other student gatherings, and when they attend athletic events on their own.

Marketing to Parents
- The school district held meetings with parents to fill them in on the proposed program. Parents also attended school board meetings when the program was under consideration.
- Every year, each SRO talks about the program at a sixth grade parent orientation night at the junior high schools and makes himself available after the assembly to answer questions.
- SROs attend parent/teacher conference nights, answering parents' questions about the SRO program. (The Intergovernmental Agreement requires SROs to "[w]ork collaboratively with the PTA to arrange and participate in parent/community education sessions.")

- SROs attend Gym Jams, hosted by the PTA, which provide a DJ, refreshments, games, and an open gym for students.
- Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) newsletters provide information about the SRO program.

Marketing to Faculty and Administrators
- Administrators invite new SROs to talk at faculty meetings to explain their roles and responsibilities, and the services they offer.
- School district administrators placed an announcement about the program in the administrators' own newsletter, *Inside School Safety: Effective Management Strategies for School Administrators*.

Early Implementation Problems and Solutions

The most serious problems related to implementing the program involved misunderstandings of the nature of the SROs' role on the part of some Large Established Site One school administrators.

- Misperception of SROs as Primarily Cops. Faculty and 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 at one time or another attend at least one 40-hour training offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO). During the pilot test year, the junior high school principal had the SRO talk at weekly school staff development meetings about his tripartite responsibility for education and mentoring as well as law enforcement. The school district and police department redoubled their efforts to recruit only SROs who were prepared to shoulder a significant teaching load.

- Using SROs to Discipline Students. While the program's planners did not intend for SROs to handle matters of discipline, it took two years to establish the policy firmly in the minds of all school administrators and faculty. For example, some administrators asked SROs to send students to the assistant principals for punishment and to recommend penalties for violations of school rules such as not getting to class on time. Two administrators used their SROs as substitute building administrators, leaving them in charge when the administrators left the building. The program's supervisors used repeated written and verbal communication with these administrators to end this practice. Much of this orientation was done at meetings held every other month chaired by the principal who coordinates the SRO program and attended by the SROs, the police department SRO supervisor, and school administrators.

- Overuse of SROs by Elementary Schools.   Over time, as elementary school administrators saw how helpful the SROs could be, they began using them too much (see the box "Relations between the Elementary Schools and the SROs"). Indeed, some elementary school administrators and parents pressured the school board (unsuccessfully) to expand the program to the elementary schools.

- Lack of Training.   The first SROs did not receive training in how to be an SRO or how to teach class until after they had been on the job for many months. This lack of immediate training left SROs on their own in terms of learning how to function on the job. For example, the pilot school's principal had to work closely with a new SRO, who had been a high school liaison officer engaged exclusively in law enforcement activities, to spend less time sitting in the office and talking with staff and more time in the classroom and making himself visible to students.

Relations Between the Elementary Schools and the SROs

While the SROs are posted only in Large Established Site One's three junior high schools, the Intergovernmental Agreement calls for them to provide telephone consultation to elementary school administrators. Elementary school principals regularly ask the SROs for advice, especially on legal matters. However, some elementary principals wanted the SROs to spend time at their schools, for example to address a vandalism problem. One SRO went to his junior high school's four feeder elementary schools 15 times in 2000-2001. As a result, the SRO coordinator had to explain at an elementary school principals' meeting that they should ask the SROs to come over only in the event of a serious crime, although they were free to telephone the SROs for unlimited consultation. As a result, the SRO was called to the four feeder schools only twice in 2001-2002.

One elementary school principal with three self-contained classes for troubled K-6 students said, "I learned when it was appropriate [to ask] for him [the SRO] to come over [to her school]—for example, to attend initial suspension hearings to explain the legal implications of the students' acts as they get older and to come to reintegration meetings to make clear to the child and the parents the seriousness of their student's behavior."

- An elementary school principal reported having asked an SRO come over "to talk with two students who were slugging teachers and students, and flipping desks. He was able to calm them down. It's a novel situation for kids," she said, "to see that their behavior was serious enough to have a cop come to talk to them. He also talks to the parent to let them know that they're responsible [for their children's behavior]. Some parents feel it's the school's problem. [The SRO] makes kids and parents see that it [their behavior] is not a trivial matter—it's criminal behavior."

- When teachers at an elementary school were finding their cars vandalized after junior high students were released from school, the SRO found out from other students at the junior high school who was doing the vandalizing and talked with the offenders. After they had confessed, the SRO required them to pay restitution. He also talked with their parents. The elementary school principal said later that "I had a hunch it was junior high kids but had no clue about how to solve the problem. In the past, the school would have called the beat officer, and nothing would have happened. The SRO solved the problem without a lot of department involvement."

Some SROs like the opportunity of going to the elementary schools because it gives them an opportunity to get to know some of the students (and vice versa) *before* the children enroll in their junior high school.

Program Coordination

The school district oversees the program by inviting a school administrator to act as the coordinator in return for a $2,200 stipend. From its initiation until 2002, the pilot junior high school principal was the coordinator. Since his retirement at the end of the 2002 school year, his former assistant principal, now a principal at another junior high school in Large Established Site One, has coordinated the program. Coordination involves:

- arranging the screening, selection, and training of new SROs;
- supervising the school district guidance department's annual focus groups (see below);
- updating the SRO manual that contains the Intergovernmental Agreement, blank monthly SRO activity reporting forms, the town municipal code, a detailed list of SRO responsibilities, and the schools' yearly events calendar;
- coordinating relations among the program, the school board, and the elementary schools;
- chairing bimonthly meetings involving the SROs, junior high school administrators, and police department SRO supervisor; and
- promoting ongoing orientation to the program.

The School Resource Officers

The program's screening of SRO candidates has been thorough, but its training, while eventually equally systematic, has in the past not been provided in a timely manner.

Recruitment

The Intergovernmental Agreement stipulates that "The . . . [Large Established Site One police department] will provide to [the school] [d]istrict . . . sufficient qualified officers to interview [for each new SRO position that becomes available]." The agreement provides that all candidates must:

- have a minimum of two years' experience as officers in the department,
- be trained in gang resistance and alcohol/drug resistance curricula,
- have verbal, written and interpersonal skills that include public speaking,
- have knowledge of, and experience in, matters involving cultural diversity, and
- be able to function as a strong role model.

For the program's pilot year, the Large Established Site One police department provided the junior high school administrators with 18 candidates. Some of the candidates volunteered because they had seen what a good assignment the school liaison position was at the high school and wanted similar "cushy" hours. Fewer officers have applied for the assignment since the pilot test because they now know by word of mouth and from the written selection criteria that SROs are required to do extensive teaching and work one-on-one with students—responsibilities that frighten some of them. For example, only four officers applied when the SRO's tour expired in 2002. Nevertheless, the assignment remains attractive because of the regular daytime hours, overtime pay, opportunity to dress in civilian clothes, relief from patrol duty, and support from school administrators and most faculty. In addition, the position is considered a stepping stone for promotion within the department.

The police department initially eliminates applicants it feels are unqualified, for example officers with a history of abusing sick time. After reviewing the remaining candidates' written applications, a committee consisting of the principal and assistant principal, health teacher, and the police department's SRO supervisor interviews each one. The school identifies its top three candidates, has them approved by the police department, and makes the final selection in consultation with the police department's SRO supervisor. All new SROs are automatically assigned (not promoted) as detectives to the police department's juvenile bureau within the crime investigation division.

Because of the careful pre-screening of candidates by the police department and close
examination of the remaining candidates by the screening committee, every SRO in
Large Established Site One has worked out; all have stayed the maximum four years
allowed except for an SRO who was promoted after three years. Most of the SROs
would prefer not to rotate out of the position, and most school administrators would like
them to remain longer. However, the Large Established Site One police chief has a
policy of rotating SROs out of the position every three to four years. In part, the chief
wants his officers to rotate assignments so that, when promoted, they have had
experience in various aspects of police work, which, he believes, makes them better
supervisors. In addition, he wants to be able to reward patrol officers with a desirable
posting. Finally, he says, SROs can "recycle their experience by being a great mentor for
new officers" on how to work with youth.

Training

Initially, SROs learned their responsibilities by trial and error on the job because, having
gone from the patrol division directly to the juvenile bureau, they had had no previous
experience working with juveniles or working as SROs. Often many months transpired
before they were trained.

Today, SROs are trained the summer before their new assignment begins, including
G.R.E.A.T training (which has the added advantage of teaching the SROs how to teach),
40-hour juvenile officer training, and training related to sexual abuse, domestic violence,
and resources such as social service agencies. In addition, during the last two weeks of
the end of the school year and the first two weeks of the new school year new SROs
shadow the outgoing SRO. However, new SROs are not sent for training with NASRO
until the organization's next training cycle begins, which can occur after the school year
starts.

New (and occasionally established) SROs also call more experienced SROs for advice.
One experienced SRO estimates that he gets a call a week from other SROs. For

example, a relatively new SRO called him 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 was not illegal in the State to have a pocket knife. So the school suspended him for three days. The SRO was unsure whether he could charge the student with some other offense. The experienced SRO said to ticket him 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.

Program Activities

Program participants report that there have been no significant disagreements between the Large Established Site One police department and school district over the SROs' responsibilities. A police department Investigative General Order stipulates that

> ". . . this officer is considered an employee of the . . . [town] on special assignment to the school district, and the officer may not be used for other purposes by the police department except by mutual agreement between the principal of the assigned school and the Chief of Police or his designee."

The general order further specifies that "The SRO shall answer directly to the assigned school administration during the course of his/her assigned duties."

As noted above, the school district considers teaching and mentoring equally if not more important than the SROs' law enforcement responsibilities. Reflecting this perspective, the Large Established Site One police department SRO supervisor estimates that the town's three SROs devote about 10 percent of their time to law enforcement, 30 percent to advising, 40 percent to teaching, and 20 percent to other activities (e.g., paperwork).

With the exception of interviews with school district and police department supervisors, all of the observations and interviews were conducted at one Large Established Site One junior high school chosen for intensive study (see the box "Characteristics of the Sample

School"). The school was chosen for intensive study at the recommendation of the program coordinator.

Characteristics of the Sample School and SRO

The school singled out for intensive examination is a junior high school in Large Established Site One where the SRO program was first pilot tested. In 2002, the school's SRO was in the last year of his four-year rotation.

With fewer than 100 teachers, the school had a 2001-2002 enrollment of about 700 seventh and eighth grade students. Three-quarters of the students were white, 14 percent Asian, 7 percent Hispanic, and 4 percent African American. Low-income families made up 3.5 percent of the community, and 12 students qualified for the free and reduced cost lunch program.

The school is a single story brick building with two very long corridors connected by shorter corridors, like the rungs of a ladder. The school is located on a wide four-lane boulevard one-quarter mile from the town's major six-lane thoroughfare.

The officer has been the school's SRO since the 1997-1998 school year. He was 29 years old in 2002 and had worked previously as a D.A.R.E. officer. The SRO is rarely in uniform "because kids connect better if I'm not." However, he always wears a T-shirt with the police department logo on it. He also carries a sidearm in an ankle holster and takes a school radio with him at all times while he on school grounds.

The SRO's somewhat cramped 200-square-foot office, which is 150 feet from the principal's office and 15 feet from the lunch room, has a table, four-tier file cabinet, desk, and five chairs, two of them upholstered. The SRO has a police department laptop computer in his office as well as a school personal computer. He takes the laptop home if he has work to do after hours. The SRO estimates that he spends 20 percent of his time on law enforcement, 25 percent teaching, and 55 percent mentoring.

Law Enforcement

The Intergovernmental Agreement requires SROs to:

1. Maintain a high level of visibility during school entrance and dismissal times as well as during passing periods;

2. Meet with building administrators to advise them of potentially violent situations and to plan for the safe resolution of those situations; and

3. Follow building and district behavior policies, using police authority in necessary situations.

The SROs make only a few arrests a year. The school district's SRO program coordinator explained, "We're not looking to make arrests. So a big job [for the SROs] is to counsel students on the potential legal consequences of their behavior, not just arrest them or threaten them with arrest. [For example], they teach [kids] that pushing is a borderline illegal act. This helps the SROs establish rapport with kids and educate them to make better choices."

> The principal at a junior high school learned from a student about an eighth grade boy who was making fun of a seventh grade student on the bus and then getting physical, such as pushing him into lockers and stepping on the backs of his feet.   The principal brought the bully and the SRO into his office together with the guidance counselor and assistant principal, where the student claimed that he was just "joking." The SRO told the boy that what he was doing was bullying, and the principal told him he would be suspended if it continued. The SRO told the boy about the legal consequences of assaultive behavior and, if the student used an instrument, it could be aggravated assault. The principal called the parents of the victim and told them to call the SRO if anything happened outside of school. The SRO then talked with the victim weekly until it was clear the bullying had ended for good. According to the principal, "When I dealt with discipline before we had an SRO, kids were always concerned about retaliation, and I would tell them to go to their parents or call the police. Now, I can refer them to . . . [the SRO] for follow up."

The SROs also make few arrests because the juvenile court does not want police to refer minor cases and first offenders. As a result, when SROs arrest students they typically assign them community service (authority granted to juvenile officers under State law) instead of petitioning the court to hear the case. One SRO arrested a student caught stealing a purse and arranged for her to spend six hours working for the custodian after school. (The parents of another student objected when another SRO assigned their daughter to wash windows, so the officer sent the case to juvenile court.) The SROs have a form that releases the school from liability, and they monitor the students' adherence using a time sheet signed by the person for whom the student is performing his or her community service.

At the intensively studied junior high school, teachers as well as school administrators refer matters to the SRO that may involve criminal behavior.

> A student told a teacher he was being harassed outside school but added that "You can't help because it's outside of school." The teacher said that was not true and arranged for the SRO to see the youth privately during class time. The SRO told the student an SRO's authority extended beyond the school and he could file a report if the problem reoccurred. The SRO brought the two harassing youth into his office, who then said, as is often the case with these types of problems, that "We heard he said something about me." The SRO told the students not to retaliate and that, if the problem reoccurred, he would involve their parents.

On occasion, the SRO also helps deal with criminal matters in which teachers themselves are involved.

> "A staff member told me she was physically confronted by an ex-boyfriend while at a local restaurant. She alleged her 'ex' had showed up at her parents' house and had also left several phone and e-mail messages for her. I completed a domestic battery report and requested a special watch for her residence."

Parents also refer potential criminal matters directly to the SRO at the school, bypassing school administrators and the guidance department.

- A parent called to complain that students on their way home were spitting on her recreation vehicle in her driveway. When watching the driveway failed to identify the kids, the SRO talked to other kids, a couple of whom identified the offenders. The SRO gave the offending students' names to the assistant principal, who called them to his office, where they confessed. The principal had the students write letters of apology to the vehicle owner and notified their parents. The SRO talked with one set of parents, the assistant principal to the other. The spitting never occurred again.

- A parent called the SRO to report that a knife had been thrown from a school bus window at her son while he was waiting for the bus. The SRO recovered the knife from the student's front yard, returned it to the student's parent, learned who the offending student was from other students on the bus, and interviewed him. The SRO found out that she had taken a steak knife on the bus to cut up an apple and, when done, disposed of the knife out the bus window. The assistant principal suspended the girl's bus riding privileges for three days.

Students, too, sometimes report illegal behavior to the SRO directly. In 2001-2002, students twice told the SRO about other students who were carrying marijuana.

> When a student gave him the name of a girl who had cigarettes in her possession on the school bus, the SRO told the assistant principal (without revealing who told

him) and let her handle the problem. She searched the student's locker, found the cigarettes, and called a meeting for the next day with the student, the student's parents, and the SRO. At the meeting, the SRO wrote up an ordinance ticket, which involves a $50 fine for possession of cigarettes by youth under 18 years of age. The SRO explained that bringing cigarettes to school constitutes a health hazard in addition to exposing other students to cigarette use. He warned the student and her parents that, if she were caught again, she might have to go to court.

In their law enforcement role, the SROs at all three Large Established Site One junior high schools also monitor a variety of school and nonschool youth activities to keep the peace:

- SROs help supervise the school district's monthly Friday evening event involving a dance, snacks, and entertainment (board games, floor hockey, volleyball) for all junior high school students.

- During the summer, the three town junior high school SROs are assigned in pairs, during alternating two-week periods, to help run an education and recreation program that provides free supervised activities in two parks from 5:30 p.m. to dusk five days a week for at-risk youth aged 5 to 13.

- The SROs monitor a teen center two evenings a month during the school year and two to three days a week during the summer.

- The schools use the SROs to monitor dances and escort the band and athletic teams to out-of-town games because, with the SROs' knowledge of the students and the students' familiarity with the SROs, the events stay under control better than when regular officers used to be hired for the assignments.

The SROs sometimes get involved in domestic violence allegations based on reports from students, school administrators, and guidance counselors.

- A seventh grade female student told the assistant principal that her father had used excessive physical discipline against her.

- A guidance counselor advised the SRO that a student told her that her older brother had slapped her on two different occasions.

The SROs follow up, interviewing the student and parents and, as appropriate, reporting the problem to the appropriate State agency, completing a domestic battery report, or both.

The SROs participate on each junior high school's reintegration team consisting of the child's parents, the guidance counselor, and an administrator, that works with suspended students before they are permitted to return to school.

Based on tips they get from students and teachers who trust them enough to serve as "informants," the SROs can sometimes act proactively to prevent an incident from ever occurring. For example, a teacher called the SRO at the intensively studied junior high school to say that a girl had talked to her about being afraid she was going to get beaten up after school because another girl claimed she had been "badmouthing" her. The SRO talked to the potential victim at lunchtime in his office, got the story, and then told the assistant principal, who called both girls into her office along with the officer to iron out the problem before a fight actually broke out.

This same SRO acts proactively in other ways to prevent student misbehavior.

- On Wednesday afternoons when students get out of school 30 minutes early, many of them walk to a nearby hamburger shop. Because of problems with student misbehavior there in the past, the officer on his own initiative decided to stop in for 15-20 minutes every Wednesday afternoon just to make sure things remain orderly.

- On his own initiative, the SRO reactivated a previously rejected truancy ordinance, initially pushed by the principal, that the town eventually enacted because of the SRO's efforts through his department. The new ordinance allows officers to issue a $25 "parking" ticket to truants or a local ordinance ticket requiring a court appearance where the judge determines the fine. If the child does not appear, the court holds the parents in contempt of court. The goal of the ordinance is to get more parents of truant children involved in addressing the problem. Without the SRO's involvement, the principal would not have been able to get the ordinance passed.

A (not Necessarily Typical) Day in the Life of a Large Established Site One Junior High School SRO

The SRO arrives at the school at 6:50 a.m., makes a few phone calls, checks his mailbox, talks to a teacher in the faculty room about scheduling a class, chats with a few students, and checks in with the administrators. At 7:20 he walks outside to patrol the parking lot.

A teacher tells the SRO that a bus driver wants to talk with him, and he goes over to discuss a problem with a student that the bus driver brings to his attention. On the way back into the school, he tells a student riding a skateboard on the school building sidewalk to get off the board. The SRO returns to the school to monitor the corridors.

At 7:30 a.m., the principal and the SRO rush out the door because of a fight on the sidewalk near the main entrance. They send the boy and girl involved to the office even though the two students deny there was any physical contact—"We were just arguing and screaming." The SRO takes the boy into the assistant principal's vacant office and interviews her; the principal interviews the girl in her office. The principal joins the SRO, and then the officer interviews the girl alone in the principal's office. Then the two students wait in the lobby until the principal has time to tell them what she is going to do.

At 8:00, the SRO fills out his schedule for the day on his whereabouts and leaves a copy with the assistant principal and the secretaries. From 8:15 to 8:25, he goes to his office to get his voicemail messages, including one from a mother who wants him to talk to her son who was given a discipline slip by a teacher for fighting.

> The mother is concerned that the boy may be starting down the wrong path. The SRO knows the boy, a member of the cross-country track team, because the SRO sometimes jogs with the team after school. As a result, the boy himself had told his mother about the SRO, and she elected to call him, not the assistant principal or guidance counselor. The boy had already told the SRO about the problem while waiting for the bus after school, and the officer assures her that he is convinced the boy was just horsing around. (Later in the week, the SRO talks to the boy—"Is everything OK? You're not goofing around anymore?" Then he calls the mother back to reassure her that her son is not in trouble.)

The SRO does a sweep of the corridors and all the boys' bathrooms (where kids once punched out the stall partitions and threw wet toilet paper around). As he does during all class breaks, at 8:45 he "stands guard" in the corridors—standing first in the seventh grade corridor and then in the eighth grade corridor.

Four girls come into the SRO's office to chat. Then the police department's SRO supervisor pages the officer. The SRO calls back on his cell phone, and they talk on the phone for a few minutes. At 9:30, between classes, two girls come in for pretzels and to talk for a minute about the track party. Two more girls come in, and one takes a pretzel. Two others are hanging around outside the door.

The SRO goes to the lunchroom to open boxes with donuts that the Student Council is selling to raise money. "I go on purpose to make contact with kids and so they see me in a non-cop role—role modeling," he explains. He helps sell the donuts. A student comes up to him and asks, "What are you going to do about the threat?" He says, "I'll try to find out who wrote it." (Later in the day, he talks with the girl who was threatened, but she has decided she does not want him to follow up.)

Back in his office, during the early lunch period (because school ends at 1:00 p.m. today because of a band and choir show), three girls come in, joined shortly by two others. One gives him an anonymous note from another student who threatens to report her to the principal for something. The SRO keeps the note. Two more girls come in for pretzels and leave. All but two of the other girls leave.

At 10:15, he does corridor duty again. Some kids chat with him about a girl whose nose was broken accidentally in an accident. At 10:20, he goes back to the lunchroom for a second stint selling donuts and circulating to talk with kids having lunch at different tables.

During third lunch, seven girls crowd into the SRO's office for pretzels; several others come and go, with six staying, three of them sitting on the floor; then two more come in and sit on the floor. The officer talks with his wife on the phone, and the girls talk among themselves. Then the girls banter with the SRO, teasing him for pronouncing "three" "tree." The girls leave. Fourth lunch finds another group of students in his office.

A boy comes up to the SRO in the corridor between classes with a legal question: "My dad lost his license because he was speeding in a school zone, but the kids were already in school. Does my dad need a lawyer?" The officer explains why he does.

Early afternoon, the SRO has lunch in the teacher's room. He checks in with the assistant principal and meets with the principal behind closed doors. He takes care of paperwork, returns calls, and does corridor duty. At 1:30, the end of the (shortened) day, he again patrols the parking lot.

The SRO program itself, of course, represents a major example of collaborative problem solving—the police department and the school district teaming up to work together to prevent and solve recurring student-related problems. According to the school district's new SRO coordinator, one of the program's most important benefits is that it "brought three communities together: police, parents, and school staff; it's broken barriers among the three groups. Now, to solve problems, we think of all three groups to help with the solution."

However, individual SROs rarely join with other agencies to solve a chronic problem involving students. On one occasion, an SRO did use outside resources to solve a one-time problem that posed a safety threat to students. Coming to school one morning, the SRO found students walking in the street, instead of the sidewalk, to get into the building because electric department workers had parked their trucks on the sidewalk. When he

asked the workers to move their trucks, they nodded and ignored him. He then telephoned the town engineering department, and got it to call the electric company to have it tell its subcontractor about the problem. The next day, the trucks were no longer on the sidewalk. On another occasion, the SRO did engage in a textbook example of collaborative problem solving (see the box "Multiagency Problem Solving by an SRO").

Multiagency Problem Solving by an SRO

Over a two-year period, the secretary at one junior high school had been repeatedly referring to the school's SRO numerous calls from residents living near the school complaining that students, on their way home at the end of the day, were damaging the fences (already in a state of disrepair) around their front yards. After talking with the suspected students failed to resolve the problem, the SRO checked to see if there was a town ordinance requiring residents to keep their fences in good repair. While there was no such ordinance, there was a safety issue involved because of the loose and jagged boards and nails. As a result, the SRO invited a code enforcement person to join him in visiting the three complaining homeowners to ask them to help solve the problem by repairing their fences. The SRO, in turn, said he would see to it that the students stopped damaging them. One neighbor replaced his fence entirely, and the other two had theirs repaired.

At the same time, the SRO had the suspect students meet with him and the assistant principal and got them to admit to what they had been doing. The SRO told the students—who, he says, "were regular kids just goofing around"—that their behavior reflected poorly on the school and all students. The SRO explained the possible consequences if they continued to damage the fences and if the assistant principal called their parents.

The vandalism stopped—perhaps because this was an example of the "Broken Windows" theory that disrepair attracts criminal behavior, since talking with the students before the fences had been repaired had not solved the problem.

Teaching

Each SRO is required by the Intergovernmental Agreement to teach the G.R.E.A.T. gang resistance curriculum to all seventh graders in language arts classes one day a week for eight weeks for the entire year, representing 30 to 36 class periods a year. The course generally takes up to 25 percent of the SROs' time because they are teaching it to a

different class all year long. SROs also teach segments of the law classes that some teachers offer, and they teach fingerprinting in science classes. Individual SROs teach other classes that reflect requests from individual faculty members.

In addition to teaching the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum, the SRO at the sample school teaches:

- sexual harassment and babysitting in Life Skills classes;
- shoplifting (see the box) and gangs in language arts classes in each of the three semesters (total of 18 class periods);
- driving under the influence (DUI), including a presentation on zero tolerance and arrest policies, followed by students going through field sobriety testing and wearing "fatal vision" goggles that simulate various levels of intoxication;
- drugs and alcohol for the last one or two weeks of each nine-week health education course;
- fingerprinting in all six science classes (total of 15 class periods); and
- segments of the school's law-related course.

For each of these topics, the SRO has developed a curriculum outline and handouts, preparing most of them himself but using other resources at times, such as materials available on the NASRO website.

An SRO Teaches a Class on Shoplifting

At 7:45 a.m., the SRO teaches about shoplifting to the first of four seventh grade language arts classes during the day, He follows a curriculum outline and provides handouts (with legal definitions and terms) that he developed with another SRO. The class coincides with the students' reading a book about a girl who is arrested for shoplifting. The SRO begins by asking the students, "What is my job?" "Hall monitor?" a boy replies hesitatingly. "Sort of. I don't do discipline, but I won't walk away from trouble, either." Another student: "Counselor?" "Right—on legal issues." The SRO explains he will be teaching the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum later in the year.

The officer then conducts a class on why people shoplift, how prevalent it is, how retail stores defend against it, and what the consequences can be for a juvenile versus adult shoplifter—including the liability of other kids who may be with shoplifter. The SRO explains that juvenile shoplifters can be liable civilly—the store sends their parents a letter demanding repayment of the cost of the stolen goods as well as payment of attorney's fees and court costs. He discusses "underringing"—when a salesperson rings up less than the retail price on the cash register to do friends a favor.

The SRO is relaxed and humorous as he teaches, walking around the room and singling out specific students to contribute. The students listen with rapt attention. The SRO explains why he will handcuff everyone he arrests, even in the school. He ends by telling the students how they can minimize the risk of having their own possessions stolen.

Much of what this SRO teaches fits in with the school's ongoing academic curriculum. Because students write an essay at the end of the unit, which teachers grade and can give extra credit for, the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum has relevance to the language arts classes in which it is taught. When language arts students are reading a novel about gangs, the SRO teaches a class on gangs for an entire day for each of the six teachers. He teaches about fingerprinting when science teachers are doing a unit on DNA.

The SRO continued his predecessor's practice of encouraging teachers to leave a note in his mailbox with requests and dates for him to teach specific topics. Just as the school district intended, a teacher confirmed that "He's like another staff person."

Mentoring

The SROs are constantly available to students for informal chats and serious conversations about problems the youth may be having. The SROs engage in ongoing banter throughout the day with students they have come to know. When possible, they take the initiative to participate in activities in which they can serve as role models:

- An SRO sees two girls struggling to put a tuba onto a dolly so they can transport it for band practice. He helps them hoist the instrument onto the dolly and makes sure it will not fall off. He then follows them to the band room where he shmoozes with several band members for a few minutes.

- On his own initiative, an SRO goes to the lunchroom to sell donuts that the Student Council is selling to raise money. "I go on purpose," he says, "to make contact with kids and so they see me in a non-cop role—role modeling."

The SRO at the sample junior high school devotes considerable time to mentoring students, both through conversations about whether the students' actions or contemplated actions are right or wrong and also through his presence, openness, and helpfulness. Students come into his office to talk between classes but especially during one of the four

20-minute lunchtimes (they are required to eat in the cafeteria, but he can give them a pass to eat in his office). Every day, different groups of girls have lunch in his office, in part to get out of eating in the cafeteria and partly to be with their own cliques. (Students must sign a sheet in the lunchroom to have lunch with him because, in the past, 20 of them would run to his office at the lunch bell, all jostling to get in at the same time.) The students often talk among themselves while the officer does paper work. However, the students also interact with the SRO in a way that builds rapport and enables him to act as a role model—and different kind of police officer.

In addition, the SRO says, "sometimes they say things [to each other] intentionally knowing I can hear" so he can follow up on a problem without the students' having to tell him about it directly. One year, students talked about other students having drugs on a school bus; the next year, students gossiped about cigarettes in the school. The SRO followed up both "leads," passing on the information and the suspected students' names to the assistant principal.

Students sometimes ask the SRO for small amounts of money, which he occasionally provides—but, he says, he always gets it back. He also passes out cold drinks he keeps in a small refrigerator in his office and candy or pretzels. Local businesses provide all the SROs with coupons to distribute to students for free products and services. The SRO is given 500 coupons each year.

When the SRO finds out that students have serious problems that need counseling, he refers them to the counselor or tells the counselor himself. After he witnessed a student's mother drunk in the child's presence in a local store, he suggested the counselor talk to the girl because the student was mortified at her mother's behavior.

All the SROs in Large Established Site One engage in other activities that do not fall neatly under the single rubric of law enforcement, education, or mentoring. For example, the SROs' involvement in the teen center and athletic events provides not only a law enforcement presence but also an opportunity to act as a role model and positive image of

police. An avowed purpose of the summer evening education and recreation program for at-risk youngsters is to expose youth to positive role models.

A key to the SROs' ability to be effective as mentors (and to getting tips from students about possible criminal activity) is to be scrupulous about maintaining confidentiality. When a student gave him the name of a girl who had cigarettes in her possession on the school bus, the SRO told the reporting student, "That's between you and me." A student participating in a focus group held at the junior high school with seventh and eighth grade students (see below) said, "You can really trust Officer----------." Another student reported, "Officer--------- is totally trustworthy. We can go in at lunch and talk about anything. We don't go to [a] counselor as often because they may call parents."

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

The school district and police department are both involved in supervising the SROs, but largely in a collaborative manner. The school district alone evaluates the program's effectiveness.

Monitoring

Both the police department and school system, as well as the SROs, keep extensive and meticulous qualitative and quantitative records on the program. SROs complete a detailed monthly summary matrix of specific activities engaged in, number of students involved (by gender and class), and year-to-date totals, accompanied by written descriptions of significant activities engaged in according to a standardized list of topics. Topics range from self-initiated investigations to weapons confiscated, from counseling sessions with parents to classroom presentations. SROs submit the report, mandated by a police department Investigative General Order, to their police supervisor, who circulates it to command staff, school district administrators, and the school board.

The school district superintendent of schools 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."

Each of the four sergeants who have supervised the SROs has had a different supervisory style. The current police department SRO supervisor has the advantage of having been the school liaison officer at the high school where, unlike most liaisons, he taught 20 class periods a semester. He also attended a 40-hour NASRO training, becoming certified as an SRO.

The supervisor is firm about requiring the SROs to complete the monthly summary activity form properly and on time. He also asks them to keep in touch if they become involved in a case that involves sexual abuse or has political overtones (one SRO caught a town official's son stealing). Every year, he meets with each SRO individually and with the SRO's school principal or assistant principal. He has observed each SRO teach. Occasionally, he advises an SRO on how to follow up on a case—for example, when a student threatened to come to school and "blow a kid away," he told the SRO to make sure their were no guns at the student's home and to arrange for an administrator to search his locker at school. Otherwise, the supervisor lets the SROs do their jobs without interference, in part because he knows that, if there were a problem with an SRO—which has never happened—a school administrator would let him know.

Evidence of Program Effectiveness

There is no empirical evidence that the SRO program is effective in reducing crime in the schools. However, there is anecdotal evidence that criminal behavior has declined. Furthermore, the program's planners and current administrators were as interested in providing a police officer who could act as a mentor and educator as in one who could provide security, and all observers report that the SROs appear to be effective in performing these two roles.

School Safety

In recent years, arrests of junior high school students in the school district have shown no pattern: 36 in 1998-1999; 15 in 1999-2000; 33 in 2000-2001; and 29 in 2001-2002. Suspensions in the school district have also oscillated in recent years, with 155 in 1997-1998, 113 in 1998-1999, 16 in 1999-2000, and 55 in 2000-2001. No more than 3 students have been expelled each year since 1997-1998. There were too few arrests at the intensively studied junior high school (2 in 1998-1999, 1 in 1999-2000, 3 in 2000-2001, and none in 2001-2002) to determine whether the program has had any impact on arrests at this one school. Arrests at all three junior high schools were 33 in 1998-99, 10 in 1999-01, and 33 in 2000-01. Out-of-school suspensions at the school were similarly infrequent (12 in 2000-2001, 8 in 2001-2002).

Nevertheless, knowledgeable observers believe that the SROs have contributed to a decline in two types of criminal offense among students.

- *Possession of cigarettes and smoking.* The SRO and 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 the schools, with no more smoking in washrooms and hiding of cigarettes in the bushes so students could smoke on their way home. According to the principal, "The school used to have to suspend several kids for having cigarettes on them; that has stopped since the SRO program began." Without the SROs, issuing the citation would have been too cumbersome for the schools to arrange for a best officer to show up.

- *Gang activity.* 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 communities. However, they believe that the SRO program continued to keep them out of the schools. In addition, a program evaluation conducted in 1997 (see below) found a large decline in the proportion of students who said there were gang members at the school. Among the reasons students in the 2000-2001 focus groups gave for the absence of gang activity were the gang awareness program (G.R.E.A.T.) taught by the SROs and the presence of an SRO in the buildings.

Finally, 10 students participating in a guidance-department sponsored 2001 focus group of randomly selected seventh grade students from the intensively studied junior high school agreed that the SRO had "probably" assisted in reducing crime at the school.

While these results are promising, several events have taken place in Large Established Site One that, in addition to the SRO program, may also have contributed to any decline in student misbehavior and crime (see the box "Many Factors May Have Contributed to Declines in Student Misbehavior at the Junior High Schools").

Many Factors May Have Contributed to Declines in Student Misbehavior at the Junior High Schools

- In 1998, one school cut back the time between classes from five to three minutes to reduce socializing and horseplay.
- In 1998, "in-school suspensions" were renamed "alternative learning environment" and were no longer reported to the school district.
- After the April 1999 Columbine tragedy, the school district spent $500,000 on increased security, including cameras at school entrances, staff ID cards, and the installation of concealed panic buttons in administrators' offices. In addition, the school instituted mandatory visitor sign-in, annual lockdown practices, and the locking of school doors during the day.
- Because the juvenile court made clear in 2000 that it did not want to have nonserious cases brought to its attention, the SROs generally stopped arresting students unless the students were involved in a serious fight or another serious criminal offense.
- A recent school district discipline policy calls for increased interest in providing remediation for students who get into trouble and a decreased emphasis on enforcement and suspension.

Perceptions of Fear of Crime

Because the school board wanted valid research on whether the SRO program was working, 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 data showed that, between the spring of 1996 and the spring of 1997, student perceptions of safety were unchanged at the intensively studied junior high school. However, this was very early in the program.

Every year, the school district has conducted focus groups at each grade level at each of the five junior high schools, including Large Established Site One's three junior high schools. The groups include a random sample of 10 seventh graders, a random sample of 10 eighth graders, and a group of about 10 combined seventh and eighth graders selected by the principal, assistant principal, and SRO who have dealt with the SRO personally. School guidance counselors moderate the groups, which include a significant focus on the SRO program (see the box "The School District Made Improvements Based on Focus Group Results"). A review of the results for the school years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 suggests 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 have an SRO in school and felt safer because of his presence.

The School Made Improvements Based on Focus Group Results

The school district gives the results of its annual focus groups to each school for purposes of goal setting.

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 providing feedback to the SROs when they were new at the job. In addition, the process and logistics for conducting the focus groups are arduous. The district may resume them for the 2004-2005 school year because there will be two new SROs.

The 10 nonrandomly selected students in the combined seventh and eighth grade focus group answered a question about how safe or comfortable they felt at the school by saying they felt safe "between 7-8-9 [a.m.] (10 [a.m.] being the safest), especially with Officer---------- here." One student commented, "Between 8 & 9 [a.m.], it's the most

secure place I've been." Comments from students who participated in the 1990-2000 and 2000-2001 focus groups included the statements that "They [other students] feel good about ----------- and safer," and "He's very visible."

The school district has periodically administered a school safety survey to students and mailed a similar survey to parents. Questions include whether the students feel safe at school (parents are asked how safe their child feels at school). However, longitudinal data were not available for purposes of assessing changes in the responses over time.

Perceptions of Trust

The results of a 1997 evaluation of the pilot program at the first junior high school to have an SRO found only small changes in attitudes toward the police, but the shifts were generally in a positive direction. Several knowledgeable individuals also reported that the SRO program has increased trust in the police department.

- The Large Established Site One police chief believed that trust has increased, giving the following supporting evidence:

    — "Anecdotally, I've seen more trust in the department [as a result of the SRO program]. The SROs interact with the PTAs [parent-teacher associations], so the public sees a different view of a cop as not in law enforcement adversarial roles. So [the program] has improved trust."

    — "Kids talk to parents [about liking the SROs], and kids grow up," which improves trust in the police in the long term.

    — "A teacher asked me to come to the school to talk about what it means to be a police officer—that would not have happened without the SRO because [the SRO] arranged it."

- The police department's SRO supervisor said that the program "has improved the police department's image in the community, especially among school administrators and teachers. My neighbors like the idea of a cop in the [local] junior high."

- According to the school board member who had been most instrumental in supporting the program and teaches criminal justice classes at a local junior college reported, "I've had students who graduated from the junior highs who have a different attitude toward the police department [compared with students in

his previous classes]. They have more trust in seeing it as a resource when they have a problem; they now feel the cops won't make the problem worse."

Community Support

Everyone involved with the program in both the school district and police department spoke favorably about the program and felt it was meeting *their* objectives for providing additional education and mentoring resources to students, reducing crime (or preventing an increase in crime) in the schools, improving (or maintaining the existing) climate of safety, and improving trust in the police. Perhaps the most telling measure of support for the program in the community at large is the fact that, even 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 even raised.

Large Established Site Two

Capsule Program Description

Large Established Site Two, with a 2002 population of over 500,000, encompasses more than 200 square miles in a State in the Southwest. The police department has nearly 1,000 sworn officers, while the principal school district within the city has over 50,000 students. Begun in 1962 with a single SRO, Large Established Site Two's SRO program now has one full-time SRO serving in each of 19 of the city's 21 middle schools (one SRO serves two middle schools).

Program Planning and Costs
The police department pays the entire cost of 18 of the SROs and will pick up the cost of the other 3 SROs currently funded with a U.S. Department of Justice COPS in Schools grant. The only source of ongoing dissension is school administrators' concern that the officers are not available enough at the schools—in part because each one serves up to six feeder elementary schools as well as a middle school and works a four-day week.

The SROs
In addition to fixed criteria for becoming SROs, the program prefers candidates with some college education. Several years ago, the program provided incentives to become SROs (take-home cruisers, four-day week, five percent pay increase) because few officers were applying for the posting. SROs take the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) 40-hour basic course as it becomes available, and they receive ongoing in-service training, as well.

Program Activities
On average, SROs spend about 25 percent time on law enforcement, 38 percent advising, 25 teaching, and 12 percent on other activities. Over time, they have been spending more time on education and less on enforcement.

- *Law Enforcement:* SROs are responsible for making arrests (generally for drug possession, threats, and fights) and preventing crime (through teaching, dealing with rumors, and cruiser patrols around the schools).
- *Teaching:* Most SROs spend considerable time in the classroom, including teaching the G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) curriculum and other topics ranging from Halloween safety to animal cruelty.
- *Mentoring:* SROs mentor students, especially by talking with students who have gotten into trouble—sometimes establishing ongoing relationships that last two or three years. SROs are also expected to engage in extracurricular activities that afford the opportunity to mentor students outside of school.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation
While the school district collects a great deal of information about school crime, levels of fear, and suspensions, these data cannot be used to evaluate the impact of the SRO program largely because of the program's longevity. However, two knowledgeable school district administrators feel the program has increased trust in the police.

Large Established Site Two's SRO program has a full-time SRO serving each of 19 of the city's 21 middle schools and its 4 to 6 feeder elementary schools. One SRO serves 2 middle schools.

The Site

Large Established Site Two, with a 2002 population of over 500,000, encompasses more than 200 square miles. The city and surrounding area are a tourist attraction and popular with retirees. The city's population has risen dramatically over the past 20 years, increasing about two-and-one-half times over its 1960 population.

The Police Department

The Large Established Site Two police department has nearly 1,000 sworn officers (including about 500 uniformed patrol officers) and an annual budget of $100 million. The department responds to an average of 775 calls for service every 24 hours.

In 1995, the department embarked on the development of a five-year plan to support community policing. During 1997, a neighborhood-based patrol officer assignment and deployment system was expanded citywide. With few exceptions, officers work the same shifts and beats throughout the year.

The School System

The total K-12 enrollment in the Large Established Site Two's school districts is over 50,000 students, of whom nearly 50 percent are Hispanic and nearly 40 percent white. The dropout rate was 3 percent during the 2001-2002 school year, and 4,442 students were suspended.

Program History

The School Resource Unit main office in the police department administration and nonuniformed services building occupies two large rooms, where three sergeants who monitor the SROs' activities share desks and computers and where SROs meet for briefings and training, and to check their mail.

Origins

Large Established Site Two's SRO program began in 1962 with one SRO serving one middle school and its five feeder elementary schools. The police chief at the time became intrigued by a Police-School Liaison Program in Flint, Michigan, that included most of the components of what today's SRO programs incorporate. Because research showed that existing efforts to curb delinquency in Large Established Site Two were severely hampered because officers acted after the fact rather than before the fact, the chief asked, "Why not attempt to <u>prevent</u> juvenile crime rather than simply react to it?" The department decided that the most logical period in which to attempt to prevent delinquency was during the transition between elementary to high school—that is, during students' middle school years—when delinquent traits often begin to appear.

The chief picked two articulate officers with bachelor's degrees to "sell" the program to the school board, teachers, school administrators, P.T.A. groups, and juvenile authorities. After getting agreement, the department tested the program in a single junior high school and its five feeder schools. The results showed a significant improvement in the image of the police among children and improved communication among the children, the police, the school, and residents in the area. As a result, by 1966 the program had expanded to six SROs. Today, the program has 21 SROs serving 21 middle schools and their 65 feeder schools. Each SRO continues to serve a single middle school and its feeder schools, traveling among them as needed.

The program's original goals (see the box for its current goals) were to:

    (1) combat juvenile crime on a systematic, predelinquent preventive basis;

(2) develop better understanding of the law enforcement function among parents and educators in the school system as well as children; and

(3) orient juveniles of junior high age and younger toward a more positive concept of the police and law enforcement.

According to the assistant chief of police, the program's biggest benefit is that it establishes relationships between officers and children. "We preach community policing, so we need to apply it to kids. Parents tell kids, 'Behave, or the cop will arrest you.' SROs break that mindset and act as role models for them—an important thing especially for at-risk kids."

Large Established Site Two's SRO Program Goals and Objectives

The Large Established Site Two police department's SRO Procedures Manual lists seven goals and objectives for the program.

(1)   To educate students about the law and the importance of individual responsibility as well as teambuilding and cooperation within our community.

(2)   To interact with students in a setting that builds self-esteem and trust and reinforces the police as role models.

(3)   To create a safe environment which promotes learning.

(4)   To interact with students, faculty, community, parents, and civic leaders to promote positive relations.

(5)   To teach the importance of good safety practices through various educational programs.

(6)   To serve as a primary resource to students who are victims and suspects of unlawful or harmful activity in order to deter and protect them from further harm.

(7)   To provide students with a positive role model through the exhibition of departmental values.

The program's mission statement is:

> *To Enhance a **Safe Atmosphere** in Our Community's Schools, Foster **Positive Relationships** With Our Community's Youth, And Develop Strategies to **Resolve Problems** Affecting Our Youth.*

Budget

The police department currently pays for 18 of the 21 SROs; a three-year COPS in Schools grant, provided by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented

Policing Services (the COPS Office), pays for the other 3 SROs. When the grant runs out, the department will pick up their cost. The department also pays the salaries of the three sergeants who supervise the SROs. These personnel costs were about are $1.3 million in 2000, representing about $850,000 in salaries plus fringe benefits. National Association of School Resource Officer (NASRO) training, overtime, laptop computers, and take-home cruisers represent an added cost of $700,000-$750,000, but grants pay for most of these expenses except for the cruisers. As a result, the entire cost to the department is close to $2 million, or about 2 percent of the agency's entire $100 million budget.

The program has benefited over the years from Federal grants, starting with a $76,891 grant in 1967 that enabled the department to add three additional SROs and a supervising sergeant, as well as lease vehicles and radios for the new SROs. Among other uses, Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grants totaling almost $740,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention provide overtime for SROs to participate in activities that involve interacting with students after hours. Some individual schools have money from their auxiliary budgets to pay SROs for overtime details (e.g., dances, open houses), but the schools also try to get event sponsors to pay the overtime.

Planning and Implementation Obstacles

Some counselors, teachers, and juvenile probation personnel had opposed the program in 1963, concerned that untrained police officers would usurp their responsibilities. Although meetings between police department personnel and school administrators overcame most of these apprehensions, the American Civil Liberties Union still sued the department charging that the officers constituted a threat to the constitutional rights of students. The court dismissed the case.

Another early problem was the SROs' expectations and habit of being obeyed unquestioningly, which conflicted with school administrators' authority in the schools. As a former SRO said, "SROs could not expect them [administrators] to bow down to

cops—we are a guest in the administrators' home. As a result, SROs had to be willing to give up some command and control." For example, one SRO said she always checks with the principal before making an arrest when the school is the "victim," as in the case of vandalism and graffiti. "It's a waste of time to arrest when the school will be a 'hostile witness.' " However, SROs have the authority to arrest students when they have probable cause to believe that they committed a crime regardless of the administrators' position. For example, one SRO reported that the only two disagreements she has had with her principal in seven years was over her decision to arrest students.

The most frequent source of ongoing dissension has been local school administrators' concern that "the SROs are not here enough." While this may in part reflect a misapprehension that SROs are a campus cop, it also reflects the times that SROs are taken away from their schools for mandatory training—sometimes during the school calendar's most hectic times of the year—as well as having to spend time at the elementary feeder schools. The friction has been further exacerbated in recent years after the SROs switched to the same four-day week (10 hours a day) worked by regular uniform patrol officers. Because each SRO now has either Monday or Friday off and is paired with another SRO who covers the off-duty SRO's schools, school district administrators are concerned because on Fridays, the schools' worst day for problems, one SRO has to cover two middle schools and up to nine elementary schools.

Program Coordination

An Intergovernmental Agreement between the city and the school district, renewed as needed, is signed by the chief of police and superintendent of schools, with the city clerk, mayor, assistant city attorney, and senior school district legal counsel signing as "parties to the agreement." The agreement spells out the SROs' and school district's broad responsibilities in the program. A 37-page SRO Procedures Manual, a section of the department's General Operations Manual for the Community Relations Section, addresses SRO roles and responsibilities from dress code (uniforms were mandatory except for special functions, but the policy now allows SROs flexibility except for the first and last two weeks of the school year) to hours (based on each school's needs) to the

Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program designed to help students resist peer pressure, resolve conflicts without violence, and understand how gangs affect their lives (SROs, once trained, are responsible for teaching it). The manual includes pertinent statutes, guidelines for getting started as an SRO, and curriculum outlines for teaching.

Other School Safety Personnel

The school district has three other types of school safety personnel.

- The school district has hired and stationed nonsworn *School Safety Officers* in the high schools to investigate student wrongdoing, including truancy. Most are former Large Established Site Two police officers. While headquartered in the high schools, they can be dispatched to middle and elementary schools throughout the county (not just the city), typically when an after-school fight is anticipated. One SRO radios for them four or five times a year when she feels there is going to be serious fight after school. "They come immediately," she reports. Elementary and middle school administrators may call them when their SROs are not available and they feel they will get a quicker or more sensitive response than if they were to call 911.

- Currently, there are four *school liaison officers*, Large Established Site Two police officers who rotate among the nine high schools in the city and the one high school in the school district's one high school that is outside the city limits. Because they do much more by way of law enforcement activities and much less teaching and mentoring than the middle school SROs do—and are not trained as SROs—they report to the patrol division, not the SRO unit. However, the same Intergovernmental Agreement addresses both the SROs and the liaison officers. In the past, before budget constraints occurred, there was one liaison officer in each of the district's 10 high schools.

- Since the late 1980s, all Large Established Site Two middle schools and some elementary schools have also had one or more nonsworn *school monitors* who patrol the corridors, cafeteria, and grounds before, during, and after school with radios. The school district's school safety department trains the monitors, but local school principals hire, pay for, supervise, and fire them. Generally, monitors handle minor disciplinary problems and bring more serious problems, including criminal matters such as contraband, threats, and fights, to the SROs to handle. However, when the monitors are well liked, many students go to them with their problems. The monitors radio or come to see the SRO with a problem several times a month, usually for contraband or fighting. Some SROs go to the monitors for information about students—for example, the names of the students involved in a fight.

The School Resource Officers

In addition to strict criteria for becoming SROs, the program prefers candidates with some college education. Several years ago, the program provided incentives for officers to apply because few officers were interested in the posting. All SROs are trained before going on the job, and they receive on-going in-service training, as well.

Recruitment

The early criteria for being an SRO included two years' experience on the force and successful participation in the 24-week, 15-hours-a-week training at a local delinquency control institute. Officers also had to have earned at least 18 hours of college credits "so they could talk with faculty on their level." However, the chief made it easy for officers to get a B.A. by arranging for professors to offer courses at the academy through the Federal Government's GI Bill of Rights. Today, the program still prefers candidates with some college because, according to an SRO supervisor, "that means they are connected to education, and the SROs' work is prevention more than anything else."

According to the department's Officer Daily Bulletin of September 25, 1996, SROs must have three years of continuous service with the department and agree to remain in the position for five years. They then submit a memorandum 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.

Openings are advertised in the department's daily bulletin. The program tries to have a list of eligible candidates "on standby" who can be contacted as soon as there is an opening. There were eight standbys as of April 2001. Several years ago, the program instituted incentives for officers to apply because of lack of interest in joining the program (see the box "Incentives to Become SROs").

Incentives to Become SROs

Several years ago, very few officers were applying to be SRO 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). Then, because the rest of the department had gone to four 10-hour days, it was becoming even more difficult to recruit SROs, who had to work five days a week. Indeed, one officer who reapplied to remain an SRO after her five years were up was accepted for another term only because one other person applied for the position. As a result, the department developed the following incentives for officers to apply for SRO openings:

- The department extended its four 10-hours-a-day week to SROs.
- SROs were given a five percent increase in their base pay because they cannot get as much overtime as regular officers.
- SROs were given take-home units, partly to eliminate the time they had to take going to and from the stationhouse to pick up and return a cruiser each day (which also saves wear and tear on the SROs' personal cars).

Applicants must appear before and answer questions from a board consisting of a psychologist, school district administrator, the lieutenant in charge of the community services bureau where the SRO program is housed, and at least one SRO supervisor. The police department's SRO supervisor places each newly accepted SRO in the schools.

Most SROs last the entire five years of their commitment unless they get promoted, but most SROs do not want to rotate out—when their tour of duty is ending, some school administrators write letters to the chief asking, "Why punish them for doing a good job?" Some parents also write the chief asking to retain SROs at their children's schools. However, the chief wants to be able to reward other officers with the post.

Training

All SROs attend the basic 40-hour training offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) as it becomes available. Some have attended the advanced training, as well. The SRO Procedures Manual also requires new SROs to:

- ride along with experienced SROs;
- if they have not already been to general instructors school, call the training academy for information and plan to attend the next available class; and
- arrange to be G.R.E.A.T. certified by contacting the G.R.E.A.T. staff for information.

The SRO supervisors conduct periodic trainings for the 6-8 SROs under their supervision, typically to explain a new technology, vendor, or piece of legislation or court ruling. For example, in one meeting the SROs were trained to use a new clear plastic pouch with ampoules for testing white powders for suspected cocaine. On another occasion, a superior court judge talked about when a disruption is a felony and when it is a misdemeanor according to State statute.

Hours

Because SROs work a four-day week, the program developed a "buddy" system to cover for the SROs during the weekday they are not working (see the box "The SRO Buddy System Has Advantages and Drawbacks").

The SRO Buddy System Has Advantages and Drawbacks

SROs work four 10-hour days. This means, they all have either Monday or Friday off. As a result, the program paired up each SRO with another SRO geographically nearby so they could cover for each other during their Monday or Friday day off. Each SRO updates the other on what happened during his or her day off.

The buddy system makes for a very busy day for SROs when their buddy is off—they are responsible for two middle schools and as many as nine elementary schools. Their solution is to provide help on a first-come, first-serve basis. If a school has an emergency, it has to call 911 if the SRO is not available. However, most school administrators try to avoid contacting the on-call SRO for nonserious matters when their own SRO has the day off, preferring to wait for the SRO to return the next school day.

While SROs work four 10-hour days, their actual hours are established in conjunction with each school based on its particular needs. Partly for this reason, in 1990 the department provided SROs with take-home cruisers so they can get to school early, leave

late, or both without losing time going downtown every day to pick up and drop off the vehicle.

A more recent problem has been asking SROs to volunteer to do too many extra assignments. Some SROs feel they cannot do anything well because they are spread too thinly, especially given their responsibility for up to six elementary schools as well as a middle school—and double that number on their buddy's day off.

During the summer, most SROs run a summer G.R.E.A.T. program at five different sites in collaboration with the Parks and Recreation Department and Boys and Girls Clubs. They also help operate a Teen Citizens' Police Academy, which runs for seven consecutive Saturdays. Some SROs attend the national NASRO convention or take vacation during part of the summer. They all use the final week of summer to prepare for the following school year. During Christmas break, SROs who do not take vacation patrol malls.

Program Activities

During the 1960s, records submitted by the SROs showed that the officers spent an average of:

- 36 percent of their time on patrol;
- 16 percent investigating incidents;
- 34 percent in meetings, conferences, and interviews;
- 10 percent in the classroom; and
- 4 percent in other activities.

As of 2000, program staff estimated that on average SROs were spending:

- 25 percent of their time on law enforcement,
- 38 percent advising,
- 25 percent teaching, and
- 12 percent on other activities.

This change represents a decrease in the proportion of time the SROs spend on law enforcement from 52 percent to 25 percent and an increase in the proportion of time they spend on teaching from 10 percent to 25 percent.

Paradoxically, violence in the schools has been increasing at the same time that most SROs have been reducing their law enforcement work and increasing their teaching to get the long-term benefits from engaging in crime prevention. However, recently some SROs have been devoting more time to law enforcement and less time to teaching. According to one SRO, "Education used to be my major focus, but now I spend more time on criminal activity than on education and counseling because of the increased severity of the crimes being committed [in her schools]."

Except for interviews with school district and police department supervisors, and except for interviews with two other SROs and a former SRO, all the observations and all the interviews at this site were conducted with the SRO and staff at one middle school chosen for intensive study at the recommendation of program staff (see the box "Characteristics of the Sample School and Its SRO").

Characteristics of the Sample School and Its SRO

The School
During the academic year 2000-2001, Large Established Site Two middle school had about 800 students in grades 6-8, of whom almost 50 percent were white, over 35 percent Hispanic, almost 8 percent African American, and 7 percent Native American and Asian American. This breakdown is almost identical to the ethnic composition of middle schools in the city as a whole. Nearly 60 percent of students participated in the Federal Government's free and reduced cost lunch program. The Large Established Site Two's intensively studies middle school is no longer a neighborhood school because court-ordered desegregation has resulted in students from outside neighborhoods being bused into the school.

The school has three part-time school monitors and one full-time monitor who has been at the school for 13 years since resigning as a police officer in another State. The full-time monitor works from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday; the other two monitors' hours are staggered.

There were 38 arrests at the school during calendar year 1999, 33 in 2000, and 41 in 2001. Arrests in 2001 included 10 for assault, 10 for possession of narcotics, and 5 each for possession of drug paraphernalia and disorderly conduct (including trespassing). There were 140 suspensions in 2000-2001 and 207 in 1999-2000.

The SRO

In 2002, the school's SRO was in her seventh year at the school. With a B.A in education, she had been a teacher for three years before becoming a police officer in 1986. She had received basic and advanced training in G.R.E.A.T. and had taken the basic and advanced SRO training courses with NASRO.

The SRO's private office at the middle school is located about 50 feet from the principal's and assistant principal's offices. Pictures of her pets and posters cover the walls. She has a computer and a filing cabinet.

As of 2001, the SRO estimated that on average she spends 10 hours a week on law enforcement, 15 advising, 10 teaching, and 5 on other activities.

Law Enforcement

In addition to arresting students for criminal behavior, SROs in Large Established Site Two engage in many activities designed to prevent crime, including cruiser patrols before, after, and during school hours.

Dealing with Criminal Behavior

SROs make arrests primarily for drug possession and fighting. The SRO at Large Established Site Two middle school has twice arrested students who threatened teachers saying, "I'll blow you off." On occasion, weapons have been a problem at the school (see the box "The SRO Confiscates a Replica Gun").

SROs work closely with school administrators in matters that may involve an arrest. For example, the SRO and assistant principal at the intensively studied middle school refer cases to each other 8-10 times a month and collaborate on solving them. The assistant principal refers graffiti, gang activity, threats, and bullying problems so the SRO can talk with the students (and, as appropriate, parents) and then, as needed, make arrests. Typically, when the SRO arrests a student she releases the youth to his or her parents' custody.

The SRO Confiscates a Replica Gun

A student told the school monitor that an eighth grader had a gun inside his knapsack. The monitor radioed the SRO, and both went to explain to the teacher their need to pull the student out of class and take him to the SRO's office. The SRO read him his Miranda rights and told him there was a rumor he was carrying a gun. The student then handed over the weapon, which turned out to be a toy replica handgun that the student said he brought with him because a high school student threatened him on the way to school. However, the monitor knew him to be a "gang wannabee."

The SRO walked over to tell the assistant principal as soon as she had confiscated the gun. The assistant principal joined the monitor and the SRO with the student. The SRO arrested him, called his parents, and turned the boy over to his mother when she showed up. (If no parent had been home, the SRO would have cuffed the boy and driven him to juvenile court, which would have taken 45 minutes out of her day.) The assistant principal completed the paperwork to suspend the student.

In the case of fighting, if the altercation is mutual, the SRO lets the school monitors and administrators handle the problem unless it is a gang issue, has been repeated several times, or involves injury. "Parents prefer the school to handle fights rather than prosecuting the case," she says. However, some parents *want* the SRO to arrest their child—even when it is not warranted—to "teach them a lesson" and because the parents have been unable to get the child to behave. Generally, parents react to the SRO's involvement by saying to the assistant principal, "Tell Officer ------------, thanks for trying to help my kid."

When SROs are not available, administrators call 911 if a student needs to be arrested. One SRO tells administrators, "If you need a cop [and I'm not here], call 911 and then call me and tell me." Many administrators, however, delay the arrest until the SRO becomes available, usually calling 911 only if the problem occurs after the SRO has left for the day. One middle school assistant principal reported calling 911 only once or twice a year.

In addition to collaborating regularly with school administrators, SROs occasionally engage in collaborative problem solving in an effort to address issues that may lead to—or are already causing—criminal behavior (see the box "Collaborative Problem Solving").

Four times a year, all SROs are assigned to participate in "truancy sweeps" during their regular working hours in which they look for students cutting class that day, including going to the homes of known truants. Typically, they find three or four truants whom they transport to a command post staffed by juvenile officers and representatives of the Attorney General's office.

Preventing Crime

The SROs engage in a number of activities designed to prevent students from getting involved in criminal behavior. Teaching is one important prevention activity SROs engage in (see below) by focusing on behaviors that constitute a criminal offense and the operations of the criminal justice system. SROs also introduce themselves at the beginning of each year at an assembly, explain their authority, and describe the behaviors that students may not realize can result in an arrest, such as shoving and making threats.

Administrators, teachers, and students sometimes warn SROs that high school youth are planning on coming on campus to protect their "little" sister or brother against an alleged bully or false rumors, or that a fight among middle school students is being planned. As one SRO said, when this happens, "the SRO can nip the problem in the bud." A teacher at the intensively studied middle school said she sends the students to the SRO, not an administrator, because "The SRO is in uniform and is taken more seriously." SROs solve most of these problems by talking directly with the students involved—usually they involve false rumors that are easily cleared up.

Collaborative Problem Solving

Both the police department and the school district see the SRO program as community policing. According to an assistant superintendent of schools, "This is a real step in collaboration between two bureaucracies that has lasted a long time." The police department's Officer Daily Bulletin of September 25, 1996, reflects this thinking:

> *The SRO position involves enhancing a safe atmosphere in our community's schools, fostering a positive relationship between you and police, and partnershipping with schools and the community in developing and implementing prevention strategies to resolve problems affecting our youth.*

In a specific collaborative problem solving endeavor, the SRO Unit has encouraged SROs to work with their schools to establish and coordinate special problem solving teams designed to help the schools develop a process for reducing truancy, weapons and drugs on campus, and school violence through collaborative problem solving.

The teams are an extension of community policing into the schools, because the SROs, school administrators, and parents talk about how they can collaborate to get at the root of problems—"community policing applied to kids," according to a program staff member. SROs are encouraged to set up a team in their middle schools consisting of police, educators, community leaders, and, especially, students, that uses the SARA problem solving approach to <u>S</u>can their problems and concerns, <u>A</u>nalyze the problems, develop and implement a <u>R</u>esponse, and <u>A</u>ssess how effective the response was. State grants totaling over $600,000 fund the program. Each participating school receives $500 as an incentive to set up a team. As of 2001, 13 schools had teams involving about 200 participants each.

In addition to these teams, SROs gave illustrations of collaborative problem solving endeavors that extended beyond working in partnership with just school administrators.

- When one SRO noticed a school crossing at one of her feeder elementary schools was unpainted and not signed, she asked the principal to call the school district to have signs installed. The SRO called the city engineers to paint the crosswalk. Both agencies cooperated.

- When the SRO at a middle school found out that a fifth grade student with no father at home wanted to hurt herself, the officer arranged for the school counselor to meet the mother (the school psychologist had already tried to help, but the mother would not cooperate). The SRO arranged an appointment for the child with a mental health counselor from an outside agency for an emergency mental health evaluation.

The SRO Procedures Manual calls for SROs to "Perform preventive patrol for students en route to and from school. Attention will be directed to observations pertinent to the safety and well being of children." The SRO at the intensively studied middle school begins her day patrolling two or three of the middle school's feeder elementary schools early in the morning because they have staggered starting and ending times and are near each other. She then drives to and patrols around the middle school, where classes start later in the morning and end later in the day. SROs deliberately vary the schools they patrol each morning and afternoon so that no one can predict where they will be.

The Singing SROs Try to Help Prevent Drug Crime

Five SROs have formed a band that several times a year offers 45-minute anti-drug concerts during school assemblies to 250-300 students. The SROs alternate singing songs with providing information about what to do if students are offered drugs or see drug paraphernalia.

SROs may also patrol in the middle of the day. On one day, the a middle school SRO drove around the neighborhood of an elementary school at noon looking for fights, suspicious people watching the children, students crying, and other activity that might require her attention:

> The SRO asks a youth sitting on rocks at the entrance to the school what he is doing because she does not recognize him. He says he is new to the school. "Have a good day," the SRO says, and drives on. Twice she asks cars stopped in no parking zones to move because they are close to a student crosswalk. She also tells some students who are jaywalking to use the crosswalks. She then patrols another elementary school where the previous day staff had seen a man in a car with binoculars looking at the school (he was gone by the time she arrived).

Some principals ask SROs if they can patrol the neighborhood and campus during a dance or other after-school events; most agree to the assignment if the events are free— some without charging overtime. "In addition to saving $100 [he would have paid had he called the department for a detail]," one principal said, "I feel safer because the SRO

knows the students and they know her. When students know they will be recognized, they are less likely to get into trouble."

When the program began, the chief made clear that "the Police Officer would not involve himself in violations of school rules. He would confine himself to the problems which normally fall within the police jurisdiction." However, the current Intergovernmental Agreement calls for SROs "to enforce the school district's student disciplinary process, utilizing police involvement where appropriate . . . ."

A (not Necessarily Typical) Day in the Life of a Large Established Site Two Middle School SRO

The SRO starts the day at 7:45 a.m. patrolling the area around two elementary schools. She arrives at the middle school at 8:45, ten minutes before the first class begins. The SRO's supervisor radios her asking if she can participate in a Friday evening event at one of her elementary schools involving a dinner for sixth grade students and their families, followed by using a telescope, designed to encourage families to do things together. She agrees. She goes to her office in the middle school to check her mailbox and e-mails.

At 9:15, the SRO goes to an elementary school to teach an alcohol class but first leaves an application in the elementary school office for the G.R.E.A.T. summer program for the principal to duplicate and distribute to teachers to hand out to their students. The SRO team-teaches an alcohol class for 25 fifth graders with her "buddy" SRO. The two SROs involve the students actively in defining "a drug," identifying the different types of alcoholic beverages, discussing the effects of drinking (especially loss of inhibitions), and brainstorming the reasons people drink (no one mentions peer pressure until one of the SROs suggests it). Four students take turns walking heel to toe along a line on the floor and then repeat the exercise after putting on special goggles that simulate the vision of a drunken person. Four other students try touching their noses before and after wearing the goggles. The SROs explain that, under State law, any teenager stopped for driving with alcohol in the car or after drinking loses his or her license until age 21. After a lively question an answer period, the class ends at 10:25.

The SRO stops in several other classrooms asking the teachers if she may interrupt for 5-10 minutes to describe the G.R.E.A.T. summer program; all the teachers know and welcome her. The SRO makes the students repeat after her several times, "Mail them in!" because they will be unable to attend unless their parents send the applications to the police department. One student asked if he will have to be hosed down at the program: "No, but it'll be my mission to get you soaked."

A boy in one class asks to see her gun. The SRO asks the teacher's permission to pull him out to the corridor, where she lectures him grimly on not talking about her gun—"It offends me." She sends him back to class with a gentle tap on his shoulder. In the corridors, children come up and hug her.

The teacher in one class asks if the SRO can teach a class before the end of the school year; they arrange and time and plan on focusing on drugs. Another teacher stops her in the corridor to schedule a class—"on any topic." The SRO says she will use the class to experiment with a new topic and approaches.

At 12:30, the SRO teaches a class on animal protection to 26 fifth graders (see the discussion of **Teaching**). When she enters the wrong classroom by mistake, the third graders in the room yell out, "Hello, Officer -------------." She knows the first names of most of the students in the class. Class begins at 12:45 and ends at 1:30. The next class, third graders, begins at 1:40 and ends at 2:15.

The SRO returns to her cruiser to watch a playground area where kids are waiting for buses or to be picked up and continues to patrol the schools until 4:00 p.m.

Teaching

The SRO program was begun to create a positive image of law enforcement in the

schools and community and enforce the law. But there is also an understanding that the

officers were to also work in the classroom.

- The Intergovernmental Agreement requires the school district to "provide . . . classroom time for law enforcement and safety related education in grades K-12 . . . ." It specifically assigns the SROs to teach the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum.

- The SRO Procedures Manual calls for SROs to "Conduct classroom instruction on prevention and education on appropriate subjects to elementary, middle school, and high school students, faculty, and staff . . . ."

- The police department's General Operations Manual includes detailed, ready-made curriculum outlines for teaching classes on constitutional law, police functions, bicycle, pedestrian, stranger, and Halloween safety; emergency procedures; theft prevention; shoplifting; and vandalism.

- To facilitate teaching, the SRO program has developed or obtained over 50 video presentations that SROs may check out from the program office's video closet, as well as PowerPoint presentations on topics ranging from drug awareness to gangs.

Another reflection of this emphasis on teaching is a program policy that, when an SRO is teaching a class and something arises in the school that requires a police officer, the administrators are to call 911, not interrupt the class: "The officers are there to be SROs, not the cop on the beat." The Large Established Site Two middle school SRO waits until the end of class to answer her pages. "If it is a fight," she says, "it is over before I can get over to the school anyway."

SROs Teach a Wide Range of Subjects

The Large Established Site Two middle school SRO teaches a wide range of classes, some of which, like G.R.E.A.T., they are required to teach, some of which, like Halloween safety, they are encouraged to teach, and others, like humane treatment of pets, individual SROs choose to teach. For example, the Large Established Site Two middle school SRO teaches the following classes:

- G.R.E.A.T., four classes, grades 6-8; ten classes, grades 3 and 5
- Halloween safety, two classes each, grades K-4
- Drug Abuse, 20 classes, grades 5 through 8
- Alcohol Abuse, 20 classes, grades 5 through 8
- Theft, 4-5 classes a year
- Bully-Proofing, twice, grades 3 and 5
- Sexual Harassment, 5 classes, grade 8
- Stranger Danger, 20 classes, elementary schools
- Rights and Responsibilities, 8 classes, grade 5
- Doing the Right Thing, 1 class, grades 3 and 5
- Bicycle Safety, 3-4 classes, grade 3
- Gun Safety, 3-4 classes, grade 3
- Conflict Resolution, 2-3 classes, grades 3 through 5
- Fingerprinting, every two or three years, grade 5

The Large Established Site Two middle school SRO has also chosen to teach about "not being mean to animals" based in part on her love of animals (she owns several dogs), kids' love of animals, and kids' (and adults') ignorance that animal cruelty is illegal. She begins by showing a film produced by one of the State's Humane Societies. The students soon realize that the SRO herself is in the film along with some of the school's former students. The SRO's dogs are also in the film. The class focuses on what animal cruelty is (including the legal definition and penalties), why it is unacceptable, and how to approach unknown dogs safely. Students interrupt the class frequently with questions and stories about their own experiences with animals from snakes to birds.

Over time, the SROs have focused more and more on education and less and less on law enforcement. For example, at one time all SROs were detectives who followed their cases through from beginning to end—a time consuming responsibility. When that changed a few years ago, their law enforcement responsibilities diminished as they passed on cases to department detectives to complete. "As a result, SROs today are more educators than cops," an SRO said.

Teachers can ask for the SROs to teach a class by calling them or dropping a note in their school mailboxes. At Large Established Site Two middle school, the SRO arranges to teach directly with teachers without administrator involvement. (When she first began, she gave a list of all the things she could teach to each elementary school principal.)

Mentoring

SROs engage in two types of mentoring: being seen by students in nontraditional roles that involve showing responsibility, volunteerism, and compassion, and actively counseling individual students who are experiencing problems.

In general, SROs' availability for individual mentoring in Large Established Site Two is somewhat limited because of the time it takes to travel among and patrol their elementary schools. Furthermore, SROs are off duty one week day a week, and another day each week they must cover for another SRO whose day off it is. As a result, one teacher said she typically called on the school monitor, not the SRO, when she had a problem with a student "because the monitor's here more often."

Types of Mentoring

Despite these limitations on their time, many SROs do considerable mentoring. Furthermore, being responsible for their middle schools' feeder schools is an advantage: because the SROs get to know many students as early as the first grade, the officers can maintain contact with them, including acting as mentors, for as long as eight years.

According to one principal, "The SRO does positive counseling—she's not just a campus cop. I keep a list of students who need to be seen by the SRO because of discipline

issues—or it could be a kid who has turned things around so the SRO can reinforce their good behavior. The SRO in my school sees some kids weekly." The assistant principal and SRO refer students to each other about a dozen times a month to collaborate on helping troubled students. The assistant principal sometimes refers cases for mediating if the administrator has tried unsuccessfully a few times to stop the misconduct. The assistant principal may join in the mediation. The SRO and assistant principal ask, "What's going on? How can we avoid suspending you and calling your parents?" Having the SRO there, the assistant principal says, implies that an arrest is possible, too. As illustrated in the vignette in the box, SROs not infrequently combine their law enforcement role with their mentoring role in this fashion.

SROs Can Combine Enforcement with Counseling

- While the SRO at a middle school was in the library photographing windows that appeared to have been broken with rocks, the librarian told her that a girl was flashing her grandfather's sheriff's badge and photo ID to other students. The SRO found the girl in the guidance counselors' office and asked to look at it. The girl explains that her grandfather gave it to her mother, and the girl had asked her mother, "Can I take it to school?" The SRO calls the mother, who is angry at what her daughter did. "When my daughter asked me permission, I must have been in the shower [which the girl later confirmed] and didn't hear her ask." The SRO explains to the girl what can happen if the badge and ID were lost or stolen—someone could impersonate a police officer, and her grandfather would have to report why it was stolen. The girl said she had wanted to show the badge to a teacher who used to be a police officer to impress him. "You need to have a discussion with your Mom, tonight," the SRO says. The girl says she will.

- According to another principal, "The SRO does a lot of counseling with the children. When a teacher told her about a student who was verbally harassing other students, the SRO spoke with the child and, separately, the parents. She asked the child how he felt about herself; the boy admitted he doesn't like himself so he picks on other kids. The SRO told her what the legal ramifications are of continued bullying—juvenile court. The girl left crying and repentant.

Students also come into the SROs' offices on their own for help—most often because they are being picked on verbally. In these cases, SROs get the other students into their offices to talk with them individually and then meet with all the students together to informally mediate the problem. "Often it is just rumors, and direct confrontation among the parties solves it 90 percent of the time," one SRO reported

Individual Long-Term Mentoring

Some SROs form close and lasting relationships with difficult students.

- An SRO had been working with a fourth-grade student for over two years. The SRO initiated contact because the student, from a rough family, was getting into fights. She asked him, "What do you want to be as an adult? "Nothing." The SRO told the student, "I want you to have three things tomorrow for me that you'd like to become." The next day, the student reports back, saying "firefighter and manager of a pizza store." The SRO then arranged for a friend who ran a pizza place and a friend who was a firefighter to talk with the student. Later in the school year, the student reported he was having a problem with a teacher. The SRO arranged with the principal to switch the boy to another teacher.

- Another SRO mentored a difficult 8th grader whose mother had died of a drug overdose the previous summer and whose father was in prison. The boy was suspended for fighting in school with his sister, and earlier in the school year the SRO had already arrested him twice for fighting. When the SRO saw less and less of him, she challenged him to improve his grades by offering Cracker Jacks, candy bars, and pencils as rewards. When he got on the basketball team, he came into her office screaming, "I scored 2 points!!!" As his grades improved (he brought the SRO his report cards), she kept giving him rewards as well as meeting with him between classes in her office. At one point, he admitted he had made a lot of bad choices but was going to try to graduate. The SRO, in the meantime, talked regularly with his grandmother, with whom he was living. He ended the year with all As and Bs.

Extracurricular Mentoring Activities

Most SROs participate in extracurricular activities that involve mentoring. The SRO Procedures Manual notes that "There are several projects throughout the school year where volunteers and participation is needed in order to have successful events." The manual also requires SROs to "[a]ttend special events as necessary to interact and prevent problems" and "[p]articipate in various Department-sponsored and endorsed activities that foster a positive relationship between the students and the SRO."

One major extracurricular activity the program encourages SROs to participate in is special problems solving teams (see the box "Collaborative Problem Solving" above). Another extracurricular activity is designed to promote cooperation and productivity, decision making, problem solving skills, and increased mutual trust. The program requires participating youth to solve challenges on a course that includes rope and wall climbing in which students must help each other to meet the physical challenges. Different groups of youth from local community-based youth organizations and schools participate, usually on weekends. Interested SROs receive 40 hours of training in order to supervise the activities.

> A group of 10 seven to twelve year old students who are part of a Parks and Recreation Department program participate in the program one afternoon from 3:00 to 5:15. When one overweight boy finally completes the wall climb after an arduous struggle, an SRO who had assisted him hugs the boy and kisses his head—an officer who had previously spent 20 years on the streets "just locking kids up." Another SRO gives the students "ten fingers" to help them scale the wall. The SROs' message to the youth: "You have to work together to solve problems and to be a leader and trust each other."

A program staff member learned about the concept from a California police department, picked the program director's brain on the phone, modified it, did a feasibility study, and joined some SROs in a YMCA ropes course to see if they would want to run it. He then negotiated with the Parks and Recreation department to use one of its vacant lots as the site and to partner on the venture. After gaining the chief's approval and checking with the city's risk manager, he wrote an $80,000 Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant application to the State to fund the equipment and pay overtime for SROs to participate on weekends. He called an electric company out of the blue to ask it to donate equipment and workers to dig the deep holes needed to stabilize the rope climbing and other equipment, later inviting it to the ribbon cutting ceremony, giving it a certificate of appreciation, and putting up a plaque with company's name on it.

SROs engage in various other extracurricular mentoring activities of greater and lesser intensity (see the box "Extracurricular Mentoring Activities").

Extracurricular Mentoring Activities that SROs May Participate In

- *Teen Citizens' Police Academy*. Over six consecutive Saturdays, officers provide classroom instruction and interaction, hands-on training, and tours and demonstrations to 13 to17 year olds for community college credits.

- *G.R.E.A.T. Summer Program*. Conducted for 250 middle school students, this six-week structured program is designed to strengthen the effectiveness of the in-class G.R.E.A.T. lessons held during the school year. G.R.E.A.T. staff and SROs, with the city's Parks and Recreation Department, run the program, which includes field trips, career awareness, alcohol awareness, and CPR.

- *C.A.T.S. Program*. Developed and run by the State University, the Center for Athletes Total Success program provides athletic speakers for classroom presentations or special events, along with free tickets to university athletic events. SROs can request speakers (and, at the same time, tickets) through their SRO supervising sergeant.

- *Breakfast with Santa*. Each SRO recruits and invites four disadvantaged elementary school students to a restaurant for a free breakfast where Santa gives them gifts. SROs solicit the gifts—footballs, skateboards, dolls, and bicycles— from retail stores. At a Christmas tree party, four students from each elementary school decorate an outdoor tree with SROs, after which a helicopter arrives with Santa, who gives a bag of goodies to each child.

- *Other events* include:
  --   a Citizenship Award Picnic at which SROs flip hamburgers;
  --   a Rodeo Parade, at which SROs and students represent different schools on a horse-drawn float; and
  --   Love of Reading Week, offered at some elementary schools, at which SROs explain the importance of reading for jobs in law enforcement.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

While the school district collects a great deal of information about school crime, levels of fear, and other pertinent information, for a number of reasons the data cannot be used for purposes of evaluating the impact of the SRO program.

Monitoring

New SROs must sign and submit a sheet to their supervisors documenting that they have read and are familiar with the department's SRO Procedures Manual. They are then assigned to one of three School Resource Unit sergeants, each of whom supervises about eight SROs grouped by geographic area. The Procedures Manual requires SROs to "Provide the supervisor with monthly activity sheets." SROs fill out the sheets weekly on their computers and e-mail them to their supervising sergeant at the end of each month.

Supervisors observe their SROs teach and meet at least once a year with the SROs' school administrators. The level of supervision is increasing, according to one observer—"Supervisors are coming more frequently to events and asking the SROs what they are doing so they know which events to attend."

The department requires that all officers notify a supervisor when they arrest a juvenile. SROs also call their supervisors periodically either for advice with a problem or to keep them apprised of something important that took place. For example, SROs talk to their supervisors if a parent is angry or thinking of filing a complaint so there are no surprises. However, in seven years, one SRO has never had a supervisor talk to her about a parent complaint. To keep him informed, another SRO called a supervisor to report that a principal wanted all crime-related incidents reported through her. The SRO had had to show the principal the new mandatory reporting statute that requires officers to report them directly to the police department.

During monthly squad meetings, supervisors notify the SROs of changes in rules and statutes, available and mandated training, new forms, upcoming training certifications and recertifications, and firearms requalification dates. During the meetings, SROs also share experiences with each other about how they have solved problems.

Evidence of Program Effectiveness

For reasons explained below, it is not possible to determine whether the SRO program
has reduced crime and fear of crime in the schools; however, limited anecdotal evidence
suggests that the program may have increased trust in the police department.

School Safety

The school district has conducted an annual School Quality Surveys among parents,
students, and faculty/administrators since 1989. The questions ask respondents to rank
their answers in terms of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.
Results are available on-line for each school and for the entire district for the past few
years. The table below presents the safety-related questions asked of students in 2003,
and their responses, for the sample school and the school district as a whole.

The school district also collects considerable information about issues related to school
safety, student misbehavior and punishment (e.g., suspensions and expulsions), and
arrests. For example, annual arrest data include reasons for arrest by individual school,
by type of school (e.g., all middle schools), and for all schools combined.

**Table: Student Responses to the 2002-2003 School Quality Survey for the Sample
School and the Entire School District**

Question	Sample School (n = 514 to 536)		School District (grades 3-12; n = 32,859-33,404)	
Students behave during class.	strongly agree	3%	strongly agree	10%
	agree	37%	agree	45%
	disagree	40%	disagree	32%
	strongly disagree	21%	strongly disagree	13%
I feel safe at my school.	strongly agree	44%	strongly agree	32%
	agree	52%	agree	44%
	disagree	20%	disagree	15%
	strongly disagree	14%	strongly disagree	9%
I usually follow the school rules and stay out of trouble.	strongly agree	39%	strongly agree	46%
	agree	46%	agree	44%
	disagree	10%	disagree	7%
	strongly disagree	5%	strongly disagree	3%

There are several reasons why it is not possible to use the data to attribute changes in student misconduct and punishment, and fear of crime, to the SRO program.

- Because the program predates the surveys by many years, some of its impact on school safety and fear of crime may have occurred before data collection began.

- Because there have been significant changes in the city's demographic make-up, school campus security measures, and other conditions over the years (see the box "Many Factors May Have Contributed to Changes in Student Misconduct, Crime, and Fear of Crime"), comparing arrest rates, suspensions, and other measures by year would not yield valid results due to the inability to attribute any changes to the SRO program as opposed to some or all of these other events.

- In the case of the School Quality Surveys, because the surveys are sent home with middle and elementary school students, there is no knowing how representative the responses are of the entire student body in a given school or of the student population in the district as a whole.

Many Factors May Have Contributed to Changes in Student Misconduct, Crime, and Fear of Crime

- In 1986, a dropout prevention program was instituted that lasted about 10 years.
- In 1994, the county attorney initiated a diversion program to address the root causes of truancy and punish parents and youth for continued truancy or failure to complete the diversion program successfully.
- In 1998, with funding from the Federal Government's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the city launched a grassroots resiliency initiative to mobilize all elements in the community—particularly schools—to promote the ability of youth to bounce back from adversity.
- In 2000, a new State law went into effect that requires all schools to report to the police all suspected crimes against the person or property and any threatening situations. As a result, the number of reported incidents—but not necessarily the number of actual incidents—increased.
- In 2000, every middle school hired a full-time staff person to work on preventing out-of-school suspensions.
- The school district's definition of a dropout has changed over time, making cross-year comparisons unreliable.
- The city's demographics, including the ethnic and socioeconomic status of the population and students, changed significantly during the period the program has been in operation. Just from 1996 to 2000, the percentage of white students declined to 41.0 percent from 45.4 percent, while the percentage of Hispanic students increased to 45.8 percent from 41.8 percent. In addition, the city's population has increased dramatically since 1963 when the program began.

Fear of Crime

Two school administrators said that the SRO program has reduced fear in the schools.

- An assistant principal at a middle school said that she "feels safer with a cop—especially, with a police cruiser in the parking lot. Adults feel safer, too—the teachers. Kids have threatened teachers—in fact, the SRO has arrested two students for making threats. I feel safer knowing that the SRO is available to answer questions about how to handle a problem."

- The principal of another middle school said that "If the SRO left, there would be more difficulty because [SROs] have clout—they make a different impression than I make with students 'on the edge'; the SRO can explain the law [to students] and the [legal] ramifications of their behavior."

Perceptions of Trust

Two individuals reported that the SRO program has increased trust in the police department.

- The assistant superintendent of schools said that the origins of the SRO program were to create a positive image of law enforcement in the schools and community. The assistant chief of police said that the biggest benefit of the SRO program is the "establishment of relationships between police officers and kids through community policing; parents tell kids, 'Behave or the cop will arrest you'; SROs break this mold and act as role models for kids, especially at-risk kids." In particular, the chief felt that the School Enhancement Teams concept, a community policing initiative begun in 2000 that involves an SRO, school staff, and parents at each school in using the SARA model to solve school-related problems, may have increased trust in the department, "but there is no empirical evidence" that it has.

- The school district's school safety coordinator, a former police officer in Large Established Site Two, said that "The SROs have increased trust for the police department because students see cops in non-law enforcement roles yet still in uniform. When I was an SRO, parents would say to me, 'I can deal with you because you're an SRO, but I can't with other cops'—so this was an entrée for me for changing trust [in the police department as a whole]. Plus, SROs get to learn how to deal with kids and the community. As a result, the family unit learns to trust [the police] more because it sees what the SRO program does for kids."

Community Support

The program has lasted "through thick and thin," according to the assistant school superintendent—that is, it has endured despite budget problems and different executives

in both the school district and the police department, as well as different mayors and city council members. It appears likely that the program will continue to thrive.

The **_assistant chief of police_** 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."

School district administrators support the program because they believe it improves safety at the schools. In a 1988 staff meeting long before the Columbine tragedy, the superintendent said it was only a matter of time before a terrible calamity would happen in the schools. Ever since, the school district has been sensitized to the importance of school safety. In addition, system administrators know that local school administrators support the program. "Principals and assistant principals say that, if they have to call 911, it can be two or three hours before an officer can come." In addition, as one principal said, "The whole benefit is the SRO's knowing the kids." For example, the SRO will know whether an angry student who has said something inappropriate is just venting (and needs a lecture or some understanding attention) or is a danger (and needs to be arrested). Local administrators also tell district officials that just the 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.

The **_city council_** can vote on individual line items in the city's budget and, as a result, could delete 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." The council supports the program enough to have asked the police department more than once to increase the authorized

strength of the program by placing three SROs in the high schools, but the police department has responded that the school district would need to provide the funding.

Close ties among the various agencies involved in supporting the program also improve the chances of the program's continuing. In particular, there is a first-hand understanding of the program at the highest levels of the school district.

- As an elementary school teacher from 1971-1975, the current the assistant superintendent had worked closely with the SRO in his school and appreciated the officer's help in finding lost children and addressing neighborhood squabbles that spilled over into the school.

- The head of the school district's school safety department was a former Large Established Site Two police officer.

Despite these promising signs of program sustainability, there are indications that its survival is not a sure thing.

- At one time there were school liaison officers in all 10 high schools but, with budget constraints in the late 1990s, the police department cut them back to four despite objections from principals, teachers, and school district administrators.

- According to an assistant superintendent of schools, "I get concerned when money gets tight that the program could be cut back—it gets rattled around as a possibility. One bone of contention is that the city manager periodically says the schools should pick up some of the cost of program if it's to continue."

Nevertheless, the program appears as permanent as any program of this nature can be during a time of severe budget constraints.

Large Established Site Three

Capsule Program Description

Large Established Site Three, with a population of 100,000 and encompassing over 2,000 square miles, is located in the South. Begun in 1995, the Large Established Site Three SRO program includes 9 SROs, one each in the county's three high schools, an alternative school, two junior high schools, and a "troublesome" middle school, and two who rotate among seven other middle schools.

The sheriff's department has 250 sworn personnel, including 100 correctional officers. About half of the county's 20,000 students are eligible for the Federal Government's free and reduced cost lunch program.

Program Planning and Costs
In 1995, the county established a zero tolerance policy for fighting because of frequent physical altercations—including riots—in some schools. Under the policy, police may arrest and take any student caught fighting to the sheriff's office or jail where a parent must post a $250 bond that is returned after the student performs community service and attends a conflict resolution course. The SRO program was initiated shortly after to enforce the policy and reduce the fighting. Everyone considers the zero tolerance policy and the SRO program to be inseparable: neither one would be effective without the other.

The single most difficult problem getting the program going was disagreement between SROs and local school administrators over the officers' authority to arrest and handcuff students—at one point, an SRO threatened to arrest a principal if he interfered with the officer's arresting a student. By contrast, the relationship between the sheriff's office and school district has always been constructive.

The school district pays the SROs' salaries at two schools (approximately $65,000) and splits the cost with the sheriff's office at the other four schools ($100,000 per agency).

The SROs
A group of command officers decides whom to invite to become SROs. The officers are trained but sometimes not until they have been in a school for several months.

Program Activities
There is no description of the SROs' responsibilities because they vary depending on what each principal wants the SRO do to. However, SROs average spending about 10 percent of their time on enforcement, (much more when the program began), 60 percent mentoring, 10 percent teaching, and 20 percent on other activities.

- *Law Enforcement:* As fights among students declined, the SRO program's law enforcement focus shifted to addressing problems primarily related to drug dealing and possession. Some SROs also enforce discipline. The SROs prevent crime through their presence, tips from students about impending problems, and informally mediating disputes among students.
- *Teaching:* SROs teach several times a month, such as classes as part of a school's law studies course and classes on self defense designed to prevent fights.
- *Mentoring:* SROs spend considerable time mentoring students, and their offices are typically full of students. Some SRO also mentor parents.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation
The school district and police department collaborate in supervising the SROs. Neither party evaluates the program's effectiveness. However, several crimes appear to have declined since the SRO program was instituted, especially fighting, as evidenced in particular by the significant increase in fights that occurred when SROs were pulled out of the schools for eight months due to a budget shortfall. Several individuals felt that the program could take significant credit for a declining level of fear in the schools and an increasing trust in the sheriff's office.

According to the sheriff's department's SRO supervisor, "The voters like it [the SRO program]. People call me 30 times a month thanking an SRO for helping their kid." If there were a budget problem, it would be difficult to end the program.

Begun in 1995, the Large Established Site Three SRO program includes 9 SROs, one each in the county's three high schools, an alternative school, two junior high schools, and a "troublesome" middle school. Two SROs rotate among seven other middle schools, one SRO covering four middle schools on one side of the county and the other SRO covering the three middle schools on the other side. (Each of two school district high schools in the small city located in the county has an SRO funded by the city police department.)

The Site

Large Established Site Three, with a population of 100,000 and encompassing over 2,000 square miles, is located in the South. The county includes a city of about 25,000 residents. The nearest large city is about 50 miles away.

The Sheriff's Department

The sheriff's department has 250 sworn personnel, including 60 road deputies and 100 correctional officers. The department does not promote community policing.

The county's only municipality has its own police department consisting of about 60 sworn personnel. While the city police department has an SRO in each of two high schools in the school district, they were not included in this study because—even though they work in the same school district—their interaction with the Large Established Site Three SROs is largely limited to attending an annual SRO meeting together and chatting informally at lunch now and then.

The School System

The county includes 5 high schools, 3 junior high schools, 7 middle schools, 25 elementary schools, and a K-12 alternative school. (A second high school and alternative school are located in the city.) About half of the county's 20,000 students are eligible for the Federal Government's free and reduced cost lunch program. The drop-out rate is 50 percent because, according to the district attorney, "In this area, young males can go get a job without an education." Truancy is also a significant problem.

There are no other security staff in the schools. However, drug dogs do school searches 15-20 times a year; each school is searched twice randomly and usually one or two times at the SRO's or principal's request.

Program History

There is disagreement about whether the sheriff's department or the school district initiated the program. However, everyone agreed that at the beginning there was significant discord between some SROs and some principals and assistant principals. Nevertheless, sheriff's department and school district administrators worked well together from the outset.

Origins

There is disagreement about who initiated the program.

- According to one account, the idea was initiated by *a school board member* who, as the principal of the vocational technical school, had obtained information from the high school principal in a neighboring county that had instituted an SRO program and seen fights go from 100 to 4 in a single year.

- A second account attributes the program's initiation to *an assistant principal* at one of the county's high schools who learned about the program at a Child Welfare and Attendance seminar at a local university he was attending where the instructor talked about his county's SRO program.

- A third story has the *sheriff* coming back from a sheriffs' convention where he heard about the program and proposed the concept to the school board as a means of supporting the new zero-tolerance policy (see below).

There is agreement about why the sheriff's department and school district alike were interested in a program: to reduce the frequent fights on some campuses, including two riots at two different high schools that had required police intervention. Both the sheriff and the superintendent were looking to see how they could get a handle on the problem without using untrained security guards. As a result, the concept met a ready reception from the school board, which unanimously approved the program. The program also received consistent and strong support from the district attorney's office (see the box).

Two District Attorneys Have Supported the Program

According to the first SRO hired under the program,

> The program would not have succeeded without the support of the district attorney [at the time]. He took cases in which the SROs had made arrests to trial and won. For example, at a school movie, a student hit an adult and the SRO charged him with simple battery and won—after the offender's family had told him, "You'll never win this, you kindergarten cop." The district attorney refused to dismiss the case despite the family's requests.

When the SROs were criticized by school administrators for making arrests and handcuffing students, the district attorney told the administrators the SROs could—and had an obligation to—act. He also defended the SROs' role at zero tolerance meetings.

The current attorney has also supported the program. When the SRO at Large Established Site Three High School obtained a student's homemade videotape of other students drinking at a parent's home, he called the district attorney's office and said, "I need help." The district attorney immediately put an assistant on the case. After the SRO identified most of the students on the tape, the assistant issued a summons for them and their parents to come to the courtroom for a lecture.

Zero Tolerance and SROs

In 1995, before the SRO program had been discussed, the sheriff and school system established a zero tolerance policy at all junior and senior high schools for fighting because of frequent physical altercations in the schools, including a serious racial disturbance. A letter describing the policy, signed by the superintendent of schools, sheriff, district attorney, and chief of police, was sent to every parent in the county. In addition, each high school sent a copy of the student handbook, which includes the policy, to every parent with a requirement that the parent sign and return a Parental Notification Form indicating that they had read and understood the manual. The letter and the student handbook both explained that police would arrest students who fight, "as deemed necessary," handcuff them, and take them into custody. SROs take the students to the sheriff's office (for minors under 17) or the jail (for students 17 and over) where a parent must post a $250 bond. Upon completion of the judge's sentence, involving community service and attendance at a conflict resolution course by the student, the court returns the bond.

A Zero Tolerance Committee, consisting of school district administrators, school principals, the city judge, the district attorney, SROs, the sheriff and his department's SRO supervisor, and city police department supervisors, met monthly to ensure consistency in implementation of the policy. Parents were invited to the meetings. The group is still called the Zero Tolerance Committee but it has evolved into an annual three-hour SRO program meeting.

While it is important to distinguish between the zero tolerance policy and the SRO program, in Large Established Site Three they are seen as are inseparable: on the one hand, without the SROs to enforce the policy, zero tolerance would not work; on the other hand, zero tolerance gave SROs clear—if initially contested—authority to arrest.

Budget

Initially, the sheriff's department paid for the SROs. However, he 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 5 SROs and the entire salaries for 4 SROs. Since in 2001 the SROs' annual salary was about $30,000, the school district's contribution was about $200,000 and the sheriff's department about $80,000. The sheriff and school district lack the funds to place an SRO in every middle school.

Because school sports have to pay for themselves, money to pay the SROs overtime to attend these events comes out of the school budget for athletic teams, but the teams are well funded—in a single year, one soccer game made $4,000, and band boosters raised $40,000. The school district uses its activity fund to pay SROs $11.00 an hour overtime for non-sport details—a much lower rate than they would receive if they did overtime for the sheriff's department. The SROs submit a check request to the principal and get reimbursed by the school.

Planning and Implementation Obstacles

The single most difficult problem getting the program going was disagreement between SROs and local school administrators over the officers' authority in the schools, especially with regard to their authority to make arrests.

Administrator Concerns

As a close observer said, "The big problem [at the start] was convincing the administrators that the SROs would not be taking over the schools. A number of

administrators felt that SROs were taking away their authority and that the SROs were being 'shoved down their throats.' " There was so much mutual animosity in the beginning between some SROs and some schools that two SROs quit.

Although he became an ardent supporter of the SRO program, one school district administrator reported that, as a school principal at the time the program began, he had been "avidly" opposed to having SROs.

> Originally, I did not want to give up disciplinary authority and thought the SROs would be telling me what I could and could not do—a noneducator telling me how to do my job. There was also the implication [in placing SROs in the schools] that I could not handle the problems and needed help. In my view, the schools were a safe haven from the law—the law never entered. Schools were expected to handle all problems without involving the law.

This conflict erupted in a number of specific incidents.

- An SRO charged a boy and a girl who had been fighting with battery. The next day when the parents came to the school to see about both students, the administrator told the SRO, "You can't handcuff them." The SRO showed him the written policy on mandatory cuffing that was sent to all parents and signed by the school board, the district attorney, and the sheriff. The principal still adamantly objected. So the SRO left the office to call the sheriff's department SRO supervisor, who told him, "knock on the door and say you are cuffing the student and, if the principal objects, tell him you will arrest him and anyone else who tries to interfere with you in the performance of your duty." The SRO went back and handcuffed the students.

- Early in the program, an SRO called in the drug dog on campus to look for drugs. However, before he could bring the dog into the school, the principal ran out ordering him to put the dog back in the cruiser. Later, the school superintendent told the SRO that *she* would personally go with the dog the next time and tell the principal to allow the dog in or she would fire him.

"The biggest initial problem," the first SRO said, "was that administrators did not want special education students arrested, while the police said, if it is a battery, we have to make an arrest." A typical example of this conflict follows.

> An SRO stopped a student with a rope burn on her neck and said, "Don't we need to talk?" The girl responds, "Didn't you hear? A kid tried to strangle me in PE [physical education class]." They talk, and the student says the boy grabbed her and started choking her because she slapped him for pinching her rear end. The coach sent the boy to the office, which sent him back to class because he was a

special education student. The SRO went to the principal, who told him the
incident happened the previous day and "We handled it." The SRO checked the
student's discipline record and found three pages of misconduct. So he told the
administrator, "I'm getting him out of class and arresting him." He found the
student on the floor in class sleeping and took him to the office. The student had
a pager (a criminal offense to possess in school), marijuana, and a razor knife.
The SRO charged him with multiple criminal offenses. Later the student was
expelled.

One junior high principal refused to agree to an SRO coming to his school, claiming there
were no problems on his campus, but the school board forced him to accept one. As a
result, the administrator would not provide the SRO with office space, forcing the officer
to work out of his cruiser. The principal never made use of the SRO. The situation did
not change until the administrator retired three years later.

Parental Concerns

In the beginning, while some parents opposed the zero tolerance policy (a couple of
parents hired attorneys to challenge the policy in court but lost), few objected to the SRO
program. However, as illustrated below, misperceptions on the part of a few vocal
parents about the SROs' authority in general and powers of arrest in particular were a
problem.

- A parent sued the school district claiming the SRO could not look into cars in the
  parking lot for illegal substances. "No one expected me to do this," the SRO said
  but, under the "in plain view" doctrine, he was perfectly within his rights to seize
  the contraband and arrest the students. "Students—and their parents—were
  infuriated because they were getting caught because of perfectly legal methods
  they didn't know about."

- During the first two years, one SRO got a dozen calls a year from parents because
  he had told students that people are wrong when they say you can defend yourself
  and not be arrested for fighting. Some called the detectives to complain that "The
  SRO is telling my kid you can't defend yourself." Some parents hired
  attorneys—who told them the SRO was right.

The sheriff's department SRO supervisor still gets a half dozen calls a year from parents
after an SRO has made an arrest claiming, "My child is right, and the SRO did everything
wrong." One mother called to report that "My son's pants were rolled up and the SRO

told him to pull them down. Can he do that?" "Yes." "Well, that isn't right, but I wanted to know before I complained to the school."

Program Coordination

There was disagreement about whether there had ever been a Memorandum of Agreement between the sheriff's department and the school district. According to a long-standing SRO, "There is one, but everyone forgets it's there." According to the SRO, the memorandum simply stated that the SROs would arrest students for fighting and assist in investigations related to the zero tolerance policy. There is, however, a "Zero 'O' Tolerance Violence Prevention Program" document that, while devoted mostly to describing the zero tolerance program, does spell out the goals of the SRO program, identifies in which schools the SROs will work, and notes that "Funding for the SRO shall be shared between the City Police, Sheriff's Department, and the ------------ County School Board." Under the heading "Law Enforcement's Justification for School Resource Officer Program," the document includes "Improves respect for Law Enforcement among youth," "Improves the image of police among youth," "Reduces the problem of youthful drug involvement," and "Improves communication and increases cooperation between the police, school and community." The confusion over whether there is an MOU may reflect the nature of this document—because it is called Zero Tolerance and addresses the SRO program only in the context of the no-fighting policy.

The sheriff's department SRO supervisor and several other respondents reported that there is no written description of the SROs' responsibilities—"They vary depending on what the principal wants," the supervisor said. "Some [SROs] are part of the school's administration, others are in a completely separate world." The Large Established Site Three High School principal agreed: "Each school is so different—so the SRO's job depends on the administrator." As a result, after attending a NASRO training, the principal himself drafted a set of SRO duties and included them in the school's faculty and student handbooks, which note that the SRO "can intervene in any situation he deems necessary." The handbooks also note that he is a counselor and a teacher, and serves as a role model.

"Absent exigent circumstances," the Large Established Site Three High School SRO says, "the administrators are in charge and give me authority to deal with certain issues. I'm to assist the administrators." The sheriff's department SRO supervisor agrees: "The SROs work for their [school] administrator; the principal is their supervisor. It is up to the principals what the SROs do." However, SROs can deal with crimes immediately on their own.

There is no official chain of command for reporting problems with SROs.

- One assistant principal called the sheriff's department's SRO supervisor a few times because "the SRO was being pushed in several directions at the same time—paperwork, etc.—and this was decreasing the time he spent devoted to the school."

- An assistant principal said that, if she had a problem with the SRO, she would tell the principal.

- By contrast, the Large Established Site Three High School former assistant principal and now principal said he has never had to discuss the SRO's activities with supervisors but, if there were a problem, he would never go to the sheriff's office; as in the example below, he would first talk directly with the SRO and then, if necessary, go through school board staff.

  > "After the SRO went to a couple of events in jeans and a sheriff's department T-shirt, badge, and sidearm, I expressed disapproval because 'the uniform makes a [deterrent] statement.' We agreed that the SRO would talk with me before participating out of uniform at any other events at the school."

- According to an SRO, "Whenever a school administrator disagrees about an arrest, I have called the department's SRO supervisor, who says, 'Do what you have to do.' "

The School Resource Officers

The sheriff's department screens SRO candidates internally. Training generally occurs after SROs are already on the job. There has been frequent turnover among SROs, especially when the program first began.

Recruitment

The sheriff's department does not advertise for candidates for job openings for any department position (e.g., detective). Instead, a group of command officers meets to decide whom to invite to fill each opening. The sheriff, the commander of the uniformed officers, and the head of the detective bureau (who reads all officers' reports) decide who will be candidates for SRO as openings become available. Then they review the officers' folders and interview the candidates, asking them both their intentions in becoming an SRO and their career intentions.

There are no written qualifications for becoming an SRO, but the SRO supervisor looks for deputies who have been officers for several years, whose reports he has read and likes, who present themselves well, and who can make good decisions. The sheriff prefers an officer who has children of his or her own. The department learned that it could not assign rookies as SROs because "the kids will test you and SROs need answers. They need to get chewed up on the street to realize that the students' challenges are just nibbles."

Currently, there are usually four or five deputies who respond positively to offers of each position that becomes vacant. However, at the beginning, it was a struggle to get interest—sometimes the department had to sell the position to the officer.

Training

According to one SRO, "They put SROs in the schools the first year with no formal training, so the first year was not productive." He was an SRO for a year before he went for training with the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO). SROs also had no training to be teachers. The first time a teacher asked one SRO to run a class, "I panicked—'I'm not a teacher.' It took me over two years to teach well."

The SRO learned what to do by trial and error, playing it by ear—for example, bringing parents in with their children to talk with him. When students began to challenge his authority to tell them to tuck their shirts in ("You can't make me do that"), to enforce his authority he filled out and turned in a discipline slip form not knowing whether the school administrators would honor it—but the student was suspended. According to the SRO, "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—training is policy in court."

All SROs eventually receive the basic 40-hour NASRO training. Some principals and assistant principals have gone for NASRO training, too.

An experienced SRO now serves as a field training officer to new SROs in other schools, who come to shadow him for three days. He then shadows them for two days at their schools. In addition, new SROs call him, sometimes several times a day at first, with questions about how to handle problems.

- "I got this kid who's a pain, cussing his parents, won't go with them to court, what do I do?" The experienced SRO: "Book him into juvenile detention for a day or two."

- "I have a kid refusing to go to school. Can I go get him even though the administrators want me to stay on campus?" The experienced SRO: "Yes—whatever the kid needs—especially, if he is court ordered to school."

The sheriff's department SRO supervisor assigns the SROs during the summer, typically to the narcotics division, prisoner transport, serving restraining orders, or regular patrol. He assigned one SRO, at his school's request, to help with summer school.

Turnover

While there is no policy to automatically rotate SROs out of the position, there is high level of spontaneous turnover among SROs—they generally last only two years. As of 2002, one SROs had been on the job for eight years, one for four years, a couple for two years, and the rest for one year.

According to one SRO, there was a lot of turnover at the beginning because the schools did not want SROs. For several years, most school principals would not provide SROs with their own offices—they had to go to the cafeteria to talk with students, talk in the corridors, or work out of their cruisers. One SRO shared an office with the school nurse, but he complained about the lack of privacy, and the school built a wall between them. One school had four different SROs in four years because they all quit because of an authoritarian principal. Then the principal "retired," and the next SRO lasted.

Part of the early turnover was also due to the failure to give SROs step raises and other "perks" that road deputies get because the SROs were seen as government employees and overlooked. The agency treated them as second-class citizens. One long-standing SRO would have made sergeant three years ago if he had remained on the street.

According to a former school board member, "We also made some bad choices for SROs at the beginning—one was tapping girls on the rear end to be their buddy—SROs can't be a playmate; friendly, yes." A vocal parent went through court records and found out the SRO had had a child out of wedlock and never paid child support. The sheriff replaced him. Another SRO was terminated from the department because he flirted with female students.

Program Activities

Large Established Site Three SROs spend about 10 percent time on law enforcement, 60 percent advising, 10 percent teaching, and 20 percent on other activities. The SROs spend a majority of their time preventing crime through teaching classes and mentoring students.

With the exception of interviews with school district and police department supervisors, all of the observations and interviews related to program activities were conducted at one school—Large Established Site Three High School (see the box "Characteristics of the Sample School"). The discussion below reflects the concentration on this one school and

its SRO. The school was chosen for intensive study at the recommendation of the program coordinator.

Characteristics of the Sample School (Large Established Site Three High School) and Its SRO

The School
Large Established Site Three High School, the school singled out for intensive study in this report, is a single story, spread-out building with a large exterior and huge open porch areas under metallic overhangs in the front and back.

Seventy-one percent of the school's over 1,000 students are white, 12 percent African American, and 8 percent Native American; the rest are Asian or Hispanic. Nearly 37 percent of the students are on free and reduced cost lunches. The school has 70 teachers. Two assistant principals handle most discipline problems. Students have two 90-minute classes in the morning and two in the afternoon.

The SRO
The SRO has worked at Large Established Site Three High School for eight years. Forty-two years old, he had been a road deputy for 14 years. Four nights a week—from 3:30 to dusk—he works a second job.

The SRO's office is right next to the main office but not inside it. The office has two desks, a floor-to-ceiling locked filing cabinet, two wooden chairs, and a refrigerator. The office walls are covered with photos of softball teams, sunsets, homilies, and other items.

The SRO is a lifelong resident of the county and former student himself at Large Established Site Three High School—in fact, the assistant principal with whom he collaborates most frequently was one of his teachers. He has relatives currently attending the school.

Law Enforcement

Although initiated to address the problem with fights, as physical altercations among students declined the SRO program's law enforcement focus shifted to addressing problems primarily related to drug dealing and possession.

Responding to Criminal Activity

At Large Established Site Three High School, the assistant principal usually deals with fights first by having the students talk with her. She then investigates the incident (e.g., talks with witnesses), although she may ask the SRO for help, for example, with interviewing witnesses. If the student's involvement is verified, the assistant principal suspends the person for three days. She then passes the case on to the SRO and calls the parents (see the box "An SRO and Assistant Principal Collaborate on a Criminal Case").

An SRO and Assistant Principal Collaborate on a Criminal Case

The assistant principal calls AJ [not his real initials], a 15-year old boy, into her office on a smoking violation. The SRO stops by and says, "There's another problem with AJ. A teacher told me yesterday that a student reported he was holding drugs."

While the student remains in the assistant principal's office, the SRO double checks the accusation by tracking down the other student in shop class, where the boy repeats his accusation in the privacy of the corridor. The SRO comes back, and he and the assistant principal decide they believe the other student because "AJ answered the easy questions immediately but stopped to think before answering the tough ones." The assistant principal and SRO agree that the student should be tested for drugs.

The assistant principal calls the boy's mother as the SRO asks the assistant principal to tell the mother to come to the school to sign for AJ's release. The assistant principal tells the mother she is suspending her son for the next day "and you need to take him to the hospital for a drug test." The SRO tells the assistant principal where the testing office is, and she tells the mother. The boy signs a paper that describes his offense. (He is already on probation for burglary.)

The SRO returns to his office with AJ and reports the case to juvenile hall. He asks the boy where he lives, and the student says he bikes a special route to school because of his fear of snakes. The SRO talks for a couple minutes about not getting along with snakes. They return to the assistant principal's office.

Back in the assistant principal's office, the student's mother arrives with her 30-year old daughter. The mother apologizes to the assistant principal and signs the juvenile release form that stipulates that AJ must go city court when he gets a summons in 4 to 8 weeks. The SRO tells the boy in front of his mother and sister, "I think you're being pressured into dabbling—you've got to say no. You're tall, so kids look up to you, so you need to refuse drugs." The SRO playfully swats AJ with a rolled up paper and squeezes his shoulder. The daughter takes the boy for the drug test.

There are times, illustrated below, when SROs take the initiative to make arrests on their own if the circumstances warrant.

- A teacher came to me when a former student was threatening her for telling him to leave the campus. I tried to cuff him, but the former student hit me and we ended up rolling on the ground. Two coaches and an assistant principal helped me hold him down while I cuffed and arrested him.

- On my own, I began driving around the parking lot looking into cars for alcohol to address the problem of kids drinking after school. I found and confiscated beer several times before students stopped leaving the contraband in plain site. One time I saw a car stop, a passenger get out and either take or leave something in another car, and take off. I looked in the car and saw what looked like marijuana seeds between the seat and the door. I seized to send them to the lab and arrested the student.

- One of the biggest problems at the senior high school at the beginning of the program was swearing. Kids were saying M---------- so much they didn't even know they were saying it. After one student told me to "F--- off," I arrested him for disorderly conduct and handcuffed him, telling him, "You can't do that in front of other students." As a result, over time the swearing stopped.

Administrators call on the SROs to handle all underage smoking incidents, which are a $90 ticket. Parents must pay the fine. "This relieves me from handling them, and it's more effective," according to one principal.

SROs enforce discipline to varying degrees. One SRO sometimes writes discipline reports on students who are in the parking lot during school hours without a pass. He also writes up students who fail to tuck in their shirts after he has asked them three or four times the same day to do so.

Preventing Crime

SROs are sometimes able to prevent crimes and misconduct (see the box "An SRO Prevents a Fight"). An assistant principal said that SROs can remind a kid, 'Don't get into a fight—and here's how to avoid it.' Their very presence on campus also deters violence." The sight of the SROs' cruisers in front of their schools may also deter some crime, such as attempts by bad-intentioned outsiders to enter the school.

All the SROs do proactive informal preventive mediation almost every week. For example, if someone tells an SRO that two students almost got into a fight or are planning a fight, he calls one student into his office and asks, "Do you want to talk with the other kid?" If so, he brings in the other student. Sometimes the two students talk and he just listens. According to one SRO, "A majority of the time it's just a rumor—'A friend said you said this about me'—because kids like to see friends get into fights."

An SRO Prevents a Fight

A teacher's aide tells the assistant principal that he overheard a group of students saying there was going to be a fight after school between two students, one from the vocational-technical school and one from the special school for expelled students. Both students have two classes at Large Established Site Three High School. The aide says that a ninth grade student's big brother, a student at the vocational-technical school, is going to show up after school to beat up another ninth grade boy who the younger brother complained had been following him around the school and harassing him in class.

The assistant principal calls in the SRO to handle the problem. The SRO drives over to the vocational-technical school and gets the older brother out of class to talk with him. The SRO already knows the boy—and knows that his mother is in the hospital after having been shot by his father and that the boy is working at a fast food restaurant to support his mother while his father is in jail.

Back at Large Established Site Three High School, the SRO calls the threatened boy to his office and tells him that he will be suspended for three days if he fights back. This will put him over the 10-day limit for unexcused absences for the semester, resulting in his losing credit for the entire semester. "You need your high school diploma to succeed in life," the SRO tells the boy. "Be a man—if the kid hits you, laugh and say, 'Is that the best you can do?' and walk away. If you hit back, I'll arrest you too. If you walk away and he jumps you, then I can arrest just him." The SRO reports, "I have had 13 kids who've done this [not retaliated so that he needed to arrest only the attacker]."

The SRO tells the assistant principal what he had learned. She suggests putting the threatened boy on the bus at the end of the school day while the vehicle is already waiting but still empty. "Good idea," the SRO says. At the end of the day, the SRO goes outside with the student and the boy goes on the bus. The SRO then waits for the vocational-technical school bus to arrive. When it does and the big brother gets off, the SRO tells him to just get on his own bus, which he does.

Toward the end of each school year, SROs arrange with the junior high school principals
to hold an assembly for the entire 8th grade class so they can discuss the zero tolerance
policy and explain in a way they will remember that the SROs will be strictly enforcing
the policy when they get to the high schools the next year. One SRO has had 11th graders
tell him, "You already told us that [you would enforce the policy] before." "When?" "In
8th grade."

Student Trust in the SROs

One reason SROs are able to prevent some crime is that many students are willing to
report impending fights and other misconduct. Student tips also help the SROs to *solve*
crimes.

- According to an assistant principal, "Last year a student went to [the SRO] with
  information on drugs on campus. The SRO told the assistant principal, who
  called in the student, searched him, and found marijuana. The student was
  expelled."

- When a student came to school feeling disoriented, the nurse called her parents
  who took her to the hospital, where the girl admitted to having taken a
  prescription tranquilizer. The parents returned to the school and told the assistant
  principal that she had bought the drugs from another student on campus. The
  assistant principal talked with the other student, but he denied selling the drug.
  Then, at the assistant principal's request, the SRO talked with other students, who
  verified that the boy sold the drug to the girl. The SRO then confronted the
  accused student and said, "You're better off getting it over with," and the student
  admitted to selling the drug. The SRO arrested the boy and an accomplice in the
  office foyer, handcuffed them, and drove them to the jail. Both students were
  later expelled.

- After someone broke into a vending machine and took its money, the SRO offered
  $100 for the names of the offenders. Within 10 minutes, a student came into his
  office with the information. The SRO arrested two students who were expelled
  and had to pay back $1,200 to the vending machine company in restitution. Four
  weeks later, the SRO obtained the $100 from the vending machine company and
  gave it to the informer.

According to an assistant principal, "The SRO helps because he's not an administrator—
students will go to him with information they won't tell administrators. He develops
rapport with the students, gathers information, and can be proactive in reducing discipline

problems—he gets inside information." Students confide in the SROs about problems in the school because they do not reveal their sources.

The SROs work at keeping the students' trust.

- After he had handcuffed a student, the SRO asked a teacher for permission to address his classmates to explain his action about why he had done so in order to defuse their anger. He explained to them that the student was extremely angry, had sworn at him, and was likely to either run or fight.

- When students said the SRO could not look in cars after he had arrested some students for possession of marijuana, he went into classes to explain the "plain view" doctrine so they would understand that he was acting legally.

After sending a student to be tested for drugs, the Large Established Site Three SRO swatted him with a rolled up paper and squeezed his shoulder. Later, the SRO explained, "I don't come down too hard on the kids so they will come to me later on." The principal confirms this strategy, reporting that "He [the SRO] can play the good guy and I the bad guy. I am very authoritarian—not a negotiator, ex-army. But the SRO has become friends with many kids—he jogs with the cross-country team and repaints the parking lot stripes with some kids—on his own time."

A (not Necessarily Typical) Day in the Life of the Large Established Site Three High School SRO

After doing paperwork from 9:00 p.m. to midnight, the SRO arrives at school the next morning at 6:45 a.m. and drives his cruiser around the parking lot telling forgetful students to turn off their headlights and tuck in their shirts. He chats with two students who have had problems with their parents. He tells two girls sitting in a car to get out and get into the school. He motions at two students in another car to do the same. He tells three more students congregated in the lot, "You need to get in." He asks a student who is bent over his car, "Are you OK? You look like I feel this morning."

At 7:20, the SRO goes to his office where a boy stops in to say hello. The SRO asks, "Was it just a bug you had when you threw up?" "Yes." The SRO kids him but also tells him to put his name tag on his shirt, not hide it on his belt.

At 7:30, the SRO drives a tardy student to the vocational school and then returns to the school to walk the corridors. (Students say the SRO is a "ghost," because he seems to be

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everywhere at the same time.) The SRO tells a student who has been out of school, "Good to see you back." (He has been absent because his father shot his mother and they are divorcing.) The SRO pokes his head in a couple of classrooms with open doors, saying nothing but just peeking in. He returns to his office.

A mother calls for a report, which he reads aloud, involving underage students drinking after the prom and some kind of narcotic being passed around. The woman's daughter had passed out. He suggests to the mother that she and her husband come as chaperones to the next dance. Then he tells her that he thinks her daughter girl will do well, "she just messed up that night, probably because of peer pressure." A teacher sticks her head in the door and whispers, "I need to talk to you," and leaves.

Between classes, a girl comes into the SRO's office to talk about a stalker and then a boy comes in to talk about a stolen tire. He tells the girl to come back later and then calls the sheriff's department for any information on the tire theft. He begins typing up a report on the stolen tire on his computer. He tells a student in the corridor that his brake lights were on; the youth thanks him. The nurse warns him that a student is carrying epinephrine in a syringe because of an allergy to bee stings "because you're generally the first one on the scene." She tells him there is a second syringe in her safe in case she is not around and he needs to inject the girl. He yells at a student going by his office, "Get your shirt tucked in!"

He runs into a coach and asks him to give some structure on weight lifting to a student athlete because the boy likes structure—and because the SRO is a youth coach, too. A different coach stops by, and they discuss the same youth.

From 9:45 to 10:20 he completes the stolen tire report and does other paperwork when, at 10:30, between second period and lunch, the student whose tire was stolen reappears in his office. The SRO gives the boy a copy of the theft report. Between classes, the athlete comes in and asks for a soda, which the SRO gives him from the refrigerator in his office. A girl comes in for a soda and with a question about a car accident she was in, adding, as an aside, that she was rejected as a blood donor because of a low iron count. SRO: "So, you tried to get your iron by driving into a Chevy Suburban?" When she makes a good shot tossing the soda can into the wastebasket, he says, "Good shot!—too bad you can't drive better." She leaves and another girl stops by to chat, but the SRO tells her, "You need to get to class."

During lunch, from 10:30 to 11:05, hundreds of students mill around the exterior of the building under the overhangs talking and, in some cases, eating. (There is a cafeteria, but few students eat there; many do not eat lunch all.) The SRO circulates, chatting and joking with students. Back in his office, the girl who reported being stalked comes back with two friends. She says the boy is stalking her because he wants to find out where someone else's boyfriend is so he can cut the boy's tires. The SRO takes notes and tells them the boy is uncontrollable and well known (the SRO has already arrested him twice). After they leave, he calls the alternative school to find out if the student is there and warn administrators he could be a danger to the girl. The boy is not there.

At 11:25 a.m., the SRO goes to teach a law class, but there is a substitute teacher. So he spontaneously goes to a civics class where the teacher invites him to answer her students' questions until 12:20 p.m. The first question: "When can we hit back without getting arrested for fighting?" He has two students stand up and role-play self defense versus retaliation. He gears his discussion to preventing fights: "Walk away," he tells the students, "and ask the kid who hit you, 'Is that the best you can do? Now, I'm going to have you arrested.'"

A student comes in his office at 12:40 between classes to ask about how to proceed with a car accident during severe fog in which he rammed a car in front of him because another car hit him from behind. The SRO explains that the officer on the scene should have also cited the vehicle that hit the boy's car. "Call your insurance company—or have your Dad call me—to explain this, and *his* [the other driver's] insurance company should pay for the damage to the rear of your car." The SRO asks if the boy's parents are upset; "Not terribly," the boy says. "Watch out for your neck and back for the next couple of weeks [for signs of injury]," he warns the boy.

From 12:45 to 2:15, the SRO has lunch and does paperwork. At 2:15, after school, the student athlete comes in again to talk. Then the SRO gets in his cruiser, circles the parking lot, parks his cruiser on the middle of the highway in front of the school, and stops all oncoming traffic so that the buses can exit the school access road. "The faster the buses get out," he says, "the less likely there will be trouble."

Teaching

All SROs teach several times a month. For example, the SRO at Large Established Site Three High School teaches a class every two weeks as part of the school's elective law studies course that is offered twice a year. He also teaches a class on self defense designed to prevent fights, explaining that he will arrest students who are attacked and have an option to walk away but fight back instead, because they are engaging in retaliation, not self-defense. "If someone punches you, you can't punch back—that's retaliation, not self defense."

The SRO has developed curriculum outlines for teaching not only battery and self-defense but also the effects of alcohol and drug abuse, and relationships between people (including domestic violence). He begins the latter class by picking the biggest male student in the class and saying, "We've had a relationship for two years." Then he says the same thing with a female student in the class. Then he explains that

"relationship" is not just about sex. The class goes "Ooh!" and "Aah!" "That gets their
attention," he remarks later.

One SRO Has Checked Out Teachers' Behavior on Occasion

The Large Established Site Three High School SRO has followed up on complaints
against teachers.

- A female student said a male teacher made her feel uncomfortable—he was
  ogling her. The SRO asked the teacher if he could sit in on the class "to observe
  some students" but did not see the teacher doing anything inappropriate. Later,
  other girls in the class told him the complaining student was disrupting class and
  the teacher was OK.

- On a few occasions, he saw a teacher being abrupt with students—"He had poor
  people skills." He told the teacher, "This [student] is a project of mine, so you
  need to go gentle on him; the kid was told to shut up and abused by his parents, so
  it's probably best if you don't tell him to shut up."

- The principal occasionally asks the SRO to check on teachers.

  -- The principal asked the SRO to observe a teacher he suspected of leaving
     school 30 minutes early. The SRO observed her and found that she was.
     The administrator reprimanded her (without disclosing his source).
  -- The principal asked the SRO to report whether faculty were adhering to a
     new dress code that included having shirttails tucked in. The SRO told the
     teachers that he was asked to report on this, and they were appreciative
     that he helped them to avoid getting reprimanded.
  -- At the principal's request, the SRO verified that a teacher was berating
     students; she was fired six weeks later.

The SRO has arranged for:

- an insurance agent to talk in the law class about the financial implications of
  driving while intoxicated;
- a juvenile judge to talk about juvenile delinquency issues; and
- the sheriff's forensic investigator to talk about crime scene investigations.

The speakers usually benefit, because the insurance representative passes out bags with

the company's name on them, and the investigator, who owns three photo shops, tells the

students her stores do homecoming photographs. The SRO has also arranged for State Police officers to go into classrooms. According to the principal, when the SRO brought in State Police officers to talk with students, it made the front page of the local newspaper after the principal called the press to attend.

The SRO arranges his teaching activities directly with faculty, not through administrators. According to the assistant principal, "He's almost a member of the faculty [because of the amount of teaching he does]." According to the principal, "The SRO is not a police officer; he's a member of the faculty."

Mentoring

The SRO at Large Established Site Three High School says that other SROs do less mentoring than he because it took him six years to get to where he is now and the other SROs have not been on the job long enough. In general, the high school and junior high school SROs do more counseling than the two middle school SROs because the latter rotate among the schools, leaving them less time to counsel.

"The SRO's office is always full of kids," the Large Established Site Three High School assistant principal reports approvingly. Except during classes, the SRO's office is often crowded with at least two students—predominantly girls, but not entirely—who like to chat with him.

The SRO has told teachers that, if students come to them to ask permission to see him, to make sure classroom work comes first to prevent them from using him as an excuse to get out of class. Nevertheless, the SRO has had problems with a few teachers because he sometimes loses track of time when he is talking with students during lunch or between classes and the students are late to class. When one teacher complained, the assistant principal discussed the problem with the SRO, who apologized. The teacher had written up some students who were late to class because they had been talking with the SRO.

Obstacles to Mentoring

Despite a concerted effort (see the box "The SRO Uses Many Strategies for Establishing Rapport with Students"), the SRO (who is white) reports he has not been able to establish rapport with a wide range of students. "Bad kids don't want to be seen with me; good kids don't care. Some—especially girls—attach themselves to me. I have seen some kids for four years." He admits he has not yet gotten close to any black males. First, he developed rapport with white females, then black females, and then white males—over a two-year period. Because black students were not coming to him, he tried to reach out to them by participating in the conversation when he sees the black assistant principal talking with some black male students. As a result, a few black students have started coming to him.

The SRO Uses Many Strategies for Establishing Rapport with Students

The SRO makes a deliberate effort to build relationships with students.

- He keeps milk and soda in a refrigerator in his office that he offers to students— and parents—"to win them over."

- He lends some students small amounts of change, when they ask. Some return it, others do not.

- On occasion, he has given a student a significant amount of money that the SRO has collected selling pizzas at the school during lunch. For example, he gave money to a student who had been invited to the national junior Olympics because the boy could not afford to go. "Parents thank me for doing this kind of thing."

- He once used a "slim Jim" to open the car door of a student who had broken her key in the lock. The student had only one key because her parents had delayed in having duplicates made, so the SRO had two extra keys made and gave them to her. On occasion, he has given students with dead batteries a jump-start after school. So she could get home after school, he bought a couple of gallons of gas for a student who had coasted into the parking lot that morning on an empty tank.

- With overtime pay, the SRO escorts the band and softball team to every away game, and he attends school dances. He estimates he does 40 to 50 details a year, including the athletic events, three dances, a carnival, and parades.

- The SRO coaches the girls' recreation (not school) football team because, when he drove his stepdaughter to practice, the coach, who was quitting, asked if he would take over. As a coach, "it breaks the ice with a lot of kids," he says. And because a third of the girls are in middle school, he gets to know them before they even enroll in the high school. Sometimes he buys them sodas after games.

- He jogs with the cross-country track team on his own time.

Mentoring with Parents

SROs also do mentoring with parents. According to a former principal, "The SRO at Large Established Site Three High School enhanced the SRO program further because he knew the community and could therefore bring in parents—so he expanded the program to give parents advice and help *before* their kids' got into trouble—problem prevention. The schools never did this—involve parents in preventing problems."

- On two occasions, when parents have come in to tell administrators their children were incorrigible and ask what they could do, the administrators have called the SRO into the meeting to answer their questions. He also tells the parents *their* rights because "they can be buffaloed by their own kids and don't know their own rights."

- A girl who talked with him went home and told her mother, "I made friends with a cop." Later, after the mother initiated divorce proceedings against her cheating husband, the girl talked with the SRO some more because of the painful experience. Then the mother came in to talk with him for some encouragement since he had gone through two divorces. Later, she occasionally called him when she felt depressed or to ask how her daughter was doing.

Sometimes the SRO acts in loco parentis. If a truant student has a court order to go to school, the SRO will go into his or her bedroom, wake the student up, and escort him to school. If there is no court order, he calls up to tell the student, "I'm coming to get you in 10 minutes." The SRO says, "They're always ready [when he gets there]." Word spreads among students that the SRO cares enough about them to go this extra mile. A mother called him at 1:00 a.m. one morning and at 2:00 a.m. another morning because her daughter was missing. The SRO found her both times.

Referrals and Networking

The Large Established Site Three High School SRO developed a resource list of agencies and individuals in the area who can be of help to parents and has used it "dozens of times" to provide referrals to parents in need of help for their children. When another SRO called about what to do with a pregnant girl who wasn't getting along with her family, the SRO called a friend who works for a local children's agency. She told him where the girl could get help, and the SRO passed on the information to the other SRO.

The SRO attends meetings of a local children's coalition consisting of nonprofit organizations that deal with children. He uses the information he gets to help parents. For example, the coalition gave him a list of organizations in the area that deal with children, and he has used the list to give parents who need help with their children the names of agencies where they can get assistance.

Because of his lifelong residence in the community, the SRO is able to call on long-time friends to provide pro bono services.

- He took photos of high school student mentors and the students they mentor and arranged for a business friend to develop them for free so he could paste them on buttons for the students to wear.

- He arranged for local businesses to pay for 250 buttons with a bee and a plus sign to hand out to students to wear if they do something good for someone else for absolutely no reason.

- He has friends in the media he calls on to give the school positive publicity, for example, by photographing and publishing photos of the cheerleaders. In addition, the press has written at least five favorable articles about Large Established Site Three High School.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Except for an annual meeting among program participants, monitoring the SROs is done informally. There is anecdotal evidence that crime and fear of crime in the schools has declined, and the program appears to have contributed to an increased trust in the sheriff's office.

Monitoring

The school district and police department are both involved in supervising the SROs, but largely in a collaborative manner. The SROs, sheriff's department, and school administrators meet for three hours at the end of every year to review problems and progress. The sheriff's department's SRO supervisor does not monitor the SROs on a regular basis because principals monitor them and tell him if there is a problem. For example, a principal called him to report that an SRO was constantly late for things. The supervisor spoke to the SRO and "he shaped up." Occasionally, the supervisor stops by the schools to say hello to the administrators. Once in a while, "A principal gets tired of a student who constantly misbehaves and wants to find an arrestable offense when there is none. As a result, I have to remind SROs not to arrest just because an administrator wants them to."

Evidence of Effectiveness

There is anecdotal evidence that there has been a reduction in crime and fear of crime that may be attributable at least in part to the SRO program. Most of the evidence of these improvements comes from Large Established Site Three Senior High. However, in addition, other events during the period when the SRO program has been in operation may also have been responsible for the improvements (see the box "Many Factors May Have Contributed to Declines in Student Crime and Fear of Crime at Large Established Site Three High School").

Many Factors May Have Contributed to Declines in Student Crime and Fear of Crime at Large Established Site Three High School

School and sheriff's department administrators attribute the declines in fighting and other student crime largely to the presence of the SROs. However, an assistant superintendent said, "The SRO is not a security program—it's just a component . . . . You can't expect the SRO to solve school discipline problems [by himself]." At least at Large Established Site Three High School several other events may share responsibility for the improvements:

- In 1999, the school instituted a student uniform policy.

- Between 1997-1999, all four high schools and the two junior high schools went from a seven-period day to four 90-minutes classes, reducing the number of class changes and therefore opportunities for trouble in the corridors. In addition, lunch was reduced to 40 minutes from an hour.

- A principal who was stricter than his predecessor took over at the school at the Large Established Site Three High School at the time the SRO program began. That principal's successor, the current principal, is also very strict.

- The school installed safety technology, such as periodic use of metal detectors.

Crime

Several campus crimes seem to have declined since the SRO program began, especially fighting. The original purpose of the SRO program was to reduce the number of fights in the schools. This goal was partly achieved at Large Established Site Three High School at least in part because of the SRO program.

- The number of suspensions for fighting at the school declined for two years, starting with the year the program began, and then remained relatively constant:

  1994-1995: 72
  1995-1996: 48
  1996-1997: 32
  1997-1998: 29
  1998-1999: 28
  1999-2000: 24
  2000-2001: 27

  There were generally similar declines at the other two high schools in the county.

- In 1996, a referendum to increase the sales tax by one-quarter percent, largely to increase deputies' salaries and purchase equipment, failed. As a result, among other cost-cutting measures the sheriff removed the SROs from the schools for eight months during the program's second year. Fights, which had dropped from 50-70 during the previous year to 12 during the first part of the second year, rose to 30-40 during the second half of the year—presumably because there were no SROs to act as a deterrent.

- According to a school board member, there used to be fights every day at one junior high school; now, since it has an SRO, they occur less than once a month.

- An assistant principal at Large Established Site Three High School said, "There has been a definite reduction in discipline problems, including fights, since the SRO learned the ropes." While other factors played a role, she thinks that the SRO's presence was the single most influential cause of the decline.

There appear to have been declines in three other crimes.

- *Alcohol.* According to the Large Established Site Three High School principal, "We used to find two or three cars a night [after school] with alcohol in them, but with the SRO getting aggressive about making arrests for possession, we have had no incidents the entire school year. In the past, we didn't arrest or ticket for these things because it was a hassle to call 911. And we're less likely to be sued if a cop makes the arrest or gives out the ticket."

- *Cigarettes.* According to the principal, "Because the SRO is here and will ticket students with cigarettes [a $90 dollar fine], smoking—which used to be prevalent—is much less frequent."

- *Theft.* The biggest crime problem currently at the Large Established Site Three senior high school is theft, but the SRO feels it has declined.

Fear of Crime

Several individuals felt that there had been a reduction in the level of fear throughout the Large Established Site Three school system that could be attributed at least in part to the SRO program.

- The *superintendent of schools* said that the program's first benefit is that "children and teachers are more safe. It's a deterrent to weapons and drugs—the children know they [the SROs] are there. I knew when I was in the corridors— there were no problems." The superintendent went on to say that "Kids respect that they will get in trouble and get caught because he's a cop and another set of eyes—it's something to do with his being a police officer; his being in uniform has a lot to do with it—no one questions what he represents."

- The *school district supervisor of student services* said that the SROs "provide a feeling of safety."

- According to the newly appointed *principal* (formerly the assistant principal) at Large Established Site Three High School, "In 1995, things were lax—I'd heard that kids had concerns for their safety; now, they're very comfortable."

- An *assistant principal* said the most important benefit of the SRO program was "the safer environment for kids—in every respect, including on the way to school.

It has something to do not just with his being another set of eyes but also being police—it's better that he's in uniform."

- Several *other school administrators* agreed that, as one put it, the presence of an SRO creates "a certain sense of security seeing a cop around—another pair of eyes, like having another AP [assistant principal]. He lends a presence to trouble spots."

- A *faculty member* at Large Established Site Three High School said that "Teachers were delighted that the SRO was here because we had problems with kids' rage and guns. I feel more protected [with an SRO here]."

- A former *high school teacher* who had subsequently served for eight years on the school board confirmed that "The faculty was relieved to see someone in uniform in the school—they felt they were safer. I was also very visible in the community, so I would ask parents about the program, and they said they felt their kids were safer."

- The current *district attorney* said he was "a big SRO fan because it reduces crime and gives teachers security."

There was a consensus that the zero tolerance policy—but only in conjunction with the presence of SROs—also played a major role in reducing fights and the level of fear in the schools (see the box "The Zero Tolerance Policy and SRO Program Work Synergistically").

The Zero Tolerance Policy and SRO Program Work Synergistically

Most respondents firmly believe that, without the SRO program, the zero tolerance policy would not work. The gist of their individual arguments is two-fold:

1. Without the zero tolerance policy in effect, the apparent reduction in the number of fights and the level of fear might not have occurred because SROs would have had much less authority (real or perceived) to arrest students for fighting.

2. Without the SRO program, the zero tolerance policy would not have worked because enforcement would have been slow and inconsistent if schools had to call 911 every time a fight broke out—and some administrators would not have bothered to call the police, preferring to handle the problem in-house.

Three program participants verbalized these observations as follows:

Former Vocational Technical High School principal: Zero tolerance would not work without the SRO. You need someone with a gun whom kids will listen to and, when handcuffed, will see that there are limits to what they can get away with. Kids would rather stay out of a fight than pay the bond and do community service. You need to make it costly enough to discourage kids—and also discourage parents, many of whom tell their children, "If so and so is picking on you, giving you a hard time, go beat him up."

Large Established Site Three High School assistant principal: It would not work as well, because you want zero tolerance to be preventive, not just making arrests; with the SRO, kids know there will be an arrest [if they fight]." [In addition], the SRO hears in advance of some potential fights and prevents them. His extensive counseling allows that to happen—he has a network of kids. And it happens frequently.

Large Established Site Three High School SRO: Zero tolerance would not work without the SROs because, before the program began, the schools were calling patrol officers, who were issuing citations to parents after the parents showed up at the school; then the parents would make an appointment with the detectives, who often decided not to charge the youth because the parents claimed their children were acting in self defense. In addition, there were no SROs present to show that there would be immediate consequences for anyone thinking about getting involved in a fight. With SRO arrests, the students are always charged.

Trust in the Sheriff's Department

Several individuals reported that the SRO program had increased trust in the sheriff's office.

- The *sheriff's department SRO supervisor* said, "There has been increased trust in the SO [sheriff's office] because of the SROs—that's been a big spin-off benefit; PR is what SROs do." He added that "I've heard from parents that the SROs do a good job. So they feel the department is better, too, because of that. It's the same with D.A.R.E.—parents feel better about law enforcement officers [because of these nontraditional roles officers are playing]. That's why we pick people to be SROs who will cast the department in a good light."

- The *school district supervisor of student services*, who had been principal at Large Established Site Three High School, believes that "The SRO program has improved the sheriff's department's image in the community. The SROs affect 1,000 students every year, so parents are involved. I've seen a positive switch in the Large Established Site Three community where the law was the enemy. That's changed. The only times parents and kids felt they had to deal with the law was when they did something wrong. So initially there was a lot of

antagonism toward the Large Established Site Three High School SRO—they didn't want to talk with him. Parents now come and ask for him or call him on the phone because of problems with their kids. I've seen the turnaround [in attitudes toward the department]. The attitude's changed toward all [sheriff's] deputies. Street guys [i.e., patrol deputies], when they go to a house with a disturbance, find people are calmer because they don't see the cops [any more] as adversarial. Cops have told me this."

- The Large Established Site Three High School *SRO* reported that "There is more trust in the sheriff's department because of the SROs," offering the following evidence:

  — Parents of kids tell me [they trust the department more], and parents and kids come up [to me outside of the school setting] and see me as a person."

  —- When he runs into students in the community, they do not hesitate to come up to talk with him. One student who saw him in a video store yelled, "Mom! That's the cop in my school!" The mother then went over to the SRO to ask about the school's student uniform policy to which she objected. The SRO ended up exchanging views on the policy for 45 minutes with a whole group of parents.

  — "Six to eight kids have told me they became cops or deputies because of me."

  — The SRO talked with a road deputy who said some kids came up to talk with him at a bowling alley. It was such a rare occurrence that he could not explain it until they said they were students at the senior high and asked if he knew Officer -----------. The SRO says, "I've gotten this bowling-type story several times. Road deputies call the students 'your kids'." When the SRO enlisted a State Trooper to help him escort the band to an away football game, students chatted with the trooper in a friendly way; the officer was astounded. Later he told the SRO, "You used to tell me how the kids respond to and treat you, and I thought you were lying—I've never had kids treat me that way."

Community Support

According to the sheriff's department's SRO supervisor, "The voters like it. People call me 30 times a month thanking an SRO for helping their kid. If there were a budget problem, it would be difficult to end the program."

Large Established Site Four

Capsule Program Description

Large Established Site Four, with a population of 50,000—about half minority—is a county seat about 50 miles from a major Southern city. The site's police department has about 150 sworn officers. There are three K-12 school districts in the site. The site's SRO program, begun in 1995, serves the one junior high school in each district.

Program Planning and Costs
After attending a school safety conference, a police lieutenant and school district deputy superintendent, convinced by the SRO concept, set up the program. The police department saw—and still envisions—the program as a means of improving the public's image of police and, as a result, of enabling officers to do their work more effectively. School district administrators supported the program because of chronic fighting at some schools.

School administrators' uncertainty about the SROs' role, need for the SROs to be constantly availability, and concerns about the officers' authority to decide whether to arrest were the principal sources of friction when the program began. Over time, these problems were ironed out and most SROs now work productively with their schools.

The police department pays the entire cost of the SROs' salaries and fringe benefits, representing about $160,000.

The SROs
Currently, the police chief and captain pick the SROs. However, few officers typically apply for openings because of disincentives involved in the position. While the SROs are eventually adequately trained, some receive the training only after going on the job.

Program Activities
- *Law Enforcement:* Fighting and gang activity have been the SROs' major focuses in terms of their law enforcement role. However, both activities have diminished considerably. SROs' enforcement efforts are helped by parents, program directors, and students who tell them about planned or actual criminal activity.
- *Teaching:* Currently, the SROs devote more time to teaching than to either law enforcement or mentoring. The SROs' most time-consuming teaching responsibility is the G.R.E.A.T (Gang Resistance Education and Training) program, which can take up to one quarter of their time for many weeks.
- *Mentoring:* SROs spend considerable time talking impromptu or by appointment with students who ask for help. Extracurricular activities include after-school tutoring, attending athletic events, and participating in neighborhood meetings.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation
Program monitoring is conducted largely through SRO written reports. Quantitative and anecdotal evidence suggest that the program may have reduced student misconduct, including fights and gang activity, and increased trust in the police department.

Large Established Site Four's SRO program, begun in 1995 and paid for entirely by the police department, serves the one junior high school in each of three school districts.

The Site

Large Established Site Four, with a population of 50,000—about half minority—is a county seat about 50 miles from a major Southern city. The city consists of single-family homes, but, as a major regional recreation center, many homeowners rent rooms or apartments. According to an SRO, "It's a little city with big-city problems."

The Police Department

The site's police department has about 150 sworn officers. In addition to administrative headquarters, the department has substations located throughout the city.

Department administrators report that the agency adopted a community policing philosophy several years ago. Previously, officers had rotating shifts and changed beats and zones every day. A new chief instituted fixed shifts and zones. He also initiated bicycle patrols, which, according to a department member, "are the largest single demand on the department resources—but residents love it." While all road officers received mandatory training in community policing, lack of time prevents all but the bike officers from engaging in problem solving.

The School System

There are three K-12 school districts in the site with one junior high school in each district. The school system is more than 90 percent African American. Up to 98 percent of students in some elementary schools qualify for the Federal Government's free and reduced cost lunch program (44 percent qualify at the high school).

Program History

The site's SRO program, begun in 1995, serves each of the three school district's junior high schools. However, one junior high school is housed in two geographically separate buildings, with the seventh grade in one location and the combined eighth and ninth grades in another location. As a result, there is an SRO in each of four buildings.

Origins

A police department lieutenant and the school district deputy superintendent attended a conference together that had a session devoted to SRO programs. The two men came back "sold" on the concept.

The police department saw—and still envisions—the program as a means of improving the public's image of police and, as a result, enabling officers to do their work more effectively. The department believed that the SRO program would be a good way to educate youngsters about the department and therefore reduce their negative attitudes toward it. As a result, while the police department originally considered placing the first SRO in the high school, the lieutenant and deputy superintendent felt that the junior high would be a better place because students had fewer preconceived—and immutable— ideas about police officers: "We had a better chance to win them over," said the superintendent; "by the time they get to high school, you can't change their attitudes." The police department also hoped the program would help the school system to feel comfortable working with the department in the future on other endeavors as part of the agency's new community-oriented policing philosophy.

School district administrators were interested in the program because of chronic fighting at some schools—"The Junior High was the Wild West," according to its first SRO. In addition, some administrators felt that students, because of their impoverished background, "needed all the help they could get."

Using a sample contract distributed at the conference, the lieutenant and deputy superintendent drafted an agreement between the police department and the school

district that their respective agency heads approved. The school district school board and police department signed the agreement in June 1994 establishing the program for 36 months beginning July 1994 and ending June 1997. The agreement provided for initiating negotiations for continued funding on an annual basis starting January 1997.

The agreement requires that the SRO "shall coordinate all of his/her activities with the principal and staff members concerned . . . ." The agreement makes clear that the SRO "shall not act as a school disciplinarian as disciplining students is the responsibility of the school district and their faculty."

The initial agreement was between the city and one junior high school (housed in two separate locations). The police department then took the concept to the other two school districts after the deputy school superintendent telephoned ahead to the district administrators to recommend they participate. As a result, the police department signed three separate agreements. The program began with an SRO at each of three different junior high schools in the three school districts.

The SRO program is housed in the police department's support division, which is also responsible for public relations, public information, recruitment, training, and taking citizen complaints about crimes.

Budget

No one paid out of pocket for the program because the police department replaced the initial three patrol officers who became SROs through a Universal Hiring Grant from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (the COPS Office). However, currently the cost for the four SROs to the department in salaries and fringe benefits is approximately $160,000, not counting overtime.

Grants have paid for training the SROs to teach the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearm's Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program designed to help students resist peer pressure, resolve conflicts without violence, and understand how

gangs affect their lives. Grants have also paid for the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum materials and student handouts.

Currently, there is no overtime budget for SROs except for one SRO's participation in an after-school tutoring program. A $50,000 annual grant from the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) grant used to pay for this overtime but, when it was not renewed, the police department picked up the cost. The grant had also paid for the "goodies—T-shirts (which alone cost $6,000), water bottles, and Frisbees that SROs used to distribute to students after graduation from the G.R.E.A.T. course that the officers teach.

Planning and Implementation Obstacles

There was no formal training for school administrators in the role the SROs would play when the program was first created. An assistant principal said that there was no orientation to the program when the SRO arrived; the principal simply told her "what he [the SRO] was here for, not what he could or could not do. I learned that over time." The assistant principal at another junior high school originally thought that the SRO was going to "take over the school" and that whatever the officer said would be law.

As a result, conflicts ensued between some administrators and some SROs. According to the program supervisor, "The biggest problem was—and still is—that school officials wanted SROs to be security, but it's education and getting kids to see cops as friends rather than enemies—not security only."   For example, one principal wanted the SRO to patrol the parking lots and watch kids getting on or off the buses. The SRO refused.

Two other sources of friction between SROs and school administrators were the officers' availability and authority to decide when to arrest.

SRO Availability

One principal insisted that the SRO station herself in front of the school before classes began and in another location during lunch. If she were not there, an argument ensued.

When the SRO came back from a training, the principal asked her, "Why weren't you in school? You report to me. I'll tell you what you can and can't do." Whenever she left the school, he paged her to return. Because of the principal's attitude, the police department almost decided not to replace the SRO when she left the department.

By contrast, when the program began administrators at one school complained that, because the SRO was not staying on campus *to teach*, they were therefore not sure if they wanted to continue the program. The captain replaced the SRO, assuring administrators that "if an SRO is supposed to teach a class, he will be there to teach it." He then held a mandatory meeting with all SROs (and Drug Abuse Resistance and Education [D.A.R.E.] officers) and told them they had to be in school—and check in and out whenever they left campus, as well as time in and out with the dispatcher when taking a student to the juvenile detention center.

A similar complaint related to the department's frequently calling out SROs for special assignments, for example to participate in a fingerprinting exercise at a store or help provide security when the Governor or a business exposition came to town. Because the schools objected to this practice, the captain's orders are now to pull out the SROs last among all specialized officers for these special events and only after pulling D.A.R.E. officers out of the schools first.

SRO Discretion to Arrest

Initially, some administrators wanted SROs to make arrests when officers did not have the legal authority to do so—for example, arrest a student for having a pager or alcohol after administrators had already confiscated the items (these administrators did not realize that officers in the state usually may not arrest offenders for misdemeanor offenses unless the officer witnesses the crime).

On one occasion, after the SRO reported making an arrest for criminal trespass that the principal had requested, the police commander who coordinates the SRO program rescinded the arrest because there had been no prior warning (an essential element of a

trespass offense). The police department's SRO coordinator said he tried to explain officers' arrest powers to the administrators, "but we were reading from different sheets of music," so the department pulled the SRO out of the school for a couple of weeks and sent over a new officer when the removed officer said he did not want to return.

There was also conflict when some administrators wanted some students to be arrested but not others, "usually because one kid is 'good' and the other 'bad' or because of more problems with one kid than another," the SRO coordinator reported.

A captain had to call a meeting with the principal and assistant principals at one junior high school to explain that the SRO had arrest discretion and the right to follow through because the school administrators had been insisting on making their own decisions about how to address criminal matters. The captain distributed a memorandum on when SROs could arrest and, if administrators did not want the SRO to make an arrest, explaining why the SRO had the right to anyway once he or she had been brought in on the case.

Some school administrators seem not to be aware of the agreement signed by the police department and school district; others knew of it but either had not seen it or could not lay a hand on a copy. One SRO called it "defunct." For example, according to the agreement, SROs "are not to be used for regularly assigned lunchroom duties, hall monitors, or other monitoring duties." However, some principals request that SROs do this, and they do. According to one SRO, "The key word is 'regularly'. However, for the SROs to be effective, you need to keep the school safe, which means having security and assistant principals spread out. In a spirit of cooperation, I do it when asked."

Overcoming Early Obstacles

Despite these initial difficulties and some ongoing areas of disagreement, most of the SROs end up with close working relationships with their school administrators. One SRO and assistant principal, who initially had to feel their way in terms of how to relate to each other, ended up so compatible that the administrator keeps chocolate kisses in her desk that she gives to the SRO whenever he comes in her office. When he leaves her

office, he says loudly enough for secretarial staff to hear, "I'll be back later for another kiss."

The police department commander who coordinates the SRO program and responds when a school administrator or SRO presents a problem reported that for the past few years there have been no significant problems. She reported that she received no complaints about the program from any SROs during the 2001-2002 year.

Program Coordination

The agreement signed by the school district's school board and the police department requires that the SRO "shall coordinate all of his/her activities with the principal and staff members concerned . . . ." This coordination refers to the SROs' day-to-day activities. It is the responsibility of the commander of the police department's support division to coordinate *the program* and respond when there is a problem. While the current coordinator has never been an SRO or D.A.R.E. officer, she has attended a 40-hour SRO course offered for prospective SROs by one of the program's experienced SROs who has been certified by the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) as a trainer. Furthermore, she is a former Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) officer.

Relationships with Other School Safety Personnel

Some of the junior high schools have one or two unarmed but trained civilian security officers from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. who sit in on study halls and patrol corridors between classes. The security guards have no arrest powers, but they do break up fights and carry—and have occasionally used—pepper spray. They may also search lockers. They typically radio for the SRO when any type of criminal activity has occurred, such as a fight. The SROs also radio the security officers for help, for example, asking them to observe from a different angle a student leaving the building to see if the youth is dealing drugs, smoking, or creating a disturbance. Assistant principals at one junior high school sometimes refer students to the female security guard for mentoring because the woman lives in the community and has a daughter in the school.

The School Resource Officers

Recruiting and training SROs has had a mixed history in the site.

Recruitment

SRO openings are posted within the department. Officers who apply write an essay explaining why they want the position and what they expect to accomplish on the job. The chief and a captain then decide which ones to appoint. The captain sends the new SROs where they are needed without consulting with school administrators. The captain introduces the new person to the principal and, in the SRO's presence, reviews his or her responsibilities and guidelines for procedures "so that everyone is on the same page."

Few officers apply for SRO openings—only one applied when the position at the eight-ninth grade school became available—because officers do not find working with kids and principals appealing. Most personnel are more attracted to becoming bike officers or detectives. Some, according to one SRO, "realize that it's a lot of work; they see what I have to do." Other disincentives include working five days a week (patrol officers work four ten-hour days a week) and having to take work home (e.g., writing up reports). A few years into the program, SROs were allowed to take their cruisers home, and this was an incentive to become an SRO. However, when one SRO was found using his unit for personal business, the policy was rescinded.

The agreement between the police department and the three school districts requires that SROs make a minimum two-year commitment to the program. There is no limit to how long they may remain SROs. Two SROs lasted only a semester (one retired); one lasted 4 years (he left for a teaching career) and another 6 years; and two have lasted all 8 years the program has existed, although one recently left against his will because he was promoted.

Training

While the SROs have eventually been adequately trained, some have received the training only after going on the job. SROs eventually receive training in G.R.E.A.T.,

SRO leadership, and domestic violence. Getting certified to teach G.R.E.A.T. in a timely manner has been a problem because of infrequent or postponed training opportunities. As a result, one SRO had to teach some of the G.R.E.A.T. classes at another SRO's school until the latter became certified. New SROs spend time shadowing one of the experienced SROs before going on the job.

One SRO, certified as an SRO instructor, offered a 40-hour course during the summer of 2001 for about a dozen officers in the area, including a half dozen from the site's police department, who volunteered to attend because they were considering applying at some point to become SROs. He trained the participants to develop lesson plans, explaining that SROs need them to be able to document what they say in class in case a student claims the officers said something inappropriate.

Hours

The SROs' normal hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. However, because some buses do not come to pick up students until 5:00 p.m. and there are frequently problems between 3:30 and 5:00 p.m., the SROs stay late. When an SRO is absent (e.g., for training, because of sickness), the principal and police department's SRO supervisor arrange for the bicycle officers to show up at the beginning and end of the school day, and before, during, and after lunch.

During the summer, SROs take vacation, prepare lesson plans for public speaking engagements (a normal part of being assigned, as all SROs are, to the department's public affairs division), and work in programs such as a four-week initiative run by the police department which operates daily to try to improve kids' attitude toward police officers. Police officers, judges, and city attorneys talk to the youth about crime and juvenile justice, and students tour the juvenile detention center and go on ride-alongs. SROs also work with the citizen's academy during the summer and print and distribute fliers, and staff tables for National Night Out, a major local event. One SRO returns to his former bike officer duties.

Program Activities

With the exception of interviews with school district and police department supervisors, all of the observations and all but one of the interviews were conducted at one junior high school chosen for intensive study (see the box "Characteristics of the Sample School"). The school singled out for intensive examination is a combined eighth-ninth grade junior high school (the seventh grade is located in a different part of town). In 2002, the school's SRO was in his eighth year at the school. The school was chosen for intensive study at the recommendation of the program coordinator. An SRO at a second junior high school was interviewed but not observed.

Characteristics of the Sample School and Its SRO

The School
In 2002, the intensively studied junior high school had nearly 1,000 students, over 90 percent of whom were African American and almost all the rest white. Fifty-four percent of students qualified for the Federal Government's free and reduced cost lunch program.

The school, a one-story, spread out, circular, tan brick building with a green sloping roof along the lines of many motels, is located in a residential area off a four-lane road. The building doors are unlocked, and students and adults may enter and leave freely at any time. However, two full-time unarmed civilian security staff with radios make themselves visible on the grounds as students get off the buses to enter the building.

The SRO
The SRO, who moved to the school from out of state after he got married, had held the position since the program began in 1994 until he was promoted in 2002.

The SRO's office is in the media center, 100 feet from the main corridor and another 100 feet from the school administration office. The office has a large desk and two upholstered chairs, with additional chairs available as needed in the media center; a file cabinet and shelving; awards and a bulletin board with photos on the walls; and a small refrigerator.

The SRO is also the police department's public information officer, but normally his duties do not interfere with his SRO responsibilities because he does the work from his office at the school or does it before or after school or on the weekend. Typically, he spends at least a weekend a month on his public information responsibilities. On the side, he runs three retail stores.

Before he took up his post in the school, the SRO had already received training in how to teach when he became certified as a police instructor. He had also taken the National Association of School Resource Officer (NASRO) basic 40-hour SRO course and, a few years later, took the advanced 40-hour course. On his own "nickel" and usually during his vacations, he attends—and presents at—annual SRO conferences.

The SRO program coordinator estimated that on average SROs spend about 27 percent of their time on law enforcement, 22 percent on advising, 38 percent on teaching, and 13 percent on other activities.

Law Enforcement

Fights and gang activity have been the SROs' major focuses in terms of their law enforcement role.

Fighting

Fights are the principal criminal activity the SROs address. At some schools, the SROs were breaking up several fights a day when the program first began. According to the junior high school SRO, "The first year, 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." The SROs still break up fights, but much less frequently: one SRO broke up only two fights in 2001–2002 and made no arrests, while the SRO at the site's junior high school makes only one or two a week.

> A security guard saw two ninth grade girls fighting at lunch. He summoned the SRO by radio and, when the girls refused the officer's command to stop, he grabbed one of them. When she kept resisting him, trying to hit the other girl, he cuffed her and charged her with disorderly conduct. He put the girl in his cruiser and had the security guard ask her for her "demographics"—her home address, parents or guardian's name, grade level, and probation status, if any. The SRO is careful to have a security guard accompany him when he takes a student to his cruiser so the student cannot later claim he hurt her. Then the SRO drove the girl to the juvenile detention center.

If the SRO has to put his hands on a student, he arrests and handcuffs the youth if he or she continues to struggle; if the student has calmed down after the arrest, the SRO releases the student to his or her parents.

Usually, students who are fighting realize "it's a done deal" as soon as the SRO shows up—and they, themselves, usually want the fight to stop anyway. "These things are over pretty quick," one SRO said. Sometimes the SROs are able to prevent fights because students warn them that one is in the offing. The SROs then alert an assistant principal and security guard. The assistant principal calls the allegedly involved students out of class and, together with the SRO, warns them that they will be arrested if they fight.

> A big, awkward boy tells the SRO between classes, "I need to talk to you." Later in the day, the SRO gets him out of study hall, and the student tells him that he heard that a girl's brother is coming from the high school to beat him up. The boy told his parents about this, and the parents told the boy to talk with the SRO. The officer begins by asking the boy to tell the school administrators after the two of them have talked. The SRO then offers to bring the girl into his office with the boy or separately; the boy prefers separately. The officer gives the boy a pass to get back into study hall. The SRO talks with the girl, who says that the boy scares her—he "mugs" her and, when he sits behind her in class, puts his feet on her chair. She says her brother is not coming and that "I was just trying to scare him." The SRO warns her that, if he does show up, "I'll nail him"—and if the girl keeps on spreading rumors, "I'll call your parents." He then calls the boy back into his office alone and tells him the girl's concerns. The boy promises to stop his offensive behavior.

Gang Activity

The junior high school SRO initially spent considerable time addressing a gang problem that existed when he first became the school's SRO. He began by arranging with the principal to give a slide presentation to teachers that he developed on how to recognize gang behavior and graffiti and to encourage them to report them. As a result, a teacher said that, if she finds a symbol on a notebook, "I'll ask the SRO [whether it's gang related], and he'll say, no. If he says yes, I go to the student's locker or see what kind of materials this kid has in study hall and bring them to my office." The school district has an automatic five-day suspension for students with gang symbols on their materials.

The SRO also arranged for the school district to assemble the bus drivers so he could give them a lesson on identifying gang behavior and graffiti, repeating the presentation annually. The SRO told the drivers to watch for and bring to his attention notebooks with gang symbols written on the outside and students giving hand signs out the back window. As a result, bus drivers began to point out suspected students to him. When this happens, the SRO brings the students to his office to tell them they cannot be members of a secret society and then asks, "What's going on?" He photographs their tattoos and T-shirts. Typically, he observes, "These kids usually have low self-esteem, and my showing them some attention usually solves the problem."

SROs' Sources of Referrals

The assistant principal at the sample school refers cases involving possible criminal offenses directly to the SRO. She may also bring the SRO into her office, along with the counselor, when child abuse is suspected. "I let him talk with the student. I ask the student if he or she would prefer to talk with the SRO. Some kids want to be able to talk with *him* and may not be comfortable with my asking questions about this." She also finds it is useful for the SRO to explain to students the potential legal consequences of their actions to scare them into behaving.

- After conferring with the SRO, an administrator brought in a student whose grandmother with whom he was living reported that a gun was found missing at home. The SRO warned the boy of the legal issues related to getting involved with firearms.

- When a few girls were overheard talking about threatening another girl, the assistant principal brought the SRO into the office to explain the legal consequences of making and carrying out threats.

Involving the SRO also enables the administrator to document what the SRO told students should their behavior get worse.

The SRO also receives referrals about potential and actual criminal matters from school program directors, teachers, parents, and students.

The director of an after-school tutorial program told the SRO that a girl was coming to school late three or four times a week. The SRO then observed her coming to

school and noticed that a man was letting her off from a car a short distance from the school. She was then walking the rest of the way to school. By talking with the girl, the SRO discovered that he was a friend of the family who was giving her a lift to school but was "fooling around with her" on the way. The SRO reported the situation to the parents, who had trusted the man to transport their daughter to school.

Some parents call the junior high school SRO directly to report criminal activity (see the box "The SRO Handles a Call from a Concerned Parent") in part because his name and number are in the school handbook and "I have passed out a jillion [business] cards." His home phone number is also in the telephone book.

The SRO Handles a Call from a Concerned Parent about Her Daughter

A mother called the SRO to report that her daughter had stolen $10.00 from her and asked the SRO to "scare her." The SRO said he would not do that because she was a "good kid," but he agreed to talk with her. He went to the attendance office and asked to have the girl taken out of study hall to come see him.

When she comes in, the SRO tells her she is not in trouble but that her mother has called him wanting to know why she took the money. She says she does not know why. The SRO asks:

"Where was it [the money]?"
"On the table."
"Did you spend it?"
"Yes, on three Cokes for my mom, me, and my grandmother."
"But that comes to under $4.00, so you must have the rest of the money."
"Well, yes."
"What are you going to do?"
"Say I'm sorry."
"That's not enough—you need to give of yourself and win back their trust."
"Write an apology?"
"That's better. You need to write an apology that explains what you were thinking at the time, says you're sorry, and says what lesson you learned from what you did. Then you need to do something responsible for them—something that your parents haven't asked you to do—to win back their respect."
"OK."

Other Law Enforcement Responsibilities

While SROs do not handle discipline, the junior high school SRO regularly tells students to tuck in their shirts according to the dress code. He also does periodic rounds of the corridors to see whether students are doing something wrong in the nooks and crannies of the school. He spends as much as an hour at the end of the school day patrolling the area where buses come to pick up the students.

The SRO used to spend a great deal of time in court—often 90 minutes at a time—testifying in cases in which he had arrested a student. Because he makes fewer arrests, he now spends less time in court. However, the SRO still receives one to three orders a week from the juvenile justice center to pick up and drive students from the school to the center, a one-mile, five-minute trip one way. When not teaching or mentoring, the SRO writes up his reports on student misconduct—a time-consuming law enforcement-related activity he often ends up doing at home after hours.

A Day in the Life of the SRO at the Intensively Studied Junior High School

From 8:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m., the SRO does corridor duty—as he does every day—first in the eighth grade corridor ("because these are the newer kids") and then in the ninth grade corridor. Then he goes back to his office to answer his voicemail messages. At 8:45, he gets a telephone call about a student who stole something; he takes notes during the call. The SRO will visit with the student later.

Between classes, a student tells the SRO, "I need to talk." The SRO arranges for the student to leave study hall to come to his office, where the boy reports that he has heard that a girl's brother is coming from the high school to beat him up. The SRO deals with the problem (see the story in the text above).

Around 9:30, hearing a commotion, the SRO runs into the cafeteria, where a study hall teacher is trying to break up a fight between two students by pulling one youth away from the other. Some other students are struggling to keep the other kid away, but that student yanks himself free and tries to hit the other student again. Forty other students are hooting and hollering. The SRO puts the still struggling student in a bear hug and tells him and the other student to quiet down. He then asks them if they are ready to walk peacefully to the office, and they say they are. The SRO then gets their "demographics" from an assistant principal, learning that one student is on probation. The principal calls the students' parents, and the SRO takes the boys to the juvenile justice center. He

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recommends to the intake officer that the boy on probation be kept until a probation officer can see him, which means the boy has to stay the night. The SRO suggests the other boy be released to his mother, and the intake officer agrees. The SRO returns to the school. Both boys are suspended for three days.

The SRO has lunch in the student cafeteria between the two student lunches. During the two lunches, he does a perimeter patrol, talking with students. Some come up to him to chat; one says she is sorry he is leaving. An assistant principal comes up to the SRO to tell him about a student who admitted he had taken another student's necklace but given it to someone else. The original owner wants it back badly because it belonged to his mother, who died recently. The assistant principal asks, "Is it OK to tell him [the student who stole the necklace] that taking it is theft?" "Yes," the SRO says. The assistant principal proposes to tell that to the student and say that, if the necklace is not returned in three days, he will inform the SRO. The SRO says, "Good, just let me know."

When the SRO returns to his office, two students come in to visit—both work in the media center just outside his office. At the next class break, using a master key, he opens a student's locker that has a malfunctioning lock—something he does two or three times every day. Toward the end of seventh period, the principal pages him to take over the assistant principal's corridor post between classes because she had to leave early.

After the last class period, the SRO spends 40 minutes outside watching kids waiting for and getting on school buses. At 4:00 p.m., he hears a call on his radio reporting a sheriff's deputy involved in a fight right up the street from the school. He jumps in his cruiser, turns on his flashers, and speeds down the road where it turns out that a deranged woman has been hitting a family member in a car, and the relative had dragged her out of the car into the middle of the street. Because the tussle has stopped and there are already two other officers on scene, the SRO returns to the school.

At 4:30, the SRO walks into an after-school class curious about what is going on. It turns out to be a Healthy Choices class. An admiring boy immediately comes up to talk with him; four girls hug him; he let two girls use his cell phone to call for a ride home; and he tells the teacher, "If you want anything from me, let me know." He leaves to go home.

Teaching

The SROs devote more time to teaching than to either law enforcement or mentoring.

The agreement between the police department and the school district calls for SROs to

"develop expertise in presenting various subjects to the students . . . [such as] a basic

understanding of the laws . . . and the police mission." The importance with which the

SROs regard their teaching responsibilities is illustrated every time they call for a regular

beat officer to transport a student they have arrested to the juvenile justice center so that

they do not miss teaching a class they have agreed to conduct. (They go the center later to complete the paperwork.) Similarly, an SRO in the middle of a class who received a call on his pager from a captain did not return the call until the end of the class.

However, during his first year, the SRO at the intensively studied junior high school did not have time to teach classes because of the fights; the second year, he had some time to teach, but he kept getting called out of class for juvenile pick-ups and law enforcement assignments. Now, he estimates he spends 40 percent of this time in the classroom, sometimes teaching seven straight periods a day.

The SROs' most time-consuming teaching responsibility is the G.R.E.A.T program, which can take up to one quarter of their time for many weeks. The junior high school SRO once tracked the number of hours he devoted to teaching the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum alone during one school year. Out of 665 hours in the school year, he calculated he spent 234 hours (the equivalent of 33 of the school year's 95 seven-hour days) preparing to teach, teaching, and organizing graduation ceremonies for students in the program.

The SRO at the Intensively Studied Junior High School Teaches a Class on SMART Choices

The SRO condensed the eight-week SMART Choices course into one class. Students have to take notes and turn them in to the teacher at the end of the class. The SRO uses a PowerPoint presentation to discuss various crimes, such as curfew violations (parents get ticketed, not the youth), recruiting people to join a gang (a felony), and terrorist threats (for example, a student who says he is going to burn down the school). He then explains the differences between misdemeanors and felonies, and between juvenile and adult court. He explains that, if a student is stopped by the police, "If you haven't done anything, don't run and don't lie. Have a good attitude. Don't ask, 'Why you messin' with me?' Wrong." He talks and asks questions about making wise choices in relation to using alcohol and drugs, getting involved with gangs, and getting into fights.

He ends by fielding questions. A student asks if he has ever used his gun. The SRO answers, "I don't like guns—and you can be expelled for a year if caught in school with a gun. The only thing I ever used it for was to break a window—and I hope that's all I ever do with it."

At the beginning of each school year, the SRO puts a sheet in every teacher's mailbox listing the courses he is prepared to teach. Teachers then invite him to their classes, typically when they see the pertinence of a presentation by a police officer to a topic they are addressing at the time in the regular curriculum. Other classes the SRO teaches in addition to G.R.E.A.T. include:

- a one-hour SMART Choices discussion in civics classes on making wise choices related to alcohol and drug use, gang participation, and violence (see the box);
- reports involving math calculations in algebra classes—for example, taking the class outside to look at "skid marks" he draws with chalk and calculating the speed of the cars by the length of the skid marks on grass and pavement;
- drugs and accident safety, dating violence, and relationships in family and consumer science classes; and
- report writing in English classes—for example, the importance of a well-written report if the case gets appealed or attracts media attention.

Mentoring

The school board-police department agreement calls for the SROs to "encourage individual and small group discussion with students . . . to further establish rapport with the students." The agreement also calls on the SROs to "become familiar with all community agencies which offer assistance to youths and their families . . . [and] make referrals to such agencies when necessary, thereby acting as a resource person to the students, faculty and staff of the school."

An SRO Priority

Adhering to these guidelines, SROs spend considerable time talking impromptu or by appointment with students who ask for help. The SRO at the junior high school reported to his police supervisor in his 1997 summary of activities that "I spent many hours speaking with students one on one. This probably was the most time consuming, yet productive, thing that I do at [the school] . . . . I put the most emphasis on this part of my job because it is the most important to the students as well as to the teachers and parents."

While the SRO is rarely in his office because he teaches so much, he walks the corridors between bells, with students sometimes stopping to chat or telling him they "need to talk." If it is urgent, he will take them to his office (and give them a pass to return to class late), but typically he tells them to see him during lunch or after school.

> A girl who thought she was pregnant and did not feel comfortable talking with a counselor asked to talk with the SRO because they already had a good relationship. (The girl's older brother had been a student at the school, and the SRO had developed such a good relationship with him that, when he was graduated, the boy asked him to "Look after my little sister.") In addition, the SRO is on the board of local pregnancy prevention and services program. The girl talked to him every day for two months. When she talked about killing herself, even though the SRO was certain she was not serious about it—she just wanted attention—he informed the principal and counselor and then updated them periodically on the girl's progress. Later, it turned out she was not pregnant.

The SRO also fields calls from parents concerned about their children's behavior—with parents often calling him directly rather than going through the school administrator's office. Most parents get to know him through their children, but the SRO also attends PTA meetings to answer questions about the program and make himself known.

According to an assistant principal, "Teachers may ask the SRO to talk with a student— for example, if the student is having problems at home or is thinking of running away." Why not refer the student to the counselor? "Because one of his [the SRO's] hats is counseling." The principal also reported that "It's not a problem with the SRO's counseling kids because he's more visible than I am and he brings kids to me." In addition, the counselors "are drowning in paperwork," and the SRO has more contact with students because he is up and around more than the counselors, who are largely confined to their offices.

Referrals to Professional Counseling

The SRO is careful to refer students to professional counseling when he sees the need.

- A female student who was not getting along with her mother went to talk with the SRO. The SRO brought her to the assistant principal to talk and left because he felt that a female adult would be more helpful for the girl—"I didn't know how far it would go in terms of getting into female problems."

- One day when he was teaching a G.R.E.A.T. class, a girl knocked on the classroom door with a suicide note a friend had written. The SRO found the girl in a bathroom. After she had snuck out of her home at night, she had gotten into trouble with her parents, who were devastated because she had never done anything like that before. The student went into counseling after the SRO had her parents come over immediately to take her to a mental health center. The SRO also put her in his "hug-a-day program"—"I'm going to see you every day for a hug, and, if I don't see you, I'm going to find you." Now, she is a junior in high school, and when the SRO sees her there, they still hug.

Going the Extra Mile

According to an assistant principal, "the SRO goes the extra mile. You need someone who doesn't clock in at 8:15 and leave at 3:15." Examples of these above-and-beyond-the-call-of-duty mentoring activities include the following:

- Serving as an after-school tutor (see the box).

- Volunteering with the juvenile justice center's mentoring program to take a youth, currently on probation, under his wing. The program's director says that the boy considers the SRO to be the youth's "idol." The SRO has taken him to the Special Olympics and to see severely disadvantaged youth "who still hold their heads up."

- Serving on the board of the oldest and largest community-based adolescent pregnancy prevention program in the state that provides services for adolescents and pregnant adolescents and their families.

- Attending 10 to 15 citizen neighborhood meetings a month to promote community policing.

- Attending every home football game (two games, one night a week), basketball game (three games a night, two nights a week), and other home sporting events. When he plans to lead the band in his cruiser, the SRO uses a lottery system to let a few students ride with him. He has jumped rope, lifted weights, shot basketballs ("missing most of the time"), played with the band, and learned cheers with the cheerleaders. He assisted in the selection of the cheerleaders.

- Writing a poem for a girl whose parents forgot her birthday, taking a photo of the girl, and giving her the poem and photo as a birthday gift. "It's the little personal things [such as the poem] that make the [SRO] program work," he says.

- Giving some students lunch money—he gives them his business card, which they hand to the cafeteria cashier, who jots down the cost of the lunch (typically under $1.00) on the back of the cards. The SRO goes to the cafeteria every week to retrieve the cards and pay the total amount they represent.

An SRO Tutors in an After-School Program

One SRO helps students with their math and English homework, mentors them, and keeps the peace in a tutorial and mentoring program that is voluntary except for some students the court mandates attend as a condition of probation. The program is staffed by university students and held in the school cafeteria every Monday and Wednesday afternoon from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. for 80-90 students without adequate home supervision.

According to the program director, "The SRO just showed up and said, 'I'll stay with you after school.'" The director reported that, at a girl's request, the SRO helped her to write a paper to get into the National Junior Honor Society; she was accepted and inducted.

The SRO circulates around the room, sometimes talking to students about personal problems. Because the program has some of the roughest students in the school (because of the court-mandated participants), his presence helps to keep order by taking upset students aside and calming them down.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Program monitoring is conducted largely through SRO written reports. Although there has been no formal program evaluation, anecdotal evidence suggests the SROs have reduced crime in the schools and increased trust in the police department.

Monitoring

The SROs log in the number and types of things they have done each month on a Monthly Activity Report, which they submit to the department's SRO coordinator. The supervisor compiles the reports for the department's service division captain. In addition, the police department tracks activities that each SRO offers according to the type of activity, who requested it (e.g., teacher, coach, community person), date and place

offered, number of participants, and officer who gave the program. From January 1, 2001, through May 31, 2001, the junior high school SRO, in addition to participating in the after-school program 21 times during this time period, also:

- presented 64 programs involving 1,798 attendees;
- attended 10 civic meetings and functions;
- devoted 2 hours to a newsletter;
- issued 11 misdemeanor citations and took 7 reports; and
- engaged in a number of other law enforcement-related activities.

The SRO coordinator prepares a yearly written evaluation of each SRO, but it is based only on her own contacts with the SROs, not on contacts with school administrators. Otherwise, the SROs are largely on their own. No one observes them teach.

Although the SROs have not been able to get school administrators to use it, one SRO developed a School Resource Officer Evaluation form for assessing the officers' performance in terms of five dimensions:

- dependability (e.g., is the officer at school when scheduled?);
- availability (e.g., is the officer accessible to staff and students?);
- attitude (e.g., does officer accept advice and criticism well?);
- effectiveness as a teacher and counselor (e.g., with regard to content of classes and being a good listener); and
- knowledge (e.g., about state and local law, local resources).

Evidence of Program Effectiveness

Changes in the number of reported incidents at the junior high school suggest that the SRO program may have contributed to reducing student misconduct. During the three years before the SRO program began, the number of reported incidents increased from 8 to 78, the year the program began in 1994-95. 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. The increase during the SRO's initial years may be attributable to the officer's recording incidents that previously went unrecorded or not reported; the decline beginning in the 1998-1999 school year may have resulted from students' decreasing misconduct reflecting his consistent presence and intervention.

Fights

By all accounts, the number of fights in the three junior high schools declined dramatically a couple of years after the SRO program began. Echoing the opinion of other school administrators and the SROs, an assistant principal said, "Before the SRO came, we had quite a few fights but no charges of disorderly conduct; the kids were just sent home and came back in three-four days. The SRO cut down on the fights because kids know they'll get a ticket and to go juvenile [court]."

Several sources confirmed the dramatic decline in fights:

- *The junior high school SRO*: Before I took up my new post, there were 4-6 fights *a day* because administrators just sent the students home with a 4-day suspension. Now, there is an average of only 1-2 fights *a week*. Students know that I will "give them a ticket" if they are caught fighting and bring them to the juvenile center where their parents have to pick them up (unless they are held overnight).

- *A principal*: There was a fight every hour when I first came as assistant principal in 1994, but they declined over the years. Last month there were only three. Why the decline? Because he [the SRO] is here—kids know they can go to jail.

- *An attendance secretary*: I have seen changes—drastic changes. Before he [the SRO] came, we had four to six fights a day; now, there are only one or two a week. Knowing a cop is on campus, students can't misbehave because they will get caught." In the past, "students who fought were kept in the office until their parents came, and nothing else would happen—they would not be arrested."

Gang Activity

Staff and the SROs also report that gang activity has declined in the schools since the program began. According to a principal, almost daily gang activity has been reduced to a trickle in the past several years in part because punishments were increased, including fines, but also because the SRO showed teachers how to recognize gang behavior (e.g., handshakes) and graffiti—and encouraged them to report it to him. As a result, an assistant principal said that what she learned "makes kids keep off campus because I'm onto them." The SRO at her school also encouraged students to report any suspicious behavior anonymously on a piece of paper and he would follow up. According to a police captain, "Because the SROs can enforce gang laws in the schools, the regular cops are now trying to enforce them on the streets."

There were several other circumstances that occurred during the time period the SROs began to become effective that may also have contributed to these reductions in fighting and gang activity (see the box).

Other Circumstances in Addition to the SROs May Have Contributed to the Decline in Fights and Gang Activity

- In 1994, one assistant principal started enforcing the school district's policy that teachers be in the hallways between classes.
- In 1997, the school board instituted a three-strikes-and-your-out policy according to which any student suspended for the third time in a given school year is expelled.
- In 1997, the city instituted a daytime 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. curfew that apparently helped prevent kids from congregating outside the schools as they used to.
- In 2000, the school district began requiring teachers to remain in the school until 10 minutes after the students have left.
- In 2000, the school forbade students from going to their lockers between classes, letting them visit them only before and after school and during lunch.
- In 2000, the school system instituted a student uniform policy. According to a school principal, "This reduced the number of fights because there were no fights over attitudes because a kid dressed like a thug."
- Television monitors were installed in the schools in 2002.

Fear of Crime

Few individuals were willing to hazard an opinion as to whether the SRO program had reduced fear in the schools. However, three individuals implied that the program has contributed to a reduction in fear.

- *A school principal* said one benefit from the SRO program is "having someone visible—not to keep the peace, but so kids feel safe."

- *A parent* told an SRO, "We [parents] feel safe when you're at the school."

- *A school district administrator* reported that "We need the SROs for safety reasons, too [in addition to their value as mentors]. So the school district loves having them there in the schools."

Trust in the Police

Several respondents agreed that the SRO program had increased trust in the police

department.

- According to *the police chief* who, with a deputy school superintendent, initiated the program, "The department had just accepted the community policing philosophy and knew the SRO program would be a good way to educate kids about the department and change [their negative] attitudes [towards it]." But, he continued, "It's difficult to answer the question of whether the program increased trust in the police department. Yes, among younger people, but there are still bad perceptions about the department among adults."

- *A police captain* who has been involved with supervising the program since its inception reported that "If a cop before the program [began] went on campus—the city had a racial and anti-police problem—he would get a "Go to Hell" look. Now, it's a totally different reaction. Some gang members have even come up and told SROs something that affects the whole school. So regular cops get treated with more respect and are more likely to get answers—truthful answers. So there's an increased trust of the police department—kids are willing to talk more. Regular cops are seen less as the enemy."

- *A police commander* who supervised the program felt that the program had increased trust in the department.

- *An SRO* reported that "Parents see the police department in a better light because of the SROs. They have better respect for the department." Another SRO felt that trust in the police department has increased "because of what I hear from the kids. Now, if the bike officers ride into a neighborhood, the kids come out—they [the kids] are not as scared."

- *A school guidance counselor* reported that "I was here before the SRO came. What has changed is there is more respect for law enforcement people—and not because they're here to lock kids up but because he cares."

Community Support

The SRO program appears to a permanent fixture in the town. According to a member of

the police department, the agency will not "send SROs back to the streets [despite a

shortage of patrol officers] because the PR [the program brings the department] is too

good." According to the officer, "SROs' teaching *is* a PR effort."

Large Established Site Five

Capsule Program Description

Large Established Site Five serves a 50-square-mile jurisdiction in the Far West with
about 200,000 residents. The police department has over 200 sworn officers. The city's
public schools are organized into elementary and secondary school districts of 20,000 and
30,000 students each. The police chief initiated the program in 1993 with two SROs,
increasing the number over time to 18 SROs. SROs are assigned to clusters of schools
based on geographic grouping rather than grade level.

Program Planning and Costs
The biggest misunderstanding with school administrators was about what the SROs do.
Elementary school principals complained when the officers were not present when fights
broke out because the officers were at the middle and high schools since the elementary
school district was sharing the cost of the officers. An occasional ongoing problem is
that schools sometimes call for an SRO to handle minor problems that supervisors feel
teachers and administrators should be handling.

The elementary and secondary school districts share about half of the $2,078,821 cost of
the program with the police department.

The SROs
The department announces each new SRO opening by e-mail and hard copy in every
eligible officer's mailbox. School administrators are involved in interviewing and
selecting SROs as members of the interview panels.

Every new SRO rides along with an experienced SRO for two weeks. SROs attend
COPS in Schools or 40-hour basic SRO training as soon as training becomes available.

Program Activities
The SROs spend on average about 60-65 percent of their time on law enforcement, 25–30
30 percent mentoring, and 5-10 percent teaching.
- *Law Enforcement*: SROs provide full law enforcement coverage to all public
  schools in the city. School administrators call the department's dispatch center
  when they need an SRO. While on patrol in the neighborhoods, the SROs also
  pick up truants.
- *Teaching:* SROs generally do not teach regularly scheduled classes at the
  secondary school level except for four SROs who teach G.R.E.A.T. at the middle
  schools each year. SROs teach an annual "Safety on Site (SOS)" three-class
  course to all 5th grade students.

- *Mentoring:* Because of a number of constraints, SROs do not do as much mentoring as supervisors would like. However, SROs visit campuses to try to get acquainted with kids. The department purchased 11 bicycles for the SROs in part to increase the officers' opportunities to interact informally with students.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation
Two supervising sergeants visit schools to observe SROs interact with students and administrators; review SROs' crime reports; hold a daily special morning roll call; and call special meetings every six months to redistribute and discuss updates of the SROs' roles and responsibilities. The elementary school district examines relevant outcome data over time.

A number of program participants suggested that the program is likely to have created increased trust in the police and reduced student fear in many of the schools. An informed program participant felt that the SROs were a tremendous deterrent to student misconduct.

Despite considerable support for the program among many school administrators, with increased fiscal constraints school district administrators will be considering whether to discontinue or reduce their share of program costs in 2004-2005.

The Site

Large Established Site Five serves a 50-square-mile jurisdiction in the Far West with about 200,000 residents, half of whom are Hispanic. The population has grown by one-third since 1990 and is expected to grow another 50 percent by 2020. The violent crime rate is about 5 per 1,000 population; total crimes are about 100 per 100,000 population.

The Police Department

The Large Established Site Five police department, with a budget of about $30 million, has over 200 sworn officers. The department engages in community oriented policing, successfully applying a problem solving approach to chronic crime problems.

The School System

The city's public schools are organized into two separate school districts: a K-6 elementary school district that enrolls about 20,000 students in over 40 schools, and a

secondary school district for grades 7–12 that enrolls about 30,000 students in about 30 schools. Hispanics make up about two-thirds of the student enrollment in both school districts. The secondary school district has about 12,000 students receiving free lunches and another 5,000 receiving reduced-cost lunches.

All K-12 schools have up to three nonsworn campus security officers who patrol the schools on foot. The SROs interact regularly with the security officers because the latter are typically the first to witness criminal behavior that the SROs are then called on to address.

Program History

The police chief initiated the program with two SROs, increasing the number of SROs every year or two to reach its current complement of 18 SROs.

Origins

In 1993, the Large Established Site Five police chief, having already been exposed to an SRO program at his previous position with another law enforcement agency, approached the secondary school district superintendent of schools to propose starting their own program. Having read about these programs, the superintendent was receptive to the chief's proposal. As a result, the department entered into a collaboration with the city's secondary school district to create an SRO program with the appointment of two officers assigned to work full time in the secondary schools. The program was originally expected to address problems of trespassing in the schools, assault, and drug possession.

The city's (separate) elementary school district initially declined to participate in the program, wanting to see how it fared in the secondary schools first. However, in 1995, convinced of the program's value, the elementary school district agreed to join the program with an initial assignment two SROs.

In 2000, the police department and the two school districts revamped the program so that SROs were assigned to clusters of schools based on geographic grouping rather than

grade level. Six SROs are assigned to each of the three policing sectors of the city. Each SRO is responsible for a cluster of several schools, K-12, not a single school. With 70 schools in the two school districts, each SRO is responsible on average for four schools. While the SROs assigned to a sector may patrol any schools in their sector, each SRO is assigned for administrative purposes to specific schools—for example, a principal normally would contact his or her assigned SRO to develop a safety plan, talk with the school's PTA, or conduct a class on, say, search and seizure.

The SRO program's primary focus has been on crime prevention and law enforcement. The program is based on the assumption that sworn officers, given the opportunity to interact with youth, can significantly reduce juvenile crime and the traditional hostility between young people and the police. SROs are expected not only to enforce the law on school campus but also to intervene with students who have been identified to have behavior problems at home or at school that damage the learning environment for them or other students at school. SROs are also expected to take action to prevent students from becoming involved in the juvenile justice system, including building positive relationships with them that serve to help steer kids away from getting into trouble.

Budget

The total program budget in 2003 was $2,078,821. The police department and secondary school district split the cost of the first two SROs in 1993 on a 50-50 basis. With the elementary school district now a part of the program, the department and the secondary school district split the cost of 12 of the current 18 SROs and 1 field agent, with each entity 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 $439,916. A 2003 COPS in Schools grant provides an additional $246,410.

When SROs work athletic events, the school districts pay the overtime from their student activities budgets. If SROs attend parent-teacher association (PTA) events, the organization pays their overtime.

Planning and Implementation Obstacles

Current staff were not involved in planning the program 11 years ago and therefore could not provide detailed information about difficulties at this stage. However, they did identify some early problems implementing the program.

Some parents expressed concern about the need to patrol the schools. While parents who were given an explanation for the patrols were satisfied with the reasons, it was difficult to reach most parents because few of them attend meetings (e.g., PTA meetings) and not all of them read the schools' newsletters (one of which introduced the program). As a result, for several years the SRO supervisors and SROs have been given a block of time at the schools' open houses at the beginning of each academic year during which the officers explain the program and distribute a brochure describing its goals and activities. In addition, during the school year parent-teacher associations invite SROs to give presentations about the program (and to distribute more copies of the brochure).

Another initial implementation obstacle was that school administrators did not initially understand that the program could benefit them. However, the biggest misunderstanding, according to one supervisor, was about what the SROs do. "Elementary school principals in particular complained that the SROs were too often at the middle or high schools when the officers were not present when irate parents came to school and when fights broke out—yet the elementary school district was sharing the cost of the officers." As a result, the supervisors gave the elementary school administrators and teachers their telephone numbers so they could call if there was a problem getting an SRO to come quickly. However, according to one of the supervisors, "The administrators didn't understand that SROs do a lot more than break up fights—mentoring and teaching are just as important."

SRO availability is still a problem at times for some schools regardless of grade level. Some school administrators complain that they do not see SROs patrolling when parents are dropping off or picking up their children, when the parking lot is full, and in similar conditions that parents report are dangerous or frustrating. While the supervisor instructs the SROs to talk with the administrators to address these concerns, the problem keeps

arising because, according to one supervisor, "There are big traffic jams at the schools and parents are impatient." Some school administrators still occasionally complain when SROs do not come "fast enough." Typically, this is because the SRO was in training, on another call, on his or her off-day, or at another school. There is still a problem with not having enough SROs in the field during the late afternoon, because half of the SROs stop work at 3:00 p.m.

A more frequent problem is that schools sometimes call the dispatcher to send an SRO to handle minor problems, such as shoving incidents, that supervisors feel teachers and administrators should be handling but instead call on the SROs to address because they are available. In some cases, the schools use SROs to handle minor noncriminal situations. Often administrators want the SROs to frighten the students. The supervisors give the SROs the discretion in these instances to make an arrest or explain to the administrators that an officer is not needed because the student's behavior is not a crime.

Program Coordination

The police department memorandum of agreement signed with each school district:

- provides the program mission statement;
- lists the school district's roles and responsibilities;
- identifies SRO roles and responsibilities (see the box "MOUs Identify SRO Roles and Responsibilities");
- identifies the respective financial contributions of the police department and school districts; and
- anticipates the development of operational measures to evaluate the program.

The School Resource Officers

The number of SROs has gone from 2 in 1993 to 18 in 2003. Each SRO has his or her own desk at police department headquarters where the two supervisors are housed, and each has a separate telephone number and e-mail address. The program has a colorfully painted minivan and nine cruisers, including seven patrol cars with "School Resource Officer" painted on the side and two supervisor vehicles that say "School Resource Supervisor."

MOUs Identify SRO Roles and Responsibilities

Elementary School District MOU

1. "Work with each site principal, staff and community members to help continue safe, drug-free, and productive educational experiences for boys and girls in the District.
2. When requested, attend parent conferences/meetings.
3. Attend Student Attendance Review Board meetings.
4. Refine classroom and faculty presentations related to drug and alcohol abuse prevention, gang alternatives, decision making, conflict resolution, and other appropriate topics.
5. Create channels of communication with students and families.
6. Focus and intervene with students in at-risk situation.
7. Collaborate and plan services and support with school site principal.
8. Schedule security activities as needed.
9. Provide first response in all law enforcement-related matters as they occur during regular school hours.
10. Attend various sporting events and school activities as needed for proactive enforcement and interaction.
11. Document all incidents of crime as per department regulations.
12. Provide high visibility of uniformed police officer presence on the campuses of the . . . Elementary School District.
13. Continue to work with community agencies.
14. Continue to work with parent/teacher groups as needed throughout the District.
15. Continue to work with school staff and District personnel in matters of mutual concern such as education, prevention and intervention in the areas of alcohol and drug use on campus . . . . and to provide a data bank of efforts made throughout the year for comparison to previous years and for future growth."

Secondary School District MOU

1. "To provide prevention/intervention by:
   - To provide high visibility of uniform police officer presence on the campuses of the . . . School District that are located in [the city].
   - Developing classroom and faculty presentations related to the youth and the law.
   - Attending parent conferences/meetings.
   - Attending Student . . . [Truancy] Board and meetings.
   - Scheduling security activities as needed.
   - Be the first response in all law enforcement related matters as they occur during regular school hours.
   - To attend various sporting events and school activities as needed for proactive enforcement and interaction; and
   - To document all incidents of crime as per department regulations.

2. To continue to work with:
- Community agencies; and
- Parent/teacher groups as needed throughout the affected schools

3. To assist investigative personnel of the . . . Police Department who are assigned to the various school sites with continuing and ongoing investigation and preliminary investigations of criminal activity within the affected schools.

4. To work with school staff and district personnel in matters of mutual concern such as:
- Alcohol and drug use on campus;
- Safety of students and staff on campus;
- Gang related violence and crime;
- Campus intrusion; and
- Loss and/or damage to property."

Recruitment

The department announces each opening through e-mail and hard copy in every patrol officer's mailbox. The two supervisors also ask patrol sergeants to read and distribute copies of the announcement at roll calls.

The program's criteria for applicants listed in one announcement for the position include:

- ability to prioritize workload;
- ability to interact with school officials;
- knowledge of child abuse/molestation protocols; and
- knowledge of mentoring principles.

Barring poor performance, candidates are asked to commit to a three-year assignment—which is also the maximum tour of duty. The collective bargaining agreement requires that the SROs—like officers assigned to any other specialty unit—rotate out of the position after three years. While no SRO has yet been removed from the job, SROs are routinely lost to promotion because the program is housed in the department's investigations division with other detectives where there are significant opportunities for upward mobility.

About 10 officers usually apply when there is an opening. One of the supervising sergeants talks with the applicants' patrol sergeants about the candidates' work performance and whether they can be expected to work well with kids and school officials. As required by the MOU, the schools and community are involved in the interviewing and selection of SROs. The division captain schedules a panel interview with the supervising sergeants, their supervisor (a lieutenant), assistant superintendents from the two school districts, and the high school district school safety coordinator.

Training

Every new SRO rides along with an experienced SRO for two weeks before dealing with school administrators and students on his or her own. The program does not train SROs before they go on the job because, as a supervisor explains, "We don't need to because they are handling the same kinds of calls as they handled on the street." However, the supervisor reports that "The biggest thing about being an SRO is not the criminal side but being able to work with assistant principals." When the system of assigning SROs to sectors was instituted in 2000, a new supervising sergeant assembled the six new and six old SROs for a couple hours to orient—and reorient—them to their responsibilities.

SROs are sent either to COPS in Schools conferences for training or to 40-hour basic SRO training with Corbin and Associates, but in some cases this has not happened until SROs have been on the job for almost two years.

There is no special in-service training for SROs except for two special trainings in the diamond formation for responding to an active shooter on campus (an SRO with a rifle is surrounded by other SROs when there is no time to wait for the SWAT team).

Hours

The SROs generally work during regular school hours. This has occasionally been a problem because of union agreements that limit "flex time" (e.g., staying late at work one day and compensating by coming to work late another day, resulting in the schools on occasion having to pay overtime. Half the SROs work from 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and

the other half from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. so that some are always on duty the entire day. They work five 9-hour days and have very other Monday or Friday off. The work is year-round both because there are several summer and year-round schools.

Program Activities

The SROs spend on average 60-65 percent of their time on law enforcement, 30–35 percent mentoring, and 5-10 percent teaching.

Law Enforcement

SROs provide full law enforcement coverage to all public schools in the city, including documenting crime on school campuses through crime reports and arresting students involved in criminal activity. SROs took charge of all law enforcement tactical deployment during a high school lockdown that followed a rumor of a gunman coming to the school following a shooting at another school in the district.

The department's written expectations for SROs note that "Ensuring the safety of students and staff by patrolling school areas and on campus visits are your primary responsibilities." This focus is also reflected in the program's being housed in the department's investigations division—not, for example, the juvenile bureau or community services bureau. Indeed, SROs make more arrests per officer than do regular patrol officers (see the box "SROs Make Frequent Arrests"). When a new supervising sergeant assembled the new and old SROs for an orientation in 2000, she focused on the need to arrest kids who broke the law so that word would get out that students could not commit crime with impunity—as a result of which, presumably, crime and disorder would decline. The plan seemed to have worked—over time, SROs ended up making fewer arrests. According to one SRO, "At first [in 2000] I was making an average of three arrests a week; now [in 2004] I just went two weeks without making a single arrest. Usually I don't arrest anyone now more than once a week."

SROs Make Frequent Arrests

SROs arrest students most often for possession of knives, marijuana, and pills. According to one SRO, "I don't arrest them so much for fighting because it's mutual combat." Some SROs get frustrated arresting the same kids over and over.

The dispatcher sent the SROs to a property adjacent to a school after a citizen had called to report having seen students smoking marijuana there. The officers snuck up and caught five youth in the act, although all of the marijuana had already been consumed. During the search, residual amounts of the drug were discovered, as were lighters, pornographic magazines, and a knife.

One of the SROs asked two of the students, "How many times do I have to arrest you?" because the students had been arrested several times during the previous two weeks for marijuana possession and were awaiting juvenile court appearances.

The SROs summoned the assistant principal, who, along with the officers, escorted the students back to school, where the school administrator called their parents. The principal suspended the students for 3-5 days. The SROs completed citation reports for being off school grounds.

School administrators and campus security officers call the department's dispatch center when they need an SRO. The calls (whether emergency 911 calls or nonemergency calls) are routed to the SROs' own dispatcher, who radios the SROs in their cruisers on the SRO program's own channel. The dispatcher radios a free SRO assigned to the sector in which the school is located to respond. For example, if there are four SROs working a sector and two are already busy (which the dispatcher knows because SROs radio in when they are picking up a truant or teaching a class, for example), the dispatcher sends one of the two free SROs. On the rare occasions when all the sector SROs are tied up, the dispatcher sends an SRO from another sector. As a last resort, the dispatcher sends a regular officer to respond.

According to an assistant elementary school superintendent, "We and the SRO supervisors talk almost every day—for example, when a student who has had discipline problems is heard telling other kids he's going to kill an assistant principal, or a kid is bragging that he is going to sell another kid a gun, I call the sergeant to make sure the SROs are at the school first thing in the morning to prevent any problems. In one case, three kids were planning to kill their teacher."

Because SROs spend so much time in their cruisers, supervisors ask them to write their crime reports on campus or in the parking lot so that the officers are visible and accessible for crime prevention and crime response purposes. Typically, SROs complete the reports during the middle of the day but, if it is mid-afternoon and the offense is minor (e.g., petty theft), the supervisors allow them to submit the report the following day.

The SROs' typical day is similar to that of the regular patrol officers in the department— that is, they patrol their sectors and respond to calls from the dispatcher to handle incidents. SROs begin by patrolling the school areas or visiting the school grounds before classes start and again at the end of each school day to prevent vandalism and disturbances. In between, they may:

- patrol the campuses in their cruisers or on bicycles;
- sit in their cruisers in the school parking lots observing what is going on; and
- walk around the campuses and inside the buildings on foot.

The SROs are careful to vary the times of day and days of the week that they patrol each school to avoid letting potential troublemakers figure out where they may be at any specific time. While on patrol in the neighborhoods, the SROs pick up truant students (see the box "SROs Are Involved with Truant Students"). SROs also act as back-up to regular patrol officers about three times a week when the dispatcher requests assistance for a beat officer.

SROs Are Involved with Truant Students

(1)   SROs are responsible for picking up truant students under a city daytime anti-loitering ordinance that allows officers to detain school-age youth found on the streets between 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. The goal of the ordinance is to keep kids unaccompanied by a parent off the streets to prevent daytime burglaries. The SROs issue citations to students if they should be in school, take them to the school, and turn them over to the principal, who calls the parents. The entire process takes about a half hour. As a group, the SROs average about seven citations each week.

(2)   SROs conduct home visits with school administrators who ask the officers to accompany them to talk with a student and his or her family who had not been coming to school. According to a supervisor, "The SRO asks if everything is OK—and his presence makes a difference because the parents see it's more than just the school that's concerned about their child. They see that, with the cops involved, child protective services could be brought into the case—and parents don't want that."

(3)   Parents often call the dispatcher when their children refuse to go to school to ask the SRO to "make them" attend. While this is not technically the SROs' job, occasionally SROs go on the calls and ask the children, "Let me take you to school." However, the SRO cannot arrest a child who refuses to go because the youth has not broken the law as long as he or she is at home. Furthermore, SROs can get sued if they try to force the child to go to school and the officer injures the youth. Because some SROs have attempted this, the supervisors tell them "Never, never, never try to force a kid at home to go to school."

(4)   SROs, along with school administrators and guidance counselors, attend special meetings that schools hold for habitually truant students and their parents. The group develops a contract that everyone present signs. An SRO said that, "My being there adds authority to the message—kids know that I know they're supposed to be in school if I run into them on the streets." If the contract is violated, a district-level meeting is held (this one includes social workers) and everyone signs another contract. If the student violates this agreement, the county probation officer puts the youth in the juvenile detention center for a weekend.

When the student's infraction is a minor misdemeanor (e.g., theft), the SRO brings the

student to the school and either the officer or principal calls the parents. The SROs then

"release" the student to the school, and the parent later receives a notice to appear with

the child in juvenile court. If the offense is a felony, the SRO takes the student to the

police station and calls the parents to say that officers will be transporting the youth to the juvenile detention center.

SROs take advantage of a juvenile counseling diversion program for students arrested for the first time for a misdemeanor. With a second arrest, the cases are sent to juvenile court. However, school administrators occasionally call the supervising sergeants because of a dispute with a principal or assistant principal about whether to make an arrest.

> When the SRO arrives to make an arrest [a supervisor related], sometimes an administrator says, "Well, we're not going to arrest this kid." This happens quite a bit." When an SRO arrives at a school and determines that a crime has been committed, the officer must perform his or her duties. However, if the administrator does not feel that what the student has done warrants an arrest, "We tell the SRO to say (in a diplomatic way) that it is not necessary to call the SRO." The administrators say that "this is a good kid [whom the SRO arrested]," and [as a result] they want to prevent the youngster from having a juvenile record. But we have to treat all kids the same [that is, not arrest some and not others]. I tell the SROs, "Don't get into trouble by giving in and not making an arrest—parents will complain that their kid got arrested and the other kid did not—and you'll take the blame because you elected not to arrest. So, if the school calls an SRO, arrest if a crime has been committed—otherwise, the administrators should not make the call."

The high school district's school safety coordinator holds two-hour meetings four times a year with assistant principals, civilian school security staff, the SRO supervisors, and a few SROs whom the supervisors ask to attend. The participants share intelligence about student activities—for example, on which gangs are becoming more active or dangerous. SROs can often pool information to give school administrators a "heads-up" about possible trouble. For instance, the SROs were able to report that, because the leaders of a gang had been arrested, there could be a "power struggle"—that is, violence—as the remaining gang members fought to take over leadership positions. According to a former high school assistant principal who is currently the high school district's school safety coordinator, "I love this intelligence sharing because we can use it to *prevent* trouble before it happens."

Teaching

SROs generally do not teach regularly scheduled classes at the secondary school level except for four SROs who teach G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) at the middle schools each year one day a week for 13 weeks. However, high school teachers sometimes ask SROs to teach classes on law enforcement, juvenile law, search and seizure, and similar topics in political science and other relevant subject area classes.

A few times, SROs have organized a complex high school education program just before spring break designed to convey the dangers of drinking and driving. The SROs simulate and film a traffic accident on campus that involves hospitals, fire fighters, EMTs, and parents of students participating in the role play. A medical helicopter evacuates "injured" students to a local hospital, some of whom "die" and spend the night away from home until the next day when they reappear at an all-school assembly on the football field to explain what happened.

The MOU with the elementary school district states that one of the SROs' responsibilities is to "refine classroom and faculty presentations related to drug and alcohol abuse prevention, gang alternatives, decision making, conflict resolution, and other appropriate topics." Reflecting this responsibility, SROs teach an annual "Safety on Site (SOS)" three-class course to all 5th grade students that addresses:

- gang awareness,
- gun safety in the home,
- internet safety against predators, and
- abduction awareness and safety.

SROs also periodically co-teach a first and second grade program for kids run by volunteers on the dangers of talking with strangers and what to do if the children get into trouble (e.g., jump up and down and scream). SROs occasionally teach other classes at the elementary schools to which they have been assigned for administrative purposes. Elementary school principals telephone their assigned SROs or the sergeants to arrange these special classes.

Mentoring

Some school administrators and SROs report that the officers generally do not engage in much mentoring. A supervising sergeant reported that the SROs do not do as much mentoring as he would like. Sometimes this is difficult because of the need to patrol school grounds and a union contract that requires paying officers overtime for supervising after-school events. In addition, not all schools provide the SROs with an office, although, the supervisor says, "they find a place to talk [with kids]" when the need arises. However, the supervisor adds, "SROs are . . . expected to be role models and mentors for the students they contact." Furthermore, according to a former high school assistant principal and current school district safety coordinator:

> SROs visit campuses just to get acquainted with kids—and kids know who their SRO is . . . . I've had SROs take kids under their wing and then come back to the school to check up on how they're doing. One SRO even became a varsity soccer coach so he could mentor kids and keep them out of trouble."

The department also purchased 11 bicycles for the SRO unit to use in part to increase the officers' opportunities to interact informally with students outside the law enforcement role (see the box "SROs Have Their Own Bicycles").

SROs Have Their Own Bicycles

The department purchased 11 mountain bicycles for SROs to use in part to improve their mobility for law enforcement purposes and also to increase their opportunities for engaging in informal contact with students in a mentoring capacity.

SROs use the bicycles, as assigned by the program supervisors, for crowd control purposes at community events (e.g., 5K runs, health fairs) at which they also distribute stickers, pencils, and other "goodies" to promote good community relations with the department. They also use them for strategic enforcement purposes around schools. For example, program supervisors learned that there were some kids harassing other kids in a large park next to the high school that is inaccessible to cruisers. Using their bicycles, the SROs were able to apprehend the students who were doing the bullying.

As intended, the SROs on bicycles can attract students to come chat with them, or the SROs ride over to students to initiate conversations, in an effort to act as mentors outside their law enforcement role.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of the SROs' activity is done by the supervising sergeants through periodic meetings, reviews of arrest reports, and observation in the field. The elementary school superintendent's office regularly examines outcome data.

Monitoring

The program's 18 SROs are supervised by two sergeants and two "field agents," and supported by a secretary. The field agents, who are corporals, remain in the field to direct the SROs and act as liaisons between the officers and the two supervising sergeants. The liaisons are the first line supervisory responders when SROs need assistance. Both have received basic SRO training.

The two supervisors spend almost full time supervising the SROs, but they also devote time to community outreach such as the police activities league and after-school programs for youth—activities that are, however, related to the SRO program's mission of targeting at-risk youth. One supervisor knows most of the principals from having been an SRO. The supervisor—like several others—came from the ranks of the field agents.

Usually, one supervisor is on the road helping SROs with problems while the other supervisor is in the office attending to administrative matters. According to one supervisor, when he cruises around the schools and does not see any SRO units, he asks them during the next line-up where they were. The sergeants also keep track of SROs on their computers which show—based on information the officers radio in to their dispatcher whenever they begin or end a new activity (e.g., teaching, making an arrest)— where each SRO is and how long he or she has been there. In listening to the radio, if he hears there is a fight in a school and only one SRO responds, the supervisor wonders where the others are. He does a status search on his computer to see where they are located and talks to them. Often SROs are on calls or performing lower priority duties than attending to a call-out for a fight on campus.

The supervisors "make rounds" in the schools, walking through to say hello to students and administrators. At the same time, this enables them to observe the SROs in their interactions with school administrators. They also observe how the SROs interact with the administrators at after-school events, such as school staff barbecues to which the supervisors and the SROs get invited.

The supervisors read every crime report the SROs submit—typically, 24 a week or roughly one report a week from each SRO—to make sure they are adequate. The forms the supervisors use for their annual evaluations of the SROs are the standard police department performance evaluation forms used for all officers. Supervisors typically do not consult with school administrators on the SROs' performance because, according to one supervisor, "when I walk around the schools, administrators come up to me to tell me what a good job the SROs are doing and, if they are not, they let me know."

At the special morning roll calls held for SROs each day (one at 6:30 a.m., one at 8:00 a.m.), program supervisors address problems as they arise—for example, a spate of unwanted nonstudents on campus or a rash of tardy students. SROs also call supervisors with questions—for example, to resolve child custody cases in which a parent goes to the school and wants to take her child home but either the parent has lost legal custody of the child or the question of who has custody has not been resolved. SROs are required call the supervisors in cases involving weapons in the schools, big fights, and bomb threats. Occasionally, the supervisors may address the problem on the phone but, in these instances, they typically go immediately to the school. In either case, the supervisors want to hear about the problem first from the SROs—before the chief finds out and calls the supervisors for an explanation.

Finally, the supervisors redistribute updates of the SRO roles and responsibilities every six months at a 30–40-minute 6:30 a.m. group meeting as a means of reinforcing what the officers are supposed to be doing and updating them on any changes in procedures or new procedures. For example, some principals were summoning SROs to deal with truant students who were at the high school—but, if the youth are in school, they are not

an SRO responsibility. As a result, the SRO supervisors incorporated into the written role and responsibilities a policy covering the situation and reviewed it at the next semi-annual meeting. When there is something important that requires more attention, the supervisors call a special all-unit meeting at 6:30 a.m.—for example, when an SRO had been complaining that he was taking more reports than another SRO in his sector and, generally, doing more than his share of the work.

Evidence of Program Effectiveness

As noted above, one SRO reported that the number of students he arrests had declined considerably in the past couple of years. Police department juvenile arrest data (not shown) tend to confirm the SRO's observation. However, the decline in juvenile arrests began in 1999, before the orientation meeting at which SROs were told to arrest students who break the law. In addition, the arrest data are for the entire city, not just the schools.

The elementary school assistant superintendent regularly compares over time and with other comparable communities data (e.g., absenteeism, truancy, and parental complaints), that could suggest program effectiveness or problems. Using data from the police department, he compares the number of juvenile arrests by offense over time with the number in a comparable nearby community. The school district and police department used some of these data to help secure a COPS Office grant to involve the SROs in reducing bullying incidents. For the grant, the school district is now comparing baseline data on bullying with subsequent data at each school by location and time of day.

The assistant superintendent also examines information that teachers and students report regarding classes the SROs teach in the elementary schools. For example, he heard from teachers and students that, while the SROs' classes on gangs were helpful, other issues were more important. As a result, the school district and SROs expanded the curriculum to address Internet safety, abductions, and gun safety in the home.

Many program participants reported that concrete evidence of the program's effectiveness in increasing trust in the police or reducing fear in the schools was lacking and, therefore, were unwilling to offer an opinion about the program's success in these areas. In addition, as several program participants pointed out, other changes occurred just before the initiation of the SRO program or during its operation that compromise any attempt to attribute positive effects to the program alone.

That said, the opinions of many knowledgeable respondent—some of whom were in an excellent position to make such an informed judgment—suggest that the program is likely to have had some effect on increasing trust and reducing fear in many of the sites' schools. According to the school district safety coordinator, "Prevention is [a] big [part of the SROs' effectiveness]. The SROs are a tremendous deterrent . . . . Kids know the APs [assistant principals] can call the police department and get an SRO there [at the school] immediately.

Community Support

There is considerable support for the program among many school administrators. Indeed, the superintendent of the city's secondary school district approached the police department in 2001 to hasten the appointment of four additional officers for whom grant monies had been awarded. The superintendent of the elementary school district commented that the program had become so integral to his district that staff consider the SROs as full-time members of their team. During their monthly meetings with school district administrators, principals and assistant principals at the secondary school level have voiced their strong support for the program. A few years ago when the elementary school district's budget was in dire straights and the teacher's union suggested dropping the SRO program to save money, the principals expressed strong opposition to the idea— and won the day. In 2002, $1 million was cut from the school district's budget but the idea of reducing or eliminating the SRO program was not even discussed.

In 2004, with new fiscal constraints, the school districts will be looking at their budgets again and this time considering whether to discontinue or reduce their share of the costs

of the program. While a supervising sergeant, another sergeant, and a lieutenant, along with the school superintendent, sit on the secondary school district board together and, along with an assistant superintendent, sit on the elementary school board, they may not be able to convince the board not to reduce its share of the program's costs. According to a supervising sergeant, "The schools feel, why spend money [for SROs] when we have the police department available anyway [for free]." By contrast, the police department has no intention of reducing its share of the program costs—it has not suffered any layoffs or hiring freezes in recent years.

Large New Site One

Capsule Program Description

Large New Site One, a county in South Central United States, has a population of over 600,000 and occupies approximately 700 square miles. The county seat has just over a half million residents, 35 percent minority. The sheriff's office, with law enforcement authority throughout the county, has 130 sworn officers. The office's School Resource Officer program began in 1999 with five full-time SROs working in two highly dissimilar school districts. One school system serves a small, urban, largely minority, economically distressed, crime-burdened neighborhood. The other serves a large, rural, affluent, predominantly Caucasian, sparsely populated community.

Program Planning and Costs
The sheriff's office views the program as an opportunity to enhance community outreach, violence reduction efforts, and substance abuse prevention services at county schools. Administrators at both participating school districts see the program as a means of improving school safety, with officials from one emphasizing crime prevention and relationship building, and staff at the other stressing counseling and teaching, particularly around issues of alcohol and drugs. The COPS in Schools grant from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services covers the full cost of the five SROs' salaries and fringe benefits.

The SROs
The SRO openings attracted a great deal of interest within the sheriff's office. One school superintendent helped the department with officer screening and selection, interviewing between 10-20 candidates for the initial five positions. All of the officers selected had significant law enforcement experience and had rotated through several divisions within the sheriff's office. In addition to attending training sessions required by the COPS Office, some of the officers attended the National Association of School Resource Officers' (NASRO) 40-hour basic course before starting work. All SROs have received ongoing in-service training from the sheriff's office, and two have attended annual school safety programs at the request of their school district superintendents.

Program Activities
SROs spend roughly one-quarter of their time on law enforcement, one-quarter teaching, and one-half counseling and mentoring.
- *Law enforcement*: Officers at one school district have helped staff to identify potential signs of gang activity. They have interpreted gang graffiti and reduced control of courtyard corners by groups of students. SROs at the other school district coordinate their enforcement-related actions with a private security unit and the schools' administrative staff.

- *Teaching:* The SROs provide drug prevention classes and presentations to students at all grade levels. The officers use considerable creativity in reaching students with this message, in one instance writing and filming a skit. In the program's urban site, officers focus their classes on gang and drug deterrence. In the more rural district, SROs integrate teaching more routinely into their work. Teachers request that they speak to classes on law-related topics and address drug and alcohol use in small teacher-led group discussions.
- *Mentoring:* Informal conversations provide the greatest amount of SRO-student interaction, but officers also use after-school activities as opportunities to mentor students. They attend athletic events, dances, and class trips. In one school district, the SROs coordinate a "community services" program that gives kids an opportunity to perform SRO-monitored "service" in lieu of more severe disciplinary measures.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

The sheriff's office uses written reports from SROs and comments from school staff to monitor the program. Schools also provide yearly written assessments of the officers. These resoundingly endorse the initiative. Students also express approval: three quarters of those students who took a written survey said they would feel comfortable reporting a crime to their SRO, and half said their opinion of police had improved since the program began.

Although difficult to attribute reduced crime or increased safety at schools to any one factor, quantitative data from this site show promising trends. In the urban district, police records show a steady fall in the number of calls to send beat officers on campus since the SROs started, while at the rural schools discipline reports suggest achievements in terms of conflict resolution and early detection of criminal behavior.

The Site

Large New Site One, situated in the Nation's South Central region, operates in a 700-square mile county with over 600,000 residents representing about 20 percent of the state's total population. African Americans make up 15 percent of the county population, while Latinos account for nearly 9 percent. The major city in the county has just over a half million residents, of whom about 16 percent are African American, 10 percent Latino, 6 percent American Indian, and 4 percent Asian. In 1997, households in the county had a median income of $34,500. Almost 16 percent of county residents and 25 percent of county children lived in poverty.

Racial, economic, and social characteristics vary widely by neighborhood and town within the county.

The Police Department

At the time the county sheriff's office submitted its original COPS in Schools proposal to the COPS Office in July 1999 for funding, the agency had a sworn force of about 125. The sheriff has law enforcement authority throughout the county, provides direct services to unincorporated areas, and assists local municipal law enforcement departments.

In 1998, the sheriff's office extended its community policing program to the schools, with deputies teaching the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) curriculum in two school districts. One of the two D.A.R.E. officers later became one of the first SROs. Other school-oriented programs developed recently include deputies accompanying students to shop for their families' holiday meals, a law enforcement explorers' program, and a "graffiti SWAT team."

The sheriff's initial COPS in Schools application requested funding for five full-time SROs. Although the county has 15 public school districts with over 100,000 students, some of these districts fall within the jurisdictions of city or town police departments that were already operating their own SRO programs. The sheriff's office observed that an SRO unit operating at the county level would confer substantial benefits by providing a method, based on need, of helping schools in parts of the county that otherwise have little or no access to community policing resources. The original plan—later modified (see below)—called for two "roaming" SROs to provide violence reduction and drug and alcohol classes to schools in unincorporated communities, one full-time officer to be stationed at an urban distressed school district, and two SROs to be assigned to a wealthy but remote public school system.

The School System

The SRO program currently operates in two school districts.

Greater Elm School District

The Greater Elm school district (not its real name), consisting of four schools, covers a five square mile area that borders the city and provides services to one of this urban area's most economically distressed and crime-burdened neighborhoods. Nearly 30 percent of households in the Greater Elm district live at or below the poverty level, with an average annual income of under $30,000. More than 80 percent of all Greater Elm students qualify for free or reduced price lunches. Single-parent families account for almost half of the district's households.

Caucasian students make up 29 percent of school enrollment, with African-American students constituting 25 percent, Hispanic students 26 percent, and Native American students 16 percent. Total enrollment for the Greater Elm school district has averaged about 800 students over the past five years. There are about 50 full-time teachers. All 400 of the middle and high schools' students share a single counselor. With no assistant principals or deans on staff, principals and teachers assume the full burden of their students' numerous disciplinary and crisis intervention needs. The district has graduated an average of just under half of its students over the past five years. Of the 75 to 80 students promoted from Greater Elm middle school each year, only 30 to 40 remain enrolled through their senior year of high school.

A single campus houses Greater Elm's high school, middle school, and one of its two elementary schools, along with the superintendent's office and other administrative departments. The three school facilities share a cafeteria and a student center as well as a single courtyard and playing field. Aside from armed but nonsworn security guards who supervise students as they enter and leave school grounds each day, the school has implemented few other protective measures, such as metal detectors or identification checks. There is a student dress code.

Administrators in the district report that their biggest discipline problems relate to verbal disruptions in the classroom, student use of profanity, and disrespect or defiance of teachers. However, they acknowledge gang membership among some students. During the academic year 2000-01, one in every 46 Greater Elm students (17 students) was charged with a juvenile offense. About 10 students from the district received a short-term (up to 10-day) out-of-school suspension. The SRO program was expected to address these delinquency and discipline problems by building rapport between young people and law enforcement officers and by encouraging academic achievement through direct intervention with students and home visits with parents or guardians of repeat truants.

Plain View School District

The second school district that hosts the SRO program, Plain View (not its real name), 20 miles removed from the inner-city Greater Elm neighborhood, presents startling contrasts in nearly every aspect of student life. Geographically, the district encompasses over 70 square miles. Large tracts of land predominate. Demographically, Caucasian students make up 85 percent of Plain View's population, African-American students 3 percent, Hispanic students 3 percent, and Native American students 7 percent. Enrollment at the district's two elementary schools, one junior high, and one high school totaled about 1,500 in 2001.

Academically, Plain View public schools recently ranked number one in performance on state standardized tests. The district has graduated an average of over 85 percent of its students over the past five years.

While the average Greater Elm household reports an annual income of under $30,000, Plain View families earn an average of over $90,000 per year. The district has a four percent poverty rate. Single parent homes account for a little more than 10 percent of local residents, and nearly 60 percent of adults have earned a college degree. Approximately 85 percent of Plain View seniors go to college.

Neither school administrators nor law enforcement officials perceive that the Plain View community has a crime problem. Just one in every 200 local students has been charged as a juvenile offender. Although principals describe their main discipline problems as the same as those reported by Greater Elm officials—disruptive behavior in the classroom, use of profanity, and other infractions of the school's code of conduct—they suspend fewer students: only one in 30 received a short-term out-of-school suspension and none received a long-term out-of-school suspension during the 2000-01 academic year.

Given these conditions, school and police officials anticipated a different set of functions for the SROs assigned to Plain View than for those posted to Greater Elm. The proactive roles of mentor, counselor, and educator in Plain View were seen as vital, particularly around issues of alcohol and drugs. Concerned about student use of illicit substances, mostly at weekend "field parties," administrators had contracted with a private company that brings drug-sniffing dogs to campus 20 days a year. In addition, because of the district's remote location, its administrators feared that response time to any crisis or threat at their schools might be too slow to head off tragedy. The presence of two sheriff's deputies on campus was seen as a way to respond to *outside* threats to the campus and to quell many of the post-Columbine fears experienced by educators, parents, and students.

Program History

The program originated with the sheriff's office but met with strong support from the school districts.

Origins

The main concerns that county sheriff's office hoped to address by creating an SRO program centered on violence prevention and reduction, with a secondary emphasis on drug and alcohol education and deterrence.

Police Department Goals at Start-up

In the year of its COPS in Schools grant application, the sheriff's office responded to nine bomb threats in schools, up from three the previous year. Because of this increase, which the sheriff's office anticipated would intensify in the aftermath of the Columbine tragedy, the department planned a new SRO unit to address violence and safety issues in the county's schools, as well as to develop critical incident response plans for those districts not covered by local police agencies. The sheriff's office proposed that officers in the new unit, beyond their normal deterrence and enforcement functions, would provide outreach and education to teachers, parents, and students in county schools regarding how to identify and report warning signs of violence and how to access violence prevention services.

In addition to countywide efforts, the new SRO unit would deploy officers at the two school systems in which the sheriff's office had previously implemented the Drug Abuse Resistance and Education (D.A.R.E.) curriculum because this previous relationship between the police and the schools would simplify implementation of the SRO programs in these schools compared with implementing the program in the other schools with which the department had no ongoing partnerships. This deployment of SROs would permit the department to expand its response capacity related to new threats of violence not only at these particular sites but also, more generally, by freeing up deputies who used to respond to calls for service at the schools to spend more time in other patrol districts.

In actuality, the department abandoned its "roaming" SRO concept by adding two "roaming" SROs to the already planned single SRO in the Greater Elm schools because of the community demographics and threats to school safety the agency felt existed in this district. The conditions that the original SRO encountered there caused supervisors to re-evaluate the potential risks and possible inadequacy of having one deputy work there alone. The department retained the original plan of posting two SROs in the Plain View school district.

When the sheriff's office began its D.A.R.E. initiative in the Plain View school district in 1998, the acting high school principal already knew about the SRO concept many years before from evaluating a Virginia-based SRO program for the U.S. Department of Education. Seeing the benefits of having an SRO in her own school, the administrator had worked with her parent-teacher organization to hire a state-certified officer at her previous school and had already begun similar discussions in Plain View when the sheriff's department announced its plan to apply for SRO funding. Since the only police presence near the campus was a deputy who occasionally "hung out" at the neighborhood store, the superintendent and school board alike believed that such collaboration made sense for their district.

School Expectations at Start-Up

According to the sheriff's office COPS in Schools application and the recollections of school district staff, the two communities designated for on-site SRO programs had specific concerns that leaders hoped the program would address. First and foremost, officials from these two communities believed that the SRO presence would enhance safety at their schools. In Greater Elm, they hoped that the SRO program would play a critical role in deterring violence and other delinquent behavior on school grounds, since a high degree of gang activity occurs in the district's neighborhoods.

The visibility of uniformed officers and the presence of marked cruisers on campus were viewed as means of alleviating the chronic sense of threat that students, parents, and staff members experienced in their neighborhoods. Indeed, as table 1 shows, Greater Elm students themselves report a high crime risk in their neighborhoods, especially when compared with the perception of their peers from Plain View Schools. Among middle and high school students participating in a November 2002 survey,[1] 60 percent from Greater Elm reported gangs in their neighborhoods compared with just 4 percent from

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[1] Specifically for the National Assessment, surveys of student perceptions of the SRO program were conducted in selected school district in three large new sites. In Large New Site One, the 38-question survey was administered to the entire 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade classes. However, because students had to return a signed form from their parents approving their participation in the survey, only 227 surveys were filled out—25 percent of the total student enrollment in these classes.

Plain View. Seventy percent of Greater Elm respondents, compared with just 7 percent of Plain View participants, perceived that their neighborhoods had a lot of crime or some crime.

Table 1: Student Perceptions of Crime and Gang Activity in their Neighborhoods

	(N) %	(N) %
Q: I live in a neighborhood that has:	**Greater Elm**	**Plain View**
A lot of crime	(17) 35%	(3) 2%
Some crime	(17) 35%	(8) 5%
Almost no crime	(10) 20%	(47) 28%
No crime at all	(5) 10%	(112) 66%
Q: Are there gangs in your neighborhood?		
Yes	(30) 60%	(6) 4%
No	(5) 10%	(140) 82%
Don't know	(15) 30%	(24) 14%

School officials also viewed the introduction of a regularly assigned police officer to Greater Elm's campus as means of improving relationships and building trust between students and sheriff's deputies. District principals described how young people from Greater Elm were prone to associate largely negative events with police intervention—most had witnessed unknown officers arriving randomly in their neighborhoods to arrest parents, older siblings, or friends from next door. As a result, they shared a burden of feeling doubly vulnerable, exposed to the risks of local violence but having no reason to trust, much less confide in, those charged with keeping them "safe."

Administrators hoped that daily or routine youth-police interactions might begin to change this dynamic, as well as help officers to comprehend some of the difficult conditions in which Greater Elm students grew up. This, in turn might permit the officers address root causes and reasons for delinquency more effectively and to do more than just "cuff and cart" off miscreant students to detention. Parent outreach or home visits by the SRO might also enhance this understanding and provide an additional resource to the

school district in its struggle against chronically high truancy and dropout rates. In the year before the SRO program began, Greater Elm students missed an average of nearly 13 school days per student (compared with an average of 7 in Plain View), and the district had a 7 percent dropout rate.

Program Marketing

There is no evidence of any coordinated effort taken by school officials to "sell" or even introduce the concept of a school resource officer at Greater Elm to members of the community. Once on site, however, the SROs themselves realized that they needed to explain their goals and functions to parents. They requested and received permission to speak at various PTA meetings and parent-teacher nights in the district in order to introduce themselves and discuss the program. The community found one SRO's ability to speak Spanish particularly helpful, since the school district, with a large Hispanic population, had few other bilingual staff.

By contrast, administrators and SROs in Plain View worked hard before the program began to inform the community about the new police presence on campus. According to the high school principal, some parents responded to the SRO idea with relief, "immediately glad" to have an officer present, but other community members began wondering, "Are our schools really that unsafe?" In the year of the program's introduction, Plain View had received recognition as the highest performing school district in the state. As a result, many parents and staff questioned the need for police on campus. The administration addressed these concerns through "public relations" efforts, using monthly newsletters to parents to communicate the purpose of the program as one of enhancing the learning environment. These notices, along with articles printed in local newspapers, stressed the preventive and proactive nature of the program.

In the Plain View school district, administrators realized that their schools, while relatively free of gang-related crime and other threats from surrounding neighborhoods, had experienced a large influx of new students. This rapid growth in their previously small and insulated school community, they believed, had begun contributing to more frequent fights, threats, and drug-related disciplinary contacts on campus. School officials adopted a proactive stance and initiated a violence prevention plan aimed at curtailing any further escalation of these trends. The Columbine tragedy brought a new wave of concerns, however, as evidenced by the turnout for a school-community meeting

in its immediate aftermath. More than 100 Plain View parents attended, expressing fears
that the remote location of their campus might make it a prime target for such an attack,
the consequences of which would be magnified by the length of time it would take
emergency personnel of to arrive on scene. As part of its larger school safety initiative,
then, and the perceived need for an additional law enforcement presence in the
community, Plain View pursued the SRO program. When the superintendent learned of
the sheriff's office plan to submit a COPS in Schools application, she requested she be
involved and drew on her previous experience to assist the department with the grant
writing process.

Budget

Annual costs for the program have ranged from $175,000 to nearly $200,000, all paid for
by the COPS in Schools grant based on average annual salaries of between $35,000 and
$39,000 for each SRO.

Planning and Implementation Obstacles

The project experienced several planning difficulties and implementation problems.

Planning Obstacles and Solutions

Officer distribution and location. In the Greater Elm district, the elementary, middle, and
high schools all share a campus. When the SRO program first started, however,
administrators from the three schools requested that one officer work primarily in each
school building to improve rapport and familiarity. Space limitations and disagreements
with administrators, however, eventually led to all three SROs sharing one office in the
middle school after the first year.

At Plain View, SROs make periodic visits to the elementary school, but by and large one
officer works in the high school and the other in the middle school. Similar to the
Greater Elm set-up, Plain View's two facilities share a campus; as a result, most students
and staff are familiar with both SROs. The officers, too, feel comfortable if they are

called upon to cover for each other, for example when one attends training or becomes ill. The proximity of their schools permits frequent interaction and regular consultation.

Officer integration. When the SROs first began their activities in the school setting, they quickly became introduced to a host of new people and groups with which they wanted to collaborate and with which they had to coexist. Not surprisingly, though, each important individual and group that populates the officer's new daily "beat" usually brought a different set of expectations, worries, opinions, and biases that could influence its relationship with the individual SRO and with the police in general. For example, some principals feared that police would try to usurp their authority, while others believed an officer's presence would bolster their influence. Some teachers viewed the SROs' roaming the hallways as too suggestive of a "police state," while others secretly hoped that the SROs' presence would reinstate "law and order" in the classroom. One group of parents welcomed the guidance of an additional authority figure in their children's lives, while another believed that their children would be targeted for repression. Some students felt relief at the added "protection" from violence that an officer brings, while some of their peers resented having yet another adult telling them how to behave.

The SROs used various means, some more successful than others, to integrate themselves and their program into the broader workings of their respective schools. The high school SRO recalled the highly chaotic environment that he encountered when he began there. A large group of Hispanic students would congregate on one side of the courtyard, a large group of black students would stand on the other, and both groups would flash gang signs. There was a clear potential for violence. During their initial months of work, the SROs employed creative methods to help break down communication barriers with students. For example, they capitalized on an annual statewide event that promotes drug awareness within the schools to present a skit that they wrote in which the middle and high school SROs portrayed gang members so realistically that kids began to trust the officers and see them as human beings rather than "just another cop." Students began communicating more openly with the SROs shortly afterwards, and this initial respect grew over time.

The high school SRO acknowledges that, at least initially, tensions about having an officer on campus existed among some teachers and staff members. The administration made few efforts to incorporate the SROs into school life, although the middle school principal did have them attend one teacher meeting in order to introduce themselves and describe their roles. The presence of the officers' service weapons was not an issue—school security guards paid for by the school district to monitor traffic, the cafeteria, and bus drop-offs were already armed. The teachers, however, expressed concerns that the officers might engage too exclusively in suppression. Certain teachers resisted reporting incidents to the SROs because they feared that their students would be arrested or otherwise legally sanctioned. According to one officer, a degree of resentment toward the SROs still exists even now, three years after the start of the program. He speculates that teachers perhaps dislike the fact that SROs now have decision-making authority in certain realms previously controlled by the faculty.

One SRO reported that at Plain View, too, many faculty expressed initial concern about the police presence. She worked to diffuse teacher worries, however, by attending staff meetings and clarifying the role that she would play in their school. She notes that her ability to act as "mother/counselor" as easily as "law enforcer" helped her to fit into the school's culture. The high school principal indicates that teachers, by and large, welcomed the SRO's presence in their building, although some privately wondered what she did with her time.

By contrast, Plain View's kids gave the SROs a cool reception, believing that the officers would serve predominantly as a surveillance tool for school administrators. There was a need to "let the dust settle," to test out what the SROs would and would not do, and to find out what, in reality, having a police officer in the school would mean for students. Once the deputies actually began their work, they effectively sold the program to students themselves. Kids could see that the SROs wanted to contribute to a sense of safety on campus and in the classroom, and that they had no intention of lurking behind corners doing detective work.

Implementation Obstacles and Solutions

Program reporting structure. The MOU signed by each school district states that

> The school entity agrees although the SRO(s) are on site of its campus(es) and are carrying out special additional involvement activities, that as law enforcement officers they are not under the direction or command of any entity other than the sheriff's office whose professional procedures follow the requirements regarding state certification and commissioning of law officers.

In practice, however, the SROs sometimes find themselves in a balancing act, weighing their department's "ultimate" decision-making authority, their own legal constraints and obligations, and their school principal's need for control on campus. At Greater Elm High School, in particular, this caused a great deal of tension and frustration, with the SRO and principal both reporting that they routinely "butt heads." The SRO reproached his principal for his efforts to curtail his counseling activities, reasoning, "The school doesn't issue my paycheck." However, the principal had a different view, claiming "It is not a big deal who pays the bills—when you are in the high school, you need to follow the rules of the high school." Thus, while SROs are being paid by the law enforcement agency and must follow the procedures of that agency, this principal reasoned that because they work on school grounds they must operate within the norms of the school culture.

By contrast, in the Plain View schools the senior high school principal acknowledged that he and his staff must recognize the SRO's ultimate responsibility as a law enforcement agent. He stresses the importance of partnership in setting parameters for how each school will use its officers. Even so, most administrators still resist when the sheriff's office pulls the SROs off campus. For example, Plain View's superintendent expressed dissatisfaction when the sheriff's office decided to use "*her* SROs" to give presentations in different parts of the county for the annual statewide drug awareness event. Similarly, the Greater Elm middle school principal felt frustrated with *his* SRO's early absences when the sheriff needed her to testify or to complete outstanding cases. The principal met with sheriff's office supervisors to discuss the problem but became convinced he had no choice other than to accept that "county business comes first."

<u>Maintaining connections between SROs and the sheriff's office</u>. Communication between SROs and their departments has proven difficult. SROs have different schedules than the rest of their agency's sworn personnel, and they are geographically isolated from the department and their commanding officers. SROs do not participate in a regular roll calls or departmental meetings. When the agency has updates or announcements for its deputies, either the unit sergeant communicates these by telephone or uses "group pages" to notify the SROs that they have new materials in their mailboxes at headquarters.

Within such a loose communication framework, the usual camaraderie that develops or continues among police officers and helps them to endure stress, tragedy, and loss is missing for some SROs unless they engage in alternative means of connecting with their organization. For example, while the deputy assigned to Greater Elm high school reports that his peers jokingly call the SRO "kiddie cop" and other nicknames, officers on patrol in Greater Elm frequently contact him for intervention or follow-up with district students. Because he knows most of the kids and their backgrounds, he provides a vital resource to fellow deputies in these cases.

Although the interaction of Plain View's SROs with other deputies appears less regular due to their distance from headquarters, they too report open communication with patrol and other tactical units, such as gangs, narcotics, and corrections. The deputies rely on these divisions for collaboration on programs in their schools, and the divisions, in turn, use information provided to them through the SROs to increase public safety. If students are "buzzing" about a bash planned for the weekend, for example, the SROs usually alert their supervisors, who then request additional patrols in the area.

For her part, the program supervisor maintains daily communication with each of the sites through regular telephone calls and weekly visits to Greater Elm. She deems a show of support for the deputies there more vital than at Plain View, where the SROs have better relationships with school staff. But, she says, there is a growing need for interaction among the officers. With six new transfers to the SRO unit, she has

considered calling monthly meetings and roundtables to improve the flow of ideas and information. She will have to negotiate with each school about the scheduling and frequency of these meetings, though, because administrators jealously guard their officers' time and resist their leaving campus during normal school hours.

Program Coordination

As part of its COPS in Schools application, the sheriff included memorandums of understanding (MOUs) signed by the two partnering school districts that provided a *broad* sketch of the contributions and limitations approved by each party. The agreements called for the deputies placed in Plain View and Greater Elm to work on-site during normal school hours of operation and follow a standard academic calendar. The agreed-upon scope of duties stated:

> The SROs will provide regular law enforcement services at the school site(s); but in addition they will also have special involvement with the students and faculty at these on-site assignments in counseling and presenting information to eliminate and prevent the incidents of school violence.

Beyond this generic understanding, however, neither the MOUs nor any subsequent documentation delineated specific responsibilities, functions, roles, or activities for the SROs. These understandings developed only in practice and over time through a process of trial and error.

The absence of clear guidelines about SRO responsibilities contributed to difficulties in the start-up phase of the program, particularly at Greater Elm. There was a major gap in understanding about the SROs' and school administrators' duties, responsibilities, and legal obligations to act in certain situations. Monthly logs written by the three Greater Elm SROs highlight this problem. An account of a reported child molestation exemplifies the degree of tension that can erupt at particularly troubling or stressful times if roles are not clarified in advance. In this case, a teacher had given the SRO a letter left behind by a student in which the student describes being sexually abused at home. The SRO addressed the report with both her supervisor and the school's principal:

. . . [The principal] informed me that the Aunt of the female student who wrote the letter would be at the school at 11:30 hrs. I informed [the] Capt. of this meeting and asked if he wanted me to attend, Captain stated he did . . . . [The principal] expressed wanting me to do lunch duty instead of attending the meeting with the Aunt. I informed him that I needed to be involved in the meeting due to the seriousness of the letter. He was upset at my decision. After the meeting adjourned at 12:15hrs I left the office to help with lunch duty. Upon leaving the office there was a boy on the phone who was crying and told [the principal] that he was jumped at lunch. [The principal] looked at me and stated that 'this is why I needed you at lunch . . . I knew this was going to happen!' As I began to enter his office [he] yelled, 'I don't need your help . . . this doesn't concern you . . . this doesn't have anything to do with law enforcement! I will contact your supervisor! . . . I informed him that I realize as an administrator that lunch duty is important because of liability reasons and that I try to understand his job as an administrator. However, he needed to try to understand my role as a law enforcement officer and that it was my duty to act on the female student's letter. I realize that he does not understand my position and if he needed to contact my supervisor that was okay. I told [the principal] that I am trying to help him the best I could. [He] calmly told me that he knew I was trying to help, but that he needed a line drawn and he would contact my supervisor.

The School Resource Officers

Administrators from only one of the two school districts participated in the screening and selection of the SROs. Some SROs received training before beginning work.

Recruitment

The initial SRO openings attracted a great deal of interest from within the department. While the sheriff's department coordinated the recruitment process, one school district played a significant role in the process and one did not. The Plain View superintendent, who helped prepare the COPS in Schools application, remained involved by serving as "the school representative" for officer screening and selection, interviewing 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 Latino(a) officer placed there. She also believed it best to have one male and one female SRO available to her students. She made a specific request for one of the two officers eventually sent to Plain View and approved of the second officer, as well.

Both the middle school SRO and the high school SRO had significant experience on the force by the time they began working in the district. Each had rotated through several different divisions within the sheriff's office, including road patrol, corrections, and court detail. Each also stated that the positive, proactive nature of the SRO position, as well as a strong interest in working with and helping juveniles, had motivated them to apply. The Plain View superintendent indicates that these two deputies have proven good choices—if not, she says, she would have had no problem complaining to the sheriff's office. If her district did not have the right officers, "they would not be here."

At Greater Elm, by contrast, the principals report no similar involvement in either program planning or officer selection. If accurate, this may help to explain the lower level of "buy-in" or acceptance at start-up than occurred with Greater Elm staff. According to the sheriff's office, faculty and principals from Plain View provided a much more supportive and welcoming environment for SROs than did their Greater Elm counterparts. Only two of the three deputies that inaugurated Greater Elm's program lasted more than a year. One of these recounted a number of his frustrating start-up experiences, including being assigned an old janitor's closet for his first office. While these problems declined somewhat in year two, they apparently remained a problem for the officer, because he transferred to another school district a short time later.

Similar to the Plain View SROs, the deputies placed at Greater Elm had held a variety of previous assignments within the sheriff's office before applying for the post. The high school SRO began his law enforcement career as a correctional officer but had served with the sheriff's office since 1992. He decided to bid for an SRO position when the program started because he had always liked working with kids. The deputy who replaced the first officer at Greater Elm to leave the school district had transferred from the adult prison. He did not bid for the SRO position; instead, the department approached him. Nonetheless, he said, "I'm glad it happened." He much prefers the preventive aspects of SRO duties to the largely punitive role of a correctional officer.

This SRO's assertion that he did not originally pursue the SRO post raises some doubt about the department's characterization of high internal demand for the job. However, based on their early difficulties, when filling more recent SRO openings supervisors appear to have worked hard to encourage a strong pool of interested, motivated candidates. For example, when the agency secured a second COPS in Schools grant for six additional SROs in three new school districts, 53 deputies bid for the positions, 20 of whom a screening committee interviewed. Officials from the three new school districts sat on the committee, interviewed all candidates alongside sheriff's office representatives, and helped to rank the applications. These school representatives expressed satisfaction with their high degree of involvement in the selection process.

Training

SROs and school administrators, alike, have various opportunities for training. The COPS Office requires all grantees to attend a three-day training program. Agencies must send all grant-funded SROs as well as one administrator from a partnering school district.

At least some of the SROs attended the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) basic training course before beginning their assignments. One SRO reported he found the training provided him with a better understanding of how SROs and administrators were meant to work together. It also helped him to learn about the teaching component, communication with administrators, and relationships with the community. Moreover, meeting and talking with officers from other SRO programs outside of class was as important as the curriculum itself.

The sheriff's office has made a sustained commitment to having SROs attend all required standard police training course work during the summer and to keep them involved in ongoing patrol work during school vacations. This ensures that the SROs maintain the larger set of skills needed to be well-rounded law enforcement officers. The department mandates that the SROs, like all other deputies, complete a 40-hour "mini-academy" each year that includes firearms training, CPR recertification, legislative updates, and other

topics. The SROs' sergeant asserts that it would not be fair to residents or the deputies to put officers back on the street without the annual training.

The superintendent of Plain View Schools requests that the SROs in her district attend annual conferences, such as the Governor's safe schools conference, at which they receive updated information and have opportunities to network with other SROs. Both SROs attended in 2002. The superintendent acknowledges, however, that her district could do a better job of more directly preparing its SROs for work within the school setting. The traditionally female environment of teaching, she contends, can pose a challenge for officers accustomed to a more male dominated "culture of enforcement."

Turnover

The MOUs signed by the county schools indicate that

> The [school district] agrees that upon request of the school entity for the removal and replacement of a SRO, in writing listing the reasons, there will be a review and action taken by 30 days.

While this clause has not been invoked, only two of the initial five officers assigned to the program still work in their schools. At Greater Elm, the district is on its fifth different SRO in just under three years. One deputy left the sheriff's office to work for the city police. A second, frustrated by his ongoing battles with Greater Elm staff, transferred to a neighboring school district once the SRO unit expanded. The third officer initially at Greater Elm became a sergeant with the department's patrol division. In the meantime, the deputy who had replaced the first SRO to depart Greater Elm left the force and finished his college studies—concentrating in child psychology.

The steady turnover in SROs at Greater Elm, when compared with the consistency at Plain View, may indicate more rapid "burnout" of officers who confront the severity of problems and needs presented by Greater Elm's students, coupled with limited supervision and troubled relationships with administrators. Regardless of its causes, the quick turnover of personnel at Greater Elm seems to have resulted in a degree of program instability and lack of program consistency.

Program Activities

The sheriff's office has designed an outreach and information brochure about the SRO program that describes the SROs' roles as the three-fold "triad model" developed and taught by NASRO for programs across the country: law enforcement, teaching, and counseling in equal emphasis. SROs spend roughly one-quarter of their time on law enforcement, one-quarter teaching, and half counseling and mentoring. However, the degree to which each SRO at Greater Elm and Plain View performs the three functions varies from deputy to deputy. For example:

- Greater Elm's high school SRO helps staff to interpret gang graffiti—an enforcement-related function—but he also focuses on counseling.

- Plain View's high school SRO responds when searches made by a private K-9 unit yield drugs or weapons on campus, but he also attends most school dances and sporting events in order to build rapport with students.

- Greater Elm's middle school SRO arrests students who come to campus with drugs or get involved in fights, but she also performs a skit to educate kids about substance abuse and violence.

- Plain View's middle school SRO routinely takes part in school disciplinary conferences, but she also plays the role of "mother/counselor" in many cases.

An SRO's Daily Activities at Greater Elm

According to department protocol, the two Greater Elm SROs report directly to the school grounds rather than to the department's roll call. They begin their day between 7:00 and 7:30 a.m., observing students arrive on campus and touching base with each school's principal. They address any pending issues or paperwork from their office in the middle school and conduct student counseling sessions or staff conferences scheduled for that morning.

Shortly after 10:00 a.m., when the first of four lunch periods begins, the SROs start a walk through of the schools' buildings and courtyard. Since the three schools share a cafeteria and a student center for lunch, movement around the campus substantially increases during these times. Because no student may leave school during the day unless cleared by an administrator, the SROs sometimes ensure that kids stay on grounds. After lunch, the deputies continue meeting with staff and students as needed, then monitor student dismissal at 2:30 p.m. and complete paperwork before leaving for the day.

Law Enforcement

Greater Elm's principals highlighted the importance of the SROs' high visibility on campus, both in terms of the officers' enforcement and relationship-building functions. Through their regular "patrols" around the grounds each day, the SROs have helped staff to identify potential signs of gang activity. They have helped interpret gang graffiti, for example, and reduced control of courtyard corners by regular groups of students. The high school principal has seen an overall dissipation of tensions on campus, at least part of which she attributes to the positive rapport developed between SROs and students. Kids interact so often with the officers that they trust them enough to report potential trouble. This helps prevent neighborhood problems from creeping onto the schoolyard, too. According to the principal, "We are so small here, a lot of what goes on in the street comes to school the next day."

The middle school principal reflected that in the early days of the program he thought the officers sometimes "went overboard" on discipline. He thought that one SRO, in particular, had a tendency to handcuff kids and bring them into custody in cases where the principal would have preferred less severe consequences. The high school principal, too, believes that her building's SRO sometimes dealt with too many matters "like a sheriff." He would assume complete control in too many situations rather than referring less serious issues to the administration office. Nevertheless, Greater Elm's SROs filed a surprisingly low number of official police reports (table 2).

Moreover, in their monthly narratives the officers recorded a far greater concentration of effort on non-disciplinary activities than on disciplinary actions. Overviews of their logs in selected months of 2001 and 2002 appear in table 3.

Table 2: Sheriff's Office Incident Reports Filed by Greater Elm SROs
August 2001 to February 2003

Incident type	Number	Outcome
Weapons Charges	1	out-of-school suspension
Assault	8	6 arrests
		1 out-of-school suspension
		1 not indicated on report
Sexual Assaults	4	1 not indicated on report
		3 other disciplinary actions
Alcohol and Drugs	2	1 in-school suspension
		1 not indicated on report
Other	9	2 arrests
		2 other disciplinary actions
		5 not indicated on report
Total	24	8 arrests

Table 3: Activities Documented in Greater Elm School Resource Officer
Monthly Narratives—Selected Months* in Year One and Year Two

Activities of Greater Elm SROs	Year One	Year Two
	N = 228	N = 210
Disciplinary**	14%	20%
Counseling	29%	22%
Meeting	35%	34%
Teaching/School Event	6%	9%
Other	17%	14%
Total	100%	199%

*   Reviewed months were September, November, March, and April of 2001 and 2002. Due to personnel changes between year one and year two, some variation occurred in record keeping styles and number of officers writing reports for the selected months.

** "Disciplinary" refers to incidents in which SROs responded in an enforcement capacity, not all of which resulted in police reports or the filing of formal charges.

Table 4 shows that in the Plain View district, SROs recorded a similar range of activities in their monthly logs. Regarding the discrepancy in the *number* of activities engaged in

by these officers compared with the number engaged in by the SROs serving Greater Elm, supervisors noted that the former had adopted a much less detailed record keeping style than the latter. In addition, due to a flooding problem that damaged many paper records, the department had fewer logs available from Plain View than from Greater Elm.

Table 4: Activities of Plain View SROs as Documented in Officer Narratives—Selected Months* in Year One and Year Two

2000-2001 School Year	High School SRO	Middle School SRO
	N = 41	N = 68
Student Consultation	34%	21%
Professional Consultation	32%	1%
Administrative Meetings	20%	6%
After-School Activities	10%	----
Classroom Instruction	5%	9%
Disciplinary Actions	Not Available	57%
School Safety Drills	Not Available	6%
2001-2002 School Year		
	N = 98	N = 71
Student Consultation	40%	30%
Professional Consultation	22%	4%
Administrative Meetings	27%	4%
After-School Activities	11%	1%
Classroom Instruction	----	----
Disciplinary Actions	Not Available	58%
School Safety Drills	Not Available	3%

*Reviewed months were September, November, March, and April of 2001 and 2002.

At Plain View, the less severe nature of problems in the surrounding community, as well as the preferences of school administrators, appear to have influenced the direction of the SRO program. District personnel say their program has had success because they consistently use the officers as advocates for kids and as a resource, rather than as adversaries. By avoiding placing the SROs in a predominantly reactive role, administrators allow for positive and open relationships to develop between the SROs and students. The senior high school principal says of his building's SRO, "He's over here during lunch period, interacting with students." As a result, students know they can approach him—they see him as non-threatening. They speak to him more freely about certain situations than they would to a principal or assistant principal because they know that he does not hand out discipline—he will not give them detention or a suspension.

At the junior high school building, the SRO has become more fully integrated into the routine daily operations of the school. She interacts with students on various levels. In her first year, she spent considerable time in the classroom as a form of outreach, getting to know the kids and teachers in their own sphere. Her second year, however, she scaled back her teaching to a single statewide drug abuse week and similar special events. By contrast, she now spends more time speaking with students one-on-one and also coordinates with the school's assistant principal in addressing disciplinary referrals. Although she has private meeting space, she works out of the assistant principal's office most of the time, using her own office primarily for storage.

The SRO and assistant principal generally meet with students together, which helps present a unified approach to matters, avoiding the staff splitting—students playing off the SRO against the assistant principal—that occurs regularly at Greater Elm. Although many other schools have drawn clearer lines and boundaries to separate school administration and police roles in the discipline process, the collaborative model has worked well at Plain View. Indeed, the community sees the SRO as part of the administrative team more than as an outside presence.

Plain View has a clearly documented discipline process, and its published student handbook details the infractions for which administrators *may* contact the police and others for which they *must* contact the police. The "two-pronged" approach of law enforcement *and* school discipline, as delineated by the district's code of conduct, becomes implemented only when needed. According to the assistant principal, very few serious incidents have occurred at the junior high school. In a case in which a student assaulted the SRO, the two Plain View SROs processed the legal paperwork and the school administration pursued a disciplinary hearing—a dual response.

Of course, gray areas, like cases of bullying or verbal harassment, exist, but in these cases the school and law enforcement response depends mostly on *administrator* discretion. When questions emerge about the best course to pursue in a particular case, the SRO says

she consults with her supervisor at the sheriff's department, and the assistant principal speaks with his principal and the school board. The district's superintendent confirms that she has played an active part in the oversight process. She regularly reviews the principals' SRO referrals with them in order to ensure appropriate use of the program. She believes that, in the rare cases when an arrest or detention of a student must occur, the SRO or principal should call in a different law enforcement officer. This helps to maintain the positive image of the program as a proactive, rather than reactive, resource.

Ostensibly, then, the Plain View SROs have played a less routine enforcement role than their Greater Elm counterparts. Although table 5 shows that the school district's SROs have filed roughly the same number of police reports as the SROs in Greater Elm, the majority of Plain View's actions stem from "discoveries" of illegal substances or weapons made during vehicle searches by the school district's privately contracted K-9 unit. The district's two SROs reported only 2 violent incidents compared with 12 at Greater Elm.

Table 5: Sheriff's Office Incident Reports Filed by SROs
August 2001 to February 2003

School District	Plain View	
Incident type	**Number**	**Outcome**
Weapons Charges	5	2 out of school suspensions 2 not indicated on report 1 no disciplinary action taken
Assault	2	1 arrest 1 not indicated on report
Sexual Assaults	0	
Alcohol and Drugs	7	5 arrests 1 out of school 1 not indicated on report
Other	6	1 arrest 3 not indicated on report 2 none
Total number of incidents	**20**	**Total number of Incidents resulting in arrest 7**

An additional law enforcement-related role that the SROs have played at both Plain View and Greater Elm is to help improve school safety through annual security assessments at their facilities. They have designed complete emergency response manuals in

collaboration with school officials and deputies, including diagrams of school buildings and photographs, as well as procedures for various types of emergencies, contact numbers, and similar information that might prove vital in responding to a crisis. Moreover, the SROs regularly practice different types of preparedness drills with students and staff.

Teaching

Greater Elm's SROs focused their first year of classroom activities on a five-session program that addresses gang and drug deterrence.

- During one session, the deputies escort students to the adult detention center, where inmates discuss the negative consequences of their decisions.

- In a second session, students visit juvenile court and observe the proceedings.

- The remaining three sessions take place in the classroom.

The original SROs reportedly provided additional classes to alternative education students when requested by individual teachers, but the district's newer SRO revealed that he wanted to teach law-related topics more regularly in the middle school during the upcoming year. At the NASRO training he had attended, he had learned a great deal about the potential for classroom teaching. He had already spoken about his plans with the middle school principal, who approved.

At Plain View, both SROs have integrated education activities into their work with students and staff. In the high school, teachers have requested that the SRO speak on various topics in their classes. He has collaborated with the business law teacher on lectures pertaining to rights and consequences, for example. He has addressed drug and alcohol use with students during assemblies and often in the smaller setting of "team meetings." In the latter, teacher-advocates hold regular, half-hour group discussions with 10 to 15 students on issues affecting the youth's well being and that of their school and larger community. The principal acknowledges that some teachers wonder what the SRO does with all of his time, given the relatively quiet nature of the school, but mainly they want him present and visible.

Table 6 reflects student perceptions of SRO availability and effectiveness concerning law-related education at Greater Elm and Plain View schools. Among the junior and senior high students who participated in a November 2002 survey,[2] nearly three-quarters of Greater Elm students had attended a least one SRO-led assembly, and 75 percent of them had rated the event as at least somewhat helpful. A smaller percentage of Plain View students who answered the survey recalled attending an SRO-led assembly (30 percent), but of these 96 percent rated the activity as at least somewhat helpful. Actual classroom lectures provided by SROs were less common in both districts, but most students who attended at least one such lesson found it somewhat helpful or very helpful (77 percent in Greater Elm and 86 percent in Plain View).

Table 6: Student Perceptions of the SRO Program Education Component

Had students attended at least one SRO assembly?	Greater Elm (N) %	Plain View (N) %
Yes	(36) 74%	(49) 30%
No	(13) 26%	(117) 70%
Student ratings of SRO assemblies attended		
Very Helpful	(16) 44%	(24) 48%
Somewhat Helpful	(11) 31%	(24) 48%
Not Very Helpful	(7) 19%	(2) 4%
Not at All Helpful	(2) 6%	(0) 0%
Had students attended at least one SRO class?		
Yes	(20) 43%	(28) 16%
No	(27) 57%	(148) 84%
Student ratings of SRO classes attended		
Very Helpful	(13) 59%	(18) 62%
Somewhat Helpful	(4) 18%	(7) 24%
Not Very Helpful	(5) 23%	(3) 10%
Not at All Helpful	(0) 0%	(1) 3%

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[2] See footnote 1.

Mentoring

The middle school principal praised the friendly, positive relationships developed
between SROs and students. He asserted that one of the program's biggest benefits
comes through juveniles experiencing law enforcement in a helping role. Involving
SROs in school events like dances and games furthers this goal. At Greater Elm, the
district pays officers directly for after-school duties, but SROs have no obligation to
participate. Principals, however, generally prefer to offer these jobs to SROs, since their
familiarity with students' names and backgrounds helps them to intervene more
effectively than other deputies in any problems that may develop.

Greater Elm's SROs also strengthen their mentoring role among students by coordinating
a "community services" program. In lieu of detention or in-school suspension, this
intervention offers kids the opportunity to perform a "service," like removing litter from
school grounds or sweeping out school buses. The SROs have volunteered to supervise
and "sign off" on most of these activities.

The high school SRO has prided himself on his ability to "connect" with students. He
told evaluators that his activities as a counselor and mentor have bolstered his
effectiveness in violence prevention and enforcement. Once he received permission to
use a classroom (instead of a janitor's closet) for his office, he brought in a heavy bag for
students to punch—"to let off steam"—when feeling angry. They began to feel
comfortable there and to "open up" to the SRO. Kids now preemptively report "trouble
brewing" from the neighborhood that might spill over to the campus. The SRO can then
pass along pertinent information that he receives to officers in the patrol unit or gang unit,
for example, that has helped prevent crime.

The emphasis on the helper role, however, while often permitting opportunities for
students to share their concerns or fears, also poses problems when boundaries or
limitations become blurred. The biggest conflicts between the Greater Elm high school
principal and her SRO involved the amount of time that the officer spent counseling

students rather than referring them to other individuals who she felt were more qualified to handle the situation. In fact, the SRO described three cases in which students confided in him to such a degree that they revealed plans to attempt suicide. After he started arranging for students to take advantage of emergency psychiatric services, the principal became alarmed and reminded him that he was not a certified counselor or psychologist. She asserted that, given his lack of training in this area, certain students might try to manipulate him in order to get out of classes. She felt particularly uneasy about a male SRO counseling female students with his office door closed. His status as a police officer may have led him to believe that he did not need to pay attention to procedural issues, she guessed, but "just because you have a gun and a badge doesn't mean that you do not have to cover yourself just as we do."

By the second program year, many of these early difficulties seemed less pronounced. By then, the high school principal had retired and the SRO previously in her school had been transferred. A meeting that the district's two new SROs held with a student and her father during the year exemplifies both the refinement of responsibilities and the interplay of roles that have developed within the program at Greater Elm. The two officers had scheduled the session in response to a fight on campus the previous week. In the meeting, they explained to the girl and father the possible legal consequences of her actions, stressing that they had sufficient grounds to file assault charges. They also used their position as a mentors, however, to express their personal disappointment that her fight had occurred when it did, just a few hours after an assembly in which they had congratulated the student body on the decrease in campus violence.

At the end of the meeting, the girl expressed remorse and agreed to participate in a community service contract. The SROs felt this option was more appropriate than filing formal charges because the student had no prior disciplinary problems at Greater Elm and because staff had told them about the girl's troubled personal history, including the incarceration of numerous family members and a recent sexual victimization. The officers informed the student and father, however, that the school district would decide independently on the disciplinary consequences of her behavior. They advised her to

schedule an appointment with the principal before her father left campus to discuss the school's procedures for a hearing.

Program Evaluation and Assessment

The sheriff's department involves school administrators and teachers in assessing the SRO's performance. While the program does not assess whether it has achieved quantitatively measurable outcomes, data suggest the program is having a positive effect.

Monitoring

Beyond the standard procedures used by all sheriff's office supervisors to evaluate deputies' performance—annual written and verbal assessments—the SRO program supervisor draws on comments and observation from school district personnel on site to monitor the routine, day-to-day functioning of each SRO. The unit's sergeant requests annual SRO evaluations from teachers, administrators, and other key staff members at each of the participating schools. She distributes and collects these assessments personally, then reviews them individually with the officers. The assessments address performance factors ranging from officer attendance and appearance to SRO willingness to work with others and interpersonal communication skills. The following excerpts are representative of the overall tone of comments:

- A Plain View faculty member writes of the SRO—"[He] embodies professionalism in law enforcement. His presence in the school provides an avenue for exposure to trust, safety, knowledge, and experience . . . . School conflicts have been reduced through his constant, positive interaction with the student body."

- A *Greater Elm* counselor writes of an HS SRO—"Students who previously held a negative opinion of law enforcement now ask if they may go speak to the officer. He has developed a rapport with teachers as well."

- A *Greater Elm* administrator writes of the MS SRO—"[She is] strong and supportive. I like her no nonsense approach, especially with the female students. They know that they can trust her and that she's there for them but she has expectations of them!"

Evidence of Program Effectiveness

As discussed below, data suggest the program has led to improvements in school safety, attitudes toward police, school discipline, and crime in and around the schools.

School Safety and Perceptions of Trust

Administrators from Plain View schools perceived that student disciplinary problems began to increase in both severity and extent with the onset of rapid growth and development in their community. In response, the school board adopted an overall school safety strategy that included collaboration with the sheriff, first on the D.A.R.E. curriculum and later on the SRO program. In conjunction with the district's overall safety planning process, the school superintendent's office developed and distributed a survey to district teachers and students in the spring of 2002, approximately one-and-a-half years after the SRO program started in Plain View. The results of this study from the middle school appear in table 7. (Several changes in administration at the high school made it impossible to obtain survey results there.)

Table 7 shows that more staff and students from all three grades in the middle school report that they would feel more comfortable discussing an unsafe situation with the SRO than with reporting it to a principal or teacher. Similarly, of the various safety measures in place at their school, staff and students most often rate the SRO as the most effective. In short, the community members who interact most frequently with the SROs at Plain View strongly endorse the program's effects on security and safety.

Responses to student surveys administered in the Plain View and Greater Elm school districts reflect similar levels of approval and confidence in the SROs. Table 8 provides an overview of opinions expressed by the junior and senior high students who participated. Overall, almost three-quarters said they would feel comfortable reporting a crime to their school's SRO. Likewise, 60 percent indicated they would feel comfortable speaking to their SRO about other types of problems they were having in school.

**Table 7: School Safety Survey Conducted by Plain View Middle School
School Year 2001-2002 (Selected Results)**

Respondents: Middle School Staff $N = 33$ Sixth Grade Students $N = 128$
Seventh Grade Students $N = 139$ Eighth Grade Students $N = 136$

Question: Whom do you feel most comfortable reporting unsafe situation at school to? (Circle all that apply)	
Respondent	top 4 answers (# giving this answer)
Staff	SRO (24)
	Principal (20)
	Assistant Principal (18)
	Coworker (17)
6th graders	SRO (60)
	Teacher (56)
	Assistant Principal (38)
	Principal (37)
7th graders	SRO (73)
	Teacher (67)
	Principal (50)
	Assistant Principal/Counselor (46)
8th graders	SRO (65)
	Teacher (51)
	Assistant Principal. (40)
	Counselor (22)
Question: What safety measures currently at school are most effective? (Circle all that apply)	
Staff	SRO (31)
	Locked Doors (17)
	Drug Dogs (16)
	Practice drills (15)
6th graders	SRO (87)
	Practice Drills (66)
	Locked Doors (55)
	Drug Dogs (41)
7th graders	SRO (108)
	Locked Doors (89)
	Drug Dogs (70)
	Practice Drills (68)
8th graders	SRO (101)
	Practice Drills (57)
	Locked Doors (50)
	Drug Dogs (36)

When asked their opinion of their building's SRO, students from both districts checked off positive descriptions much more frequently than negative ones. The top five responses in each district (with slightly different rankings) were "Cares About Kids," "Fair," "Likes His/Her Job," "Good Role Model," and "Problem Solver." No more than 8 percent said they perceived their SRO as "Unavailable," "Useless," or someone who "Doesn't' Like or Trust Kids." Moreover, 50 percent of participants from both county

school districts indicated their opinion of police has improved since the SROs' arrival,
with only 8 percent from Greater Elm and 1 percent from Plain View saying their opinion
of the police had gotten worse.

Table 8: Greater Elm and Plain View Student Surveys—
Findings from November 2002

Q: How comfortable do you think you would be in approaching the SRO to	Total N = 227	Greater Elm N =50	Plain View N= 177
Report a Crime?			
Very Comfortable	39%	26%	43%
Somewhat Comfortable	34%	38%	33%
Somewhat Uncomfortable	19%	20%	19%
Not Comfortable At All	8%	16%	5%
	100%	100%	100%
Discuss a problem you're having at school?			
Very Comfortable	21%	31%	18%
Somewhat Comfortable	39%	29%	42%
Somewhat Uncomfortable	28%	27%	29%
Not Comfortable At All	12%	14%	11%
	100%	100%	100%
Q: What is your opinion of the SRO? (Asked to check all that apply)	Total	Greater Elm	Plain View
Students that checked:			
Cares about Kids	73%	64%	76%
Fair	67%	58%	71%
Likes His/Her Job	65%	58%	67%
Good Role Model	56%	60%	55%
Problem Solver	56%	58%	55%
Smart	46%	48%	46%
Thoughtful	45%	49%	44%
Strict	26%	30%	24%
Unapproachable	6%	12%	5%
Unavailable	4%	8%	3%
Useless	3%	8%	2%
Doesn't Like or Trust Kids	2%	6%	1%
Other	(N= 22)	(N = 3)	(N = 19)
Positive/Favorable	82%	67%	84%
Negative/Unfavorable	5%	33%	16%
Neutral	14%		
Since you have known the SRO, your opinion of police officers has:			
Improved	51%	50%	51%
Stayed About the Same	47%	42%	48%
Decreased	3%	8%	1%

School Discipline

Because of an apparent change in reporting standards over the review period, as well as
suspected variation in the accuracy of record keeping, information on suspensions
reported by the Greater Elm and Plain View school districts to the State Department of

Education do not provide a reliable basis for assessing the effect of the SRO program on the level or degree of disciplinary infractions committed by students of these two school districts.

Table 9 presents a summary of the discipline records maintained by Plain View Middle School administrators (not the State) from 1999-2003. (Similar data were not available for the high school or the Greater Elm district). The sharp rise in discipline encounters during the first year of the SRO program may reflect no more than a record keeping discrepancy, especially given the second year's resumption of levels more in line with those from the period before the program began. Alternatively, they might be explained by the increased response capacity made possible by the SROs' presence or a more stringent focus on discipline that coincided with the officer's arrival.

Data on the outcomes of these disciplinary contacts, may be of greater significance. The data in table 9 show that administrators were able to resolve an increasing percentage of discipline referrals through the lower level actions of counseling or detention, rather than suspension. This trend may suggest that the conflict resolution and early detection components of the SRO program, and of the larger school district safety plan, were showing positive results, although the trend could also reflect differences in the types of incidents, the percentage of repeat offenders, changes in the administrators handing out discipline, new discipline policies, and other considerations.

Crime

Largely because of an absence of development in the area immediately surrounding the Plain View campus, there were an extremely low number of crimes reported and calls for service for this "neighborhood." Records of police activity in the much more densely populated and crime-troubled Greater Elm neighborhood, however, tell a different story (see the figure).

**Table 9: Student Discipline Infractions and School Response,
Plain View Middle School**

Type of Infraction	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Incidents (N)	202	88	324	125
Disruptive Behavior	77	22	112	52
Bullying/Harassing	21	10	49	37
Destroying School Property	11	7	5	4
Illegal Substance	2	3	0	1
Stealing	8	0	1	1
Truancy	9	6	7	1
Fighting	16	4	13	3
Other	58	36	137	26
Total				
Action Taken by School	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Counseling by Principal	43	24	76	44
Detention	24	23	115	60
In-House Suspension	61	36	107	44
Out-of-School Suspension	20	6	57	24

**Figure: Trends in Calls for Service to the City Police Department Area
Surrounding Greater Elm Schools—When School Was Not in Session**
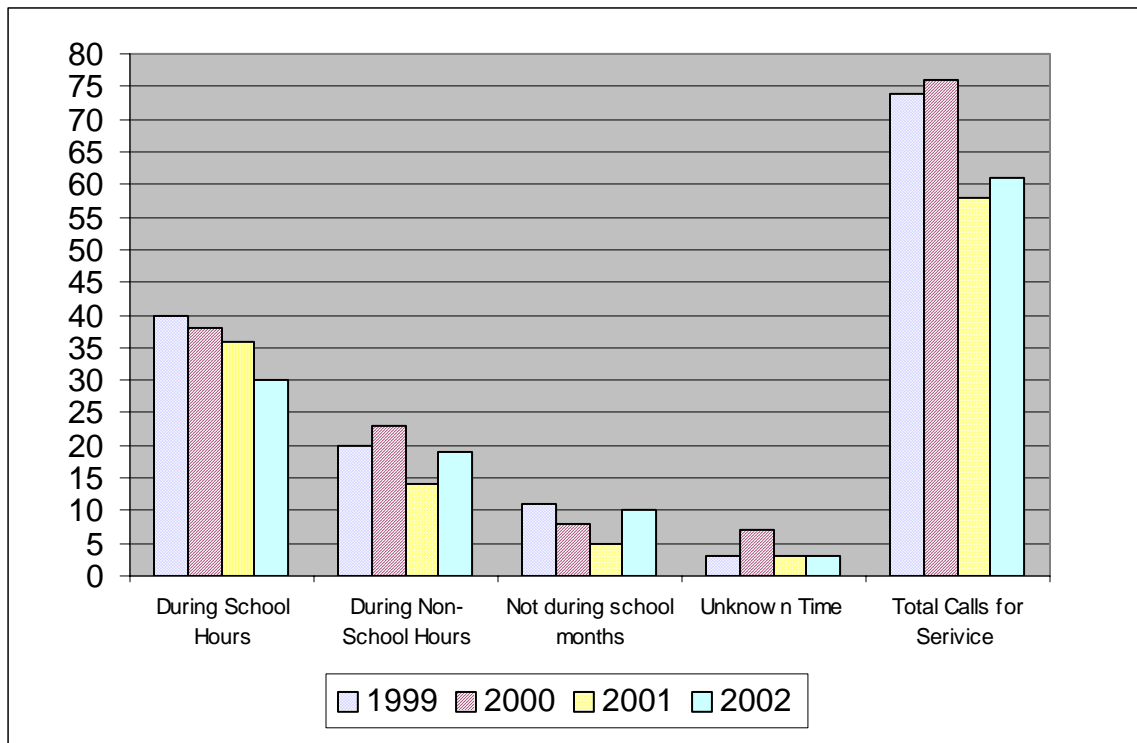
Note: The SRO Program began in September 1999. The 1999 calls for service represent the calendar year
(January-December) and therefore provide baseline figures against which to compare calls in subsequent
years after the SRO program had become operational and established.

While calls for police service to the neighborhood surrounding Greater Elm's campus show no consistent trend overall since the start of the SRO program, during the standard months and hours of school operation the number of calls has declined steadily since 1999. This decline benefited the community by enabling patrol officers who in the past had to respond to calls for service from the school to instead devote that time to patrolling and responding to calls in the neighborhood.

Community Support

Officials from both the sheriff's office and partner school districts resoundingly endorse the SRO program. Administrators cite a variety of reasons for their support, but each expresses concern for the safety of his or her school should the program end. The Plain View High principal says that he would not want his campus to lose the visible deterrence of uniformed officers and marked cruisers on site. Whether or not students express fear, he believes that increased media coverage of mass violence, particularly school shootings, has made everyone in the community wary of decreasing what little protection they now have in place. If Plain View were to lose its SROs, this principal believes that parents would demand some alternative form of security for students. The superintendent has agreed, stating that her district "would never go without an SRO again." The community would not now relinquish the increased sense of security from outside threats that the presence of sworn police officers provides (a feeling that the nonsworn armed security guards at Crooked Oak, who are without arrest powers, are evidently incapable of generating). Most obviously, the SRO presence has reduced the police response time afforded her district should any type of tragedy occur.

At Greater Elm, too, administrators clearly indicate that without the SRO program there would be concern over safety in the school. In this district, where school is considered a safe haven, the SROs are especially important. Moreover, *the students would feel that they had been let down* if the program ended. One teacher wrote of the program, "[Greater Elm] students have low expectations regarding anyone caring enough to stay any length of time. I would like them to know otherwise." Similarly, in a letter commending the high school SRO, a Greater Elm social worker asserted that the presence

of another caring adult has helped his clients and their resource-poor community tremendously. The middle school principal noted that the bilingual capacity of one officer, in particular, improved his district's ability to reach a large percentage of Hispanic parents who speak only Spanish.

Beyond potentially deterring threats posed by the external environment, Greater Elm administrators believe the SRO, even when focusing on the mentor role, has had a marked effect on discipline and disorder problems. The high school principal believes that the SRO presence sends a message that "something can be done by administration." This may, in fact, avert an escalation of incidents—where previously kids might have exploited an administrator's inability to apply serious consequences, the youth manage to "calm themselves on their own" once staff imply that they will call the SRO.

Given the strong commitment to the SRO program expressed by Greater Elm and Plain View administrators, as well as by the officers themselves, the sheriff's department has sought innovative funding streams for sustaining the program once the initial COPS in Schools grant ends at the close of the 2002-03 school year. The sheriff had hoped to fortify his department's budget significantly by means of a permanent sales tax increase of two-fifths of one percent. However, in a recent referendum held to decide the matter, 80 percent of voters rejected the proposed hike. Without this additional revenue, the sheriff will find it difficult to continue the SRO program after the grants end. Most of the onus, it seems, will fall on the school districts, because, as noted above, community members have come to expect the level of protection and services that SROs provide to their children. The Plain View superintendent has informed the sheriff that her district can maintain one of the two full-time officers presently working there. The Greater Elm superintendent has been seeking new grants to help his district maintain the program. However, sheriff's office staff are not optimistic about his chances for success.

At the same time, under the second COPS in Schools grant received by the sheriff's office, the department has assigned six *new* SROs to three *additional* school systems. These six officers began working in the schools in March 2002. One additional deputy

joined the SRO unit in early 2003 to provide services at a local inner-city charter school. As a result, if the sheriff's office or the school district successfully locate resources to continue the SROs at the program's two original sites, its efforts may provide an example to newer school districts when they have to grapple with the same funding challenge during the next 12 to 18 months.

Large New Site Two

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Capsule Program Description

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Large New Site Two, with a total population of about 400,000, is a county of roughly
600 square miles in a Mid-Western state. Residents are predominantly white,
urban-dwelling homeowners with a per capita income slightly lower than the state
average. The sheriff's office employs approximately 100 sworn officers. The office's
School Resource Officer program received COPS in Schools' funding for five full-time
officers beginning in 1999. These SROs work in five separate school districts that vary
in size and in level of urbanization and socioeconomic development.

Program Planning and Costs
Based on needs identified by school administrators at the program's start, SROs planned
to work in the areas of dispute resolution, truancy reduction, identification of at-risk
students, mentoring, and role modeling. Each school system's SRO and school
administrators have collaborated to tailor the program according to their other needs.
The COPS in Schools grant covers the full cost of the five SROs' salaries and fringe
benefits, with the exception of a small county contribution in year three. Four of the
five districts assumed the costs of retaining their SROs when the COPS Office grant
expired.

The SROs
The agreements between the sheriff and school districts called for "joint selection" of
SROs by the sheriff's office and school districts. Fourteen candidates applied for the
initial five openings and were screened through written questionnaires and personal
interviews. While the five deputies selected had between 11 and 16 years' experience
with the sheriff's office, they found the transition to SRO a difficult and stressful
process because they were not trained before taking up their new assignments.

Program Activities
Because each of the school districts has distinct characteristics and needs, the SROs vary
in the degree to which they perform activities suggested by the program's triad model.
On the whole, however, the county's SROs focus approximately half of their time on
counseling and mentoring, a quarter of their time on teaching, and a quarter of their time
on law enforcement or other activities.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation
The sheriff's office uses written reports from SROs and comments from school staff to
monitor the program. School officials have used different means for evaluating the
program's effectiveness in the five school districts. All districts provide written
assessments of the SROs, some annually and some quarterly, to the sheriff's office.

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Truancy declined and less severe disciplinary measures were imposed in the site after the SRO program began, although numerous other factors may have contributed to these improvements.

The Site

Large New Site Two is a county that occupies roughly 600 square miles in the Midwest. The county has about 400,000 residents, 90 percent of whom are white, 80 percent urban dwellers, and nearly three-quarter homeowners. In 1999, residents had a per capita income of under $30,000, almost $2,000 below the state average. Approximately 15 percent of the county's children live in poverty. Unemployment was about four percent in 1998, about the state average. Businesses in the service sector employed the largest share of county workers, followed by the wholesale and retail trades, and manufacturing.

In terms of education, about 85 percent of adults have graduated from high school and roughly 20 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher. The county has over 100 public schools, with a total enrollment of over 60,000 students. These schools' 1998 dropout rate of over 4 percent was more than double the rate of the previous decade.

From 1997 to 2001, reported crime in the county decreased dramatically for both adult and juvenile offenses. Overall, the number of offenses decreased by 60 percent. However, crime levels across the county varied among towns and among the neighborhoods within towns.

The Police Department

The Large New Site Two sheriff's office has law enforcement authority throughout the county, provides basic police services to a dozen unincorporated townships and villages, and assists numerous local municipal police departments. The agency has approximately 100 sworn officers, half assigned to the patrol bureau. It responds to 20,000 calls for service each year, and its deputies make approximately 3,500 criminal arrests.

The sheriff's office had begun developing partnerships with county schools prior to the SRO program, although these relationships were limited in scope. By 1999, the department's three community-oriented policing officers had initiated a variety of juvenile programs, including a countywide fingerprinting campaign and D.A.R.E. classes in two of the area's most populated school districts. The department had also designated an outreach officer for two of the county's more remote school districts with the goal of providing students more regular, less reactive, exposure to police.

In its COPS in Schools application, the sheriff's office proposed assigning one full-time deputy to each of four school districts with which it had previous agreements, as well as a deputy to a fifth district that had asked to participate. These five deputies were expected to tailor their work to meet the specific needs identified by each school district during program development, but generally they would serve as role models for students, offer dispute resolution and crisis intervention services, forge collaborations with parent associations, and strengthen the agency's contacts with other local organizations. The initial grant began during the 1999-2000 school year.

The School Districts

As in the larger community, considerable disparities exist among the sheriff's five partnering school districts, including levels of economic prosperity, urbanization, and racial and ethnic composition. Two of the five districts are in small rural areas with average socioeconomic profiles and average levels of poverty; of the other two districts that are also small and rural, one has a high level of socioeconomic distress and the other a considerably wealthier population. The fifth school district is in an urban/suburban region of the county with a better than average socioeconomic profile.

The school districts range in size, with the largest serving over 6,000 pupils at over 10 schools. This district's high school alone has over 1,300 students, roughly the total number of students served by the sheriff's smallest partnering school district. In the 2001 academic year, all of the sheriff office's partnering districts experienced graduation and attendance rates that were higher than the state's average. However, only two met the state's "minimum acceptable" graduation standard of 90 percent. One district reported a

significantly higher rate of student suspensions than the state average. Only one district spent more per pupil than the state average.

Program History

The sheriff's department and school districts collaborated to establish the programs' objectives.

Origins

In the process of designing its SRO programs, the sheriff's office requested suggestions from administrators at its four 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. The districts that eventually joined the SRO project all identified truancy as a major concern, one that resulted in promotion and graduation rates historically below state-mandated levels. Other common problems that educators believed might benefit from an SRO's attention included child abuse, fighting, and other "aggressive" behavior among students, and teen substance abuse. As a result, the sheriff's office anticipated that its SROs would work in the areas of dispute resolution, truancy reduction, identification of at-risk students, mentoring, and role modeling. Given the diversity of conditions across the program's sites, however, each SRO would collaborate with officials in his or her own school district to design an individualized program, one tailored to address specific needs in the locale and deal with its particular barriers to providing a safe learning environment.

Budget

The program's annual budget for five SROs has been about $200,000. COPS in Schools funding has paid the entire expense except for a few thousand dollars in the third year that the county contributed to offset a small reduction in Federal funding.

Planning and Implementation Obstacles

Although there were few problems planning the program, some difficulties arose during its early implementation.

Planning Obstacles and Solutions

For the most part, administrators in each school district had well thought-out notions
about the problem areas they expected the SROs to address on their campuses. At the
same time, SROs developed a good sense of how to distribute their time among the
various schools in their assigned districts in order to address these problems.

Defining school district expectations at start up

A sharp rise in disciplinary concerns during the late 1990s contributed, in part, to the
readiness of officials in at least one school district to participate in the SRO initiative.
In-school suspensions had increased by 50 percent in the three years prior to program's
implementation. During the same time period (1996-98), more serious, out-of-school
suspensions had risen by 20 percent. Such troubling trends had prompted the local
school board to develop a holistic plan to target student discipline and delinquency
concerns. A central part of this strategy involved the SRO program, because school
administrators believed a full-time officer specifically assigned to their schools would
help them address student alcohol and drug abuse, promote conflict resolution, and
improve the overall safety of their district's campuses.

Administrators from a second school district had similar goals for the SRO program.
Staff and students there had encountered many of the same problems identified by the
first district only on a larger scale due to the size of its student enrollment. In the three
years prior to program implementation, educators had documented a growing number of
suspensions and expulsions for fighting, threatening and aggressive behavior, alcohol and
drug abuse, weapons violations, and truancy. Despite the magnitude and scope of these
disciplinary encounters, at least some school district officials saw the SRO program as a
prevention tool, rather than strictly as an intervention. The assistant superintendent, for
example, described his vision of the SRO initiative as one founded in a youth
development model. As such, the presence of a police officer within the schools would
enhance the work of other social service providers with whom teachers routinely
collaborated, such as counselors and child protection specialists. A full-time SRO,
moreover, would provide an additional resource for the district to address its entrenched

truancy cases, eventually promoting school attendance and graduation through outreach to repeat offenders and their parents.

Administrators from a third school district described similar notions of how the SRO program might best serve their students. According to its local principals, truancy had become a significant obstacle to achieving educational goals and meeting state performance standards. In the year prior to SRO program start-up, more than100 students failed to meet the state requirement for attendance, and the graduation rate had dipped to 81 percent. School personnel believed that substance abuse, either in the home or among students, accounted for a large portion of these problems. The high school had an active partnership with the area's mental health and addiction services board, and its principal had embraced a "full service" orientation toward serving youth. This principal had begun to build a closely-knit, coherent network of providers to serve students, and he asserted that an SRO could play a vital role within this service delivery system.

In the sheriff's fourth partnering school district, officials reported that they saw the SRO program as an opportunity to expand a "pilot initiative" with the department in which a specific deputy had already begun serving the district one day a week. The superintendent cited the educational component of this program, asserting that the "expertise offered by a deputy in our classrooms assists students in understanding law enforcement" and that this learning "may help them be better citizens in and out of school." He noted, particularly, that the officers' presence had added credibility to his district's safety curriculum, and he lauded the partnership as a means of personalizing the relationship between schools and law enforcement personnel.

Although less is known about the fifth school district's goals at the outset of the SRO program, it appears that, as in neighboring sites, administrators anticipated that a full-time officer would help them to address their disciplinary concerns, which they cited as violence, vandalism, truancy, and theft.

Distribution of officers within each school district

When the SRO program began during the fall of 1999, much of the decision making about how to distribute and schedule the SROs' time and work fell to the officers

themselves. In general, however, the SROs' presence on each campus and across each grade level appears well suited to the program goals established by each district's school administrators. In one school community, for example, where the administrators saw the initiative both as providing disciplinary benefits in the high school and as expanding the safety curriculum in the elementary schools, the SRO divides her time fairly evenly among the district's four campuses. By contrast, in another school district the SRO has seen the greatest need for services at the junior and senior high schools. Students there, he observes, most often benefit from the role modeling and mentoring aspects of the program, mostly because of the social dysfunction and familial difficulties that engulf them. While this SRO does spend limited time in the district's three elementary schools, he has become a more integral part of the "total care" model adopted by the school administration at the middle/high school campus.

The SRO in a third school district has also focused his attention on the junior high and senior high campuses, largely because a local police department in the region has a liaison officer serving the three elementary schools. In a fourth district, where a sheriff's office D.A.R.E. officer teaches grade school students, the deputy similarly divides his schedule between the high school and the middle school, responding to the elementary schools only on an "as needed" basis.

In the final school district, the SRO spends most of his time on investigative and follow-up activities at the district's high school and three middle schools. He reports that, while he has attempted to schedule classes at the elementary schools, he has often had to cancel them due to unforeseen safety and security matters that occur at the upper grade levels. As a result, he no longer tries to plan his work schedule in advance but rather assesses the demands and needs for his time at each school on an ongoing basis, prioritizing them again each day. In addition, a full-time D.A.R.E. officer provides most of the services requested at the elementary level.

Implementation Obstacles and Solutions

Two early implementation problems occurred: confusion among SROs and school administrators about the SROs' role because of a lack of specificity in describing in

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advance the officers' functions, and negative reactions to the program on the part of some teachers in some of the participating school districts.

SRO integration in the schools

Even though the sheriff's department made significant efforts to include school administrators in the grant application and SRO screening process, all five SROs recall the actual start-up of the program as a difficult and stressful experience. Four of the five started in their districts after the academic year had begun. This meant that students, teachers, and principals in their schools had already developed schedules and routines, making the SROs' participation more awkward. Furthermore, although the sheriff and the school districts have provided significant training to the SROs *since* the program's inception, the deputies received little preparation for their new roles *prior* to entering the schools.

The initial phase of the SRO program presented the officers with perhaps their biggest challenge—learning to discriminate between "police matters" and "school administration matters." Each SRO has had to learn the circumstances in which principals or teachers might intervene more effectively than a law enforcement officer can because of the type of services and resources at their disposal. School staff, in turn, have had to become aware of the legal obligations and limitations of a police officer's work. According to one SRO, administrators in his school district initially feared an increase of negative press about problems in their schools if local reporters began soliciting records about the officers' activities. These administrators wanted to avoid unduly alarming parents who, with greater media coverage, might start thinking there must have been a sudden increase in discipline problems and begin to fear for the safety of their children. The SRO also admits that *he* had difficulty overlooking certain problems normally handled by school administrators, since some of these involved minor criminal offenses. It took about six months for him to begin to feel more comfortable in his new role, he reported, and for school staff to begin to trust him. By early 2002, the program had evolved into what he described as a "well-oiled machine."

This same school district's superintendent attributed early tensions about the SRO program to the lack of role definition. When should administrators "pull in the SRO" for

discipline problems? What SRO interventions posed potential violations of student rights? How could the district approach the integration of the two distinct cultures of law enforcement and school administration? These questions remained "sticking points," she said, until the SROs, together with a principal or superintendent's representative from each of the five school districts, attended a full-day seminar on school law. The presenters, a law group from a nearby city, distributed a handbook to attendees on safety, order, and discipline concerns in American schools. The SRO and district officials have referred to this document countless times for guidance on Federal and state law, and "best practices," concerning police involvement in schools. They consider it an essential resource.

The other SROs all reported similar problems in melding the two cultures of police and school during program initiation. Moreover, they had a more basic concern—just knowing what to do at first. While all five SROs now feel fully integrated into their school systems, when they started they had little structure to their days and they found this disorganization distressing. Although they understood why the sheriff's office had avoided firm guidelines and criteria—so that the SROs could better respond to particular problems in each school district—this lack of direction created stress for the SROs. It also resulted in significant differences in the levels of demand on and the expected uses of their time, as the Program Activities section below explains.

Staff, student, and community reaction to the SRO

One school district administrator characterized teacher and staff response to the new police presence in their schools as "a mixed bag." Some teachers expressed a sense of relief from the outset. Others, he recalled, wondered, "Why is he here—is the school really that bad?" Some worried that parents might become alarmed or that kids would feel they were being watched. The visibility of the deputy in classes, hallways, basketball games, and dances, he contends, helped to erode the skepticism of staff who initially questioned the program's value.

This district's SRO, himself, found that many staff members were nervous about his intentions. He sensed anxiety about whether he would interfere with their time-tested ways of handling discipline and also fear that he might violate students' civil rights.

Whenever the officer wanted to speak with a student, for whatever reason, during the
SRO's first few months on the job the principal insisted that he first notify the student's
parents. This soon proved impractical and, obviously, detrimental to one of the
program's main goals, removing barriers in the youth-police communications.

An administrator at a second school district said, "Any principal knew that your life
changed after Columbine." Parents panicked, insisting on bringing their children to
school and picking them up for a while after the tragedy. Student perceptions of school
safety became severely distorted, as well. The level of vigilance at schools "quadrupled."
Because of these concerns, this administrator thought that having an SRO available to his
school might foster a sense of security. He reports that parents never complained about
the SRO program or about the district's assigned officer. The superintendent's office had
notified parents of its decision to collaborate with sheriff's office ahead of time and
explained its decision in letters sent home to students' families. The high school
newspaper also ran a story on the program's objectives, as did a district-wide newsletter.

The SRO in this community reports having a good relationship with many students in the
high school, noting that, in general they trust him. They have become accustomed to
seeing him at the main doorway of their school each day, where he usually begins his
"rounds" by observing and greeting them as they enter the building. He believes that a
lot of "bonding" has taken place with both middle and high school students through his
accompanying them on field trips. Several kids have approached him with reports of
drug dealing or weapons in the school, he indicated. Following one such "tip,"
administrators recovered a gun that a student had brought on campus.

Administrators at a third school district reported that, even before the program's start,
they had solicited suggestions from the schools on how to best use the SRO's services.
At meetings with teachers and staff, for example, they brainstormed about different
classes and presentations the SRO might offer to students and staff. The assistant
superintendent recalled little resistance from parents in the community. Parents
supported having a deputy readily available to the district, she suggested, because many
already had concerns about their children's safety in the aftermath of school shootings
elsewhere in the country. One strategy crucial to allaying any parental concerns involved

having the SRO as integrated and visible as possible. To speed this process, the deputy
began attending school functions and other community events on a regular basis, even on
weekends.

Program Coordination

The program had to address coordination between the SROs and the schools, and
between the SROs and the sheriff's department.

Defining SRO Roles and Responsibilities

Beyond the initial, broad agreements that the sheriff's office and school districts
submitted as part of their COPS in Schools application, the partner agencies all developed
and signed a basic memorandum of understanding that established that, as sworn law
enforcement officers, deputies serving in the SRO program would remain responsible to
the sheriff. However, while on campus, these deputies would *also* be responsible to "the
principal of the appropriate school building and to the Administration of [the school
district] as deemed necessary by school policy." This meant, in practice, that each SRO
would have several "bosses."

More specific reporting expectations, role definitions, and program protocols were to
emerge on an ad-hoc, site-specific basis. By the end of the first program year, police and
school personnel appeared to have a firm grasp of the program's day-to-day operations,
having addressed any previous misunderstanding or confusion. Nonetheless, the initial
lack of clarity around role delineation, distribution of officer time across schools and
activities, and especially around the exercise of authority across different contexts made
the first stages of program implementation stressful for the SROs.

The limited scope of written guidelines, policies, and procedures for the SRO program
also contributed to peculiarities in how the program operates within each school district.
While similar in most aspects, inconsistencies exist among the different districts. For
example, the proposal first called for all five SROs to serve their schools full time during
the nine-month academic year but to remain available for other assignments by the
sheriff's office during school breaks. This policy appears to have remained in effect for
only three of the SROs. School officials from other two partner communities have

requested that their deputies work with them for the balance of the year as well, to help with summer school, camps, or other vacation programs. A similar divergence occurs regarding SRO involvement in after-school programs, extracurricular activities, and school trips. One district directly pays its SRO any overtime for these activities, while in other sites the school department compensates such involvement as "extra details." Although it does not appear to have happened in this instance, these types of disparities in how SROs are treated within the same law enforcement agency could leave the program vulnerable to officer dissatisfaction or competition, union complications, or, at the very least, scheduling difficulties.

Relations with the Sheriff's Department

The five SROs begin each day by attending the patrol division's 6:30 a.m. roll call at department headquarters in full uniform. They retrieve their patrol vehicles after roll call and then begin their school-related duties for the day. At the end of their shifts, the SROs return their vehicles to headquarters and file any paperwork stemming from that day's activities.

In addition to standing roll call with their division each morning, the SROs maintain a connection with their fellow deputies through routine collaboration and follow-up activities. Their unit supervisor indicates that, when another officer responds to a call involving a student from one of the program's five school districts, whether after school or on the weekend, the officer contacts the pertinent SRO to exchange information and ensure ongoing monitoring of the case. This type of cooperation has increased over the course of the program's development to become "practically daily interaction" between the SROs and other deputies. Further association between the SROs and the department occurs during school vacations, when three of the officers return to road patrol either full-time or part-time.

These opportunities notwithstanding, the remote location of several of the program's participating school districts has limited SRO interaction with other police personnel. The officers at two of the more isolated locations, in particular, have restricted contact, not only because of their long distance from headquarters but also because of the infrequency of calls for service from their communities. As a result, the two SROs have

formed a strong working collaboration with each other. Since the two districts are athletic rivals, the SROs often see each other during sporting events. They also serve as back-up for each other whenever needed.

The School Resource Officers

The sheriff's office and the schools jointly selected the original five SROs, all of whom, despite very little initial training for the job, remained in their positions for over two years. Of the three SROs who have remained, one left for a promotion and another left because of internal discipline problems.

Recruitment

As they had done throughout the COPS in Schools proposal writing and planning stages, sheriff's office supervisors enlisted assistance from school officials in screening candidates for the SRO program. The memorandum of agreement signed by each local school board and the sheriff's office calls for "joint selection" of the SROs. In response, 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. The selection team collectively designed and used a set of criteria to evaluate the SRO candidates. The unit's commander recalled some of the major factors considered by interviewers as good communication skills, past performance on the job, and ability to work independently. In addition to the personal interview component, each applicant also provided written responses to questions.

One school administrator recalled that, in screening SRO candidates, he looked for officers who had the characteristics of a teacher as well as a law enforcer—"a teacher who picked the wrong profession." He knew that, in order for the SRO to be a viable member of his staff, the officer would need to "fit" within the culture of the school. An assistant superintendent at a second school district echoed these concerns and stressed the importance of finding an officer with "the right personality." She believes that her district's SRO has achieved success because he interacts well with students and parents and knows how to deescalate tense situations. An officer with less developed

interpersonal skills or one with a confrontational style of communication would have doomed the program to failure, according to the school administrator.

Each of the five SROs chosen by the screening committee had 11 to 16 years' experience on the force.

Training

The five initial SROs received little preparation for their new roles before entering the schools. While later on the sheriff and the school districts provided significant training, the SROs recommended that deputies be trained for the position before going into the schools.

Turnover

All five initial SROs lasted at least two years in the position. More recent developments, however, have resulted in a large turnover in SRO personnel. One SRO received a promotion and, shortly thereafter, his replacement was laid off due to budget cuts. Another officer faced internal discipline and was placed on administrative leave. One SRO experienced a serious illness requiring long-term medical leave but has since returned to his position as SRO.

In response to these events, which occurred in rapid succession, the sheriff's office has decided to start a new recruitment and placement phase, using methods similar to those it employed at the outset. The unit supervisor has invited officials from each of the school districts to screen and interview all candidates, just as he did during the original selection of officers.

Program Activities

Large New Site Two's five SROs differ in how they carry out their mission. While all serve the general goals of violence reduction, identification of at-risk youth, and role modeling, the operating style of each officer and the precise needs of each school or school district that they serve ultimately determine how the program becomes

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implemented. As a result, as described below, each SRO has emphasized a different balance among the three broad SRO roles of law enforcement, teaching, and mentoring.

School District One: Law Enforcement Focus

The SRO stationed at the first school district spends most of his time on investigative and follow-up activities at the district's high school and three middle schools. He also handles or consults with fellow officers on other cases that involve his students. For example, he has investigated the sexual assaults of students that have occurred in town. While he reports that a lot of his work involves alleged sexual assaults, this SRO does not offer classes or presentations specifically focused on the prevention and consequences of date rape. He stated that he enjoys working "big cases," and this, perhaps, helps to explain his emphasis on enforcement activities rather than teaching or counseling.

Table 1 provides a summary of activities documented by the SRO in a sample of his monthly logs from the 2001-02 school year. Because work records from the program's initial two years were unavailable, there is no way of documenting whether the SRO's activities may have changed over time. Nonetheless, in his third year as an SRO, when one would expect that the program had become most integrated into the school system, the SRO clearly demonstrated a concentration on enforcement-related tasks.

Table 1: Activities of SRO in School District One Documented in a Sample of Monthly Logs*

Type of Activity	Frequency (Percent)
Disciplinary/Investigative	219 (60%)
Teaching/School Event	23 (6%)
Counseling/Meeting with or about Students	95 (26%)
Other (e.g., court, patrol assist, training)	28 (8%)
Total	**365 (100%)**

Months tallied were Oct. 2001, Nov. 2001, March 2002, and April 2002.

This district's assistant superintendent suggested that the purpose of posting police in the schools was to maintain order, not to respond to crime per se, and that a police presence in schools sends the message that law enforcement will intervene immediately. The high school principal, echoing this assessment, stated that his school has benefited greatly

from the SRO's presence. Before the program began, calls for routine police intervention at his school might go unanswered for hours, simply because of the jurisdiction's large area and the sheriff's department's limited staff. With a deputy assigned specifically to the school district, administrators can access police assistance much more quickly. This has helped diffuse tense situations and prevented the escalation of problems in certain cases. If a simple assault occurs at the high school, for example, even if the SRO is at one of the middle schools he can respond to a page in a matter of minutes. Previously, police might arrive only an hour or two later to investigate the situation, requiring the principal to hold and pacify the often agitated, accused student for a long period. This created stress not only for the student, but also for the student's family and the staff members involved.

The principal cited the following as examples of the type and range of enforcement-related problems for which the schools request SRO assistance:

- protective services interviews;
- students carrying weapons;
- assaults;
- smoking;
- speeding;
- entrenched cases of truancy; and
- verification of addresses.

The 226 calls handled by the sheriff's office in this school district (including garages and administrative offices) since the SRO program began in late 1999 suggested that, although relatively small when compared with schools in some higher crime areas, the level of law enforcement activity in the district stands out among the levels found in other school districts participating in the SRO program.

School District Two: Security-Related Focus

In a second, more rural, school district, the SRO uses his police training and skills to assist the schools with issues of *security* more than matters of *enforcement*. The SRO sits on the school board's security committee and has assessed the physical safety of each building. He assisted the district with replacing its outdated video surveillance system and began supervising the new system's maintenance. He arranged for its cameras to

feed directly into two computers in the assistant principal's office, where he generally sits. The SRO admits that no one monitors the computers on a continuous basis, but they have proven helpful in response to actual calls for service at the building and for collecting evidence in the event of security breaches.

The assistant superintendent in this school district emphasizes that the SRO has helped tremendously with devising school crisis plans for various types of emergency situations. Several staff members reported that the deputy had also been helpful and resourceful during a recent meningitis scare. They suggest that the episode, which involved the SRO's coordination of communication and contact among public health experts, parents, students, and school district personnel, presents a model for police and community working together during a crisis.

In addition, the SRO's presence has helped diffuse potentially violent encounters between upset parents and school staff, between agitated students and school staff, and between students and other students. The SRO has also helped maintain order at after-school and extracurricular activities like sporting events.

Despite the SRO and superintendent's focus on preventive security, the high school's assistant principal described his building as a very easy place to work. He stated that the school has "good kids" who pose very few problems. Only 13 fights occurred during the previous year, resulting in a total of 26 out-of-school suspensions. Very few weapons or drug-related incidents occur. The administrator and SRO both report that many students use marijuana, but this generally happens off campus. Very rarely is a student found with alcohol or drugs at school. The four-year total of 93 cases in this district since the SRO program began amounts to fewer than the number of cases recorded in just one year, 2001, in the first school district.

Beyond security, the SRO in this district also presents in-service training sessions for teachers and staff that address matters other than safety and security, such as student rights and responsibilities and appropriate occasions on which to request police intervention. The SRO also regularly performs counseling and mentoring functions. In addition to informal conversations and discussions with students, the officer often

responds to teachers' requests for intervention with particular kids. The high school principal indicates that the SRO participates in team meetings in which relevant teachers, administrators, and counselors discuss a student who has had behavioral or academic difficulties.

The one remaining shortcoming that the high school principal sees with the SRO program in his district is the limited opportunity for classroom teaching that it affords. School officials have used the SRO to provide a series of lectures on bullying at the middle school, but this administrator would like to see the SRO more active in formal educational programs and activities. The summary of program activities provided in table 2 indicates that the SRO, in fact, did gradually shift his workload toward this more balanced approach. Although this shift may simply reflect changes in record keeping, it also may point to adjustments the SRO made once he became more fully integrated into the school district.

Table 2: Activities of SRO in School District Two Documented in a Sample of Monthly Work Logs

	School Years			
	1999-2000	**2000-2001**	**2001-2002**	**3 Year Total**
Disciplinary	5 (5%)	13 (7%)	28 (12%)	46 (9%)
Counseling/Meeting with or about Student	73 (71%)	141 (73%)	119 (50%)	333 (63%)
Teaching/School Event	12 (11%)	18 (9%)	43 (18%)	73 (14%)
Other (e.g., court, patrol assist, training)	13 (13%)	21 (11%)	46 (19%)	80 (15%)
Total	**103**	**193**	**236**	**532**

*Months tallied: Oct., Nov., March, and April of each school year.

School District Three: Focus on Counseling and Mentoring

At the third school district, the SRO has filed a seemingly large number of police reports considering the small size of the district's enrollment. The SRO has made more than three times the number of arrests made by the SRO in the much larger school district two. He has also filed over one-and-a-half times the number of police reports generated by his counterpart from school district two.

However, the SRO in this third district has played a much more integral part in his students' lives than any other SRO in the Large New Site Two program. The superintendent of schools has worked to build an elaborate social service network in which the SRO has become a mentor and role model for a designated group of students. The SRO has attended field trips as a chaperone and has become intimately involved with the culture of the school. His weekly activity logs, summarized in table 3, demonstrate his consistent fulfillment of these mentoring and counseling responsibilities

Table 3: Activities of SRO in School District Three Documented in a Sample of Monthly Work Logs*

Type of Activity	School Year			
	1999-2000	**2000-2001**	**2001-2002**	**3 Year Total**
Disciplinary	1 (1%)	11 (7%)	7 (5%)	19 (5%)
Counseling/Meeting with or about Students	56 (53%)	82 (52%)	77 (54%)	215 (53%)
Teaching/School Event	40 (38%)	37 (23%)	36 (25%)	113 (28%)
Other (e.g., court, patrol assist, training)	9 (8%)	28 (18%)	22 (16%)	59 (15%)
Total	**106**	**158**	**142**	**406**

*Months tallied: Oct., Nov., March, and April of each school year.

Because these functions periodically pit the SRO against his role as a law enforcement officer, they have produced a high degree of personal stress. He indicates that at times he has felt genuinely "conflicted" when he has had to punish students. For example, when the SRO learned about a New Year's Eve "field party" one year, he became a central figure in an investigation that led to numerous charges filed against students for unlawful sexual activity and underage drinking. The deputy felt "embroiled" in these matters and had difficulty separating his personal emotions from his professional responsibilities.

School District Four: Emphasis on Education and Prevention

In the fourth school district, the less severe disciplinary picture, coupled with the small number of students on the junior-senior high school campus, has permitted the SRO to become very active in the elementary schools. Her activity logs document that she spent roughly 40 percent of her time in the elementary schools, far more than that of any of her colleagues.

This SRO asserts that she has taken advantage of the lower demand for enforcement activities in her district to focus on violence prevention, safety, and civics lessons in elementary classrooms. At the middle and high school level, she performs mostly a mediation and violence prevention function. She reports that students often tell her about problems that they are having with other students in their building, particularly cases in which girls "gang up on" other girls. In these instances, the SRO generally brings all of the affected parties into her office to try to sort out their misunderstandings and counsel them. She usually does not record these incidents in a police report unless one of the parties or parents request it. In terms of crime, she has handled mostly theft in the schools and an occasional wave of burglaries in the immediate vicinity of the campus. She has seen practically no physical violence in the schools and has filed a very limited number of police reports (49), even when compared with her colleagues' numbers at the program's other small school districts.

School District Five: Implementing the Triad Model

The SRO program at the final participating school district benefited greatly from the presence of a school administrator who had previously researched police-school partnerships. The administrator had a clear sense of the roles that SROs have played in other schools across the country, and this knowledge helped her outline, together with sheriff's office supervisors, the roles and responsibilities of the SRO assigned to her district. Such pre-implementation planning, in contrast to the "on the job" decision-making described by the department's other SROs, may account for this deputy's ability to work all three legs of the triad model commonly prescribed for SROs in schools—enforcement, education, and counseling and mentoring.

The assistant principal of this district's high school portrayed his student population as highly unruly. Even before the SRO program began, he said, it sometimes seemed that the school would need police intervention on nearly a daily basis. The assignment of a designated officer to the district has markedly increased the speed with which the sheriff's office can respond to these incidents. It also has helped staff more readily identify cases that call for police attention. According to the assistant principal, the SRO has helped to handle mainly cases involving disorderly conduct, theft, persistent truancy,

drug or alcohol possession, and investigations of child physical and sexual abuse. The schools in district five have been responsible for 182 police reports since the program's inception.

Another school district official estimates that, in addition to enforcement-related activities, the SRO handles 90 percent of conflict resolution interventions at the high school. The superintendent's office had applied for a state school conflict management grant about the same time that it joined sheriff's office in submitting the COPS in Schools proposal, demonstrating its strong commitment to providing a systematic response to discipline problems. The SRO has received training in dispute resolution, paid for by the school district, and he estimates that he receives an average of ten referrals per week that call for this type of intervention.

Teachers and staff have also included the SRO in weekly meetings of the alternative education program's counseling team. In these student-centered case conferences, counseling, teaching, and administrative staff discuss the progress of "at-risk" kids. (According to the assistant principal, close to 25 percent of the high school's students have behavioral or academic problems.) The SRO has accompanied other team members on home visits and also assists families and administrators with chronic truancy cases. The SRO has become involved in after-school activities and works at all home basketball and football games, as well as at dances and similar events at the middle and high schools.

The SRO at this district, then, has adopted a work strategy closely aligned with the COPS Office triad model. His activity logs, summarized in table 4, document his diverse and balanced roles and responsibilities.

Summary of Program Activities

As described above, several different models of SRO activity have emerged within the Large New Site Two program. While the SROs all appear to have achieved the general range of activities initially prescribed by the department, the specific needs of each school, as well as the particular preferences and operating style of each officer, have led to adjustments and variety across the five school districts.

Table 4: Activities of SRO in School District Five Documented in Monthly Work Logs*

	School Year			
Type of Activity	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	3 Year Total
Disciplinary	7 (37%)	36 (33%)	38 (48%)	81 (39%)
Counseling/Meeting with or about Students	1 (5%)	16 (15%)	4 (5%)	21 (10%)
Teaching/School Event	5 (26%)	29 (27%)	12 (15%)	46 (22%)
Other	6 (32%)	27 (25%)	26 (32%)	59 (28%)
Total	**19**	**108**	**80**	**207**

*Months tallied: Oct., Nov., March, and April of each school year.*

Table 5 and figure 1 provide a broad picture of the collective work of the five SROs, *as a unit*. The volume of work reported by the officers increased from year to year, while the distribution of their efforts across different activities remained fairly consistent over time. The officers appear to have devoted the largest share of their time to counseling and other student-focused meetings. Collectively, they spent approximately one-quarter of their time teaching or participating in school events like assemblies or parent-teacher nights. The SROs appear to have focused least on discipline or enforcement-related duties, although it is important to note that, because records were unavailable from two program years, this summary excludes the activities of the SRO who emphasized the enforcement aspect the most.

Table 5: Programwide Activities Documented in Sampled SRO Monthly Logs*

	School Year			
Type of Activity	Year Two	Year Two	Year Three	3 Year Total
Disciplinary	16 (6%)	61 (14%)	63 (13%)	140 (12%)
Counseling/Meeting with or about Students	141 (53%)	231 (52%)	205 (43%)	577 (48%)
Teaching/School Event	75 (28%)	97 (22%)	109 (23%)	281 (24%)
Other (e.g., court, patrol assist, training)	35 (13%)	56 (13%)	96 (20%)	187 (16%)
Total	**267**	**445**	**473**	**1185**

Months tallied: Oct., Nov., March, and April of each school year.

Figure 1: Percentage of SRO Activities by Activity Type for All Three Years
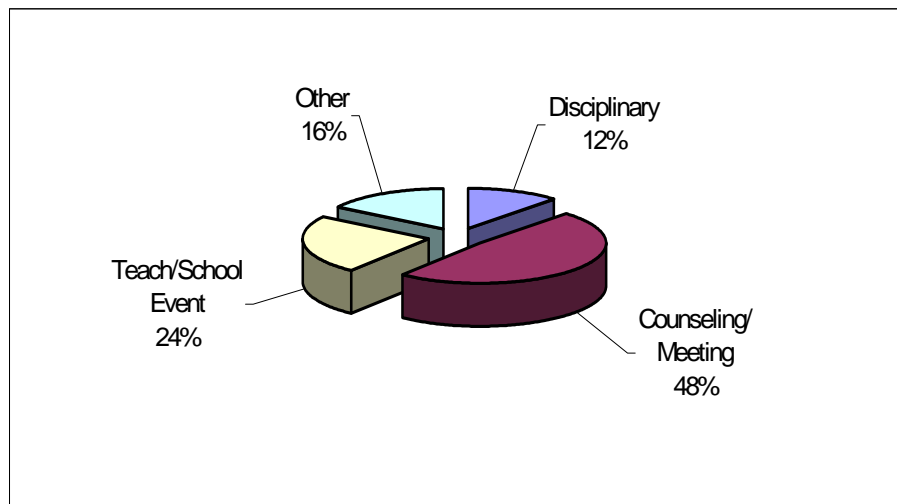
Program Monitoring and Evaluation

School administrators participate in monitoring the SROs. While not conclusive, evidence suggests that the program may have reduced school crime and other discipline problems, improved graduation rates, and benefited public safety.

Monitoring

According to the SRO program supervisor, the sheriff's office has annually invited and encouraged administrators from each of its partner school districts to review the performance of its SROs. Two school districts have developed specific reporting tools for this purpose, while administrators from the other three districts have submitted evaluations in letter form. A sample of their performance reviews follows.

- According to a letter from one high school principal, "the program works better than I thought it would, it works *differently* than how I thought it would work." While he originally conceived of the program in terms of increased security and feelings of safety at the school, he now understands the proactive role the SRO plays, as well. He had not anticipated the level of trust that the SRO would foster among students. He sees now that the deputy has formed positive relationships with many kids, so that the kids get to know him "as more than just a cop." The principal also appreciated the close relationship that the SRO has with many of the high school's teachers and staff. They have confidence in his judgment and

handling of sensitive matters. The administrator summarizes that the SRO is "a member of our team."

- An assistant principal from another high school reported that the SRO has helped him and other staff members respond to potentially dangerous situations as they arise. He specifically mentioned a bomb scare and an incident in which a student brought a knife to campus and threatened suicide. The SRO's crisis intervention skills helped diffuse the danger until the school secured psychiatric care for the child.

- A second high school principal observed several positive outcomes. Students begin to see police officers in a more positive light—through the SRO's regular presence in their lives, young people begin to accept him as more than "just another institutional employee." The SRO also acts as an intermediary with delinquent students—the officer helps students think through their decisions and accept responsibility for their actions. Finally, administrators and teachers learn from the SRO's law-related expertise.

- The superintendent from a third school district reported that she has observed a behavioral change in students because of the SRO's presence. Although police and incident reports may have increased over the life of the program due to increased police responsiveness and awareness, she notes that truancy has become less of a problem for administrators. She suggests that students are more likely to come to school on their own now because they know that truancy violations are enforced. Because of these gains, and because of the school administration's view that district students have become increasingly "street tough," the superintendent stated that the school district would do "whatever it needs to" in order to maintain the SRO program after the initial grant expires—a prediction later proven to be accurate (see below).

Evidence of Program Effectiveness

While not conclusive, evidence suggests that the program may have reduced school crime and other discipline problems, improved graduation rates, and benefited public safety.

School Crime

Table 6 presents the total number of incident reports filed by sheriff's office deputies in response to infractions or disturbances at or on the grounds of every school in the county's five school districts. The data reflect reports filed by SROs and non-SROs, alike, and include buildings beside the schools, such as district offices, bus garages, and food distribution sites.

Table 6: Incidents at Large New Site Two Partner Schools

Type of Offense	1999 Total	2000 Total	2001 Total	2002 Total*
Violent Crime	26	34	29	19
Property Crime	65	68	63	33
Domestic Violence	0	2	4	1
Sexual Assaults	2	10	8	11
Arson	3	1	0	1
Bomb Threats	0	1	1	4
Drugs/Alcohol	4	30	39	10
Motor Vehicle	5	6	4	1
Status Offenses	27	37	65	44
Threats	33	37	39	25
Warrant	1	3	4	1
Non-Criminal Investigation	75	93	78	36
Other/Unspecified	42	52	63	31
Total	283	374	397	217

Reflects activity through 10/15/02.

As one might expect, the number of police reports rose with the introduction of officers
on campus each day. Law enforcement and education officials all maintained that these
increases reflected the increased reporting opportunity and heightened awareness of
incidents stemming from the SROs' presence rather than an actual increase in school
disorder. The nearly four-fold increase in drug- and alcohol-related reports may show
that the program has successfully targeted these particular risk behaviors, identified as
problem areas during the initial grant application process. By the third full year of the
program, the total number of incidents appeared to be declining—a sign that may point to
the ultimate crime-reduction and safety-enhancing benefits envisioned by program
participants. However, since the 2002 data cover only the first nine-and-one-half months
of the year and a disproportionate share of incidents may ultimately have occurred in the

final two-and-one-half months, it is not certain that the end-of-year total would, in fact, indicate a drop in crime.

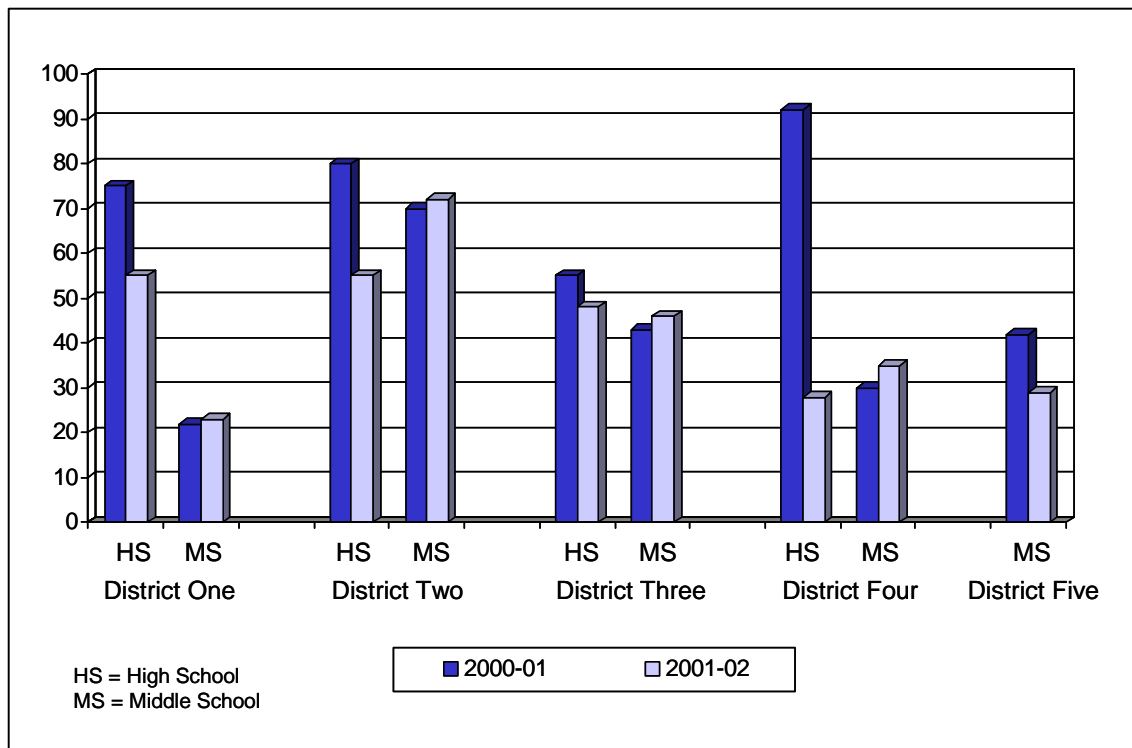*School Discipline and Safety Concerns*

Data were available for all of the sheriff's partner schools for just two years. As shown in figure 2, during this two-year period, as the SROs became more fully integrated in their school districts, the number of disciplinary actions per 100 students (in-school suspension, Saturday school, out-of-school suspension, expulsion) decreased in all of the participating high schools. A similar decline occurred in some of the middle schools, although slight increases in disciplinary actions occurred in several middle schools.

By and large, however, as figure 3 shows, 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. First, with a fuller integration of the SRO program, administrators were able to intervene in cases before they developed into more serious infractions. The reduction may also indicate that the SROs' presence helped to deescalate student misbehavior by calming tensions already in progress.
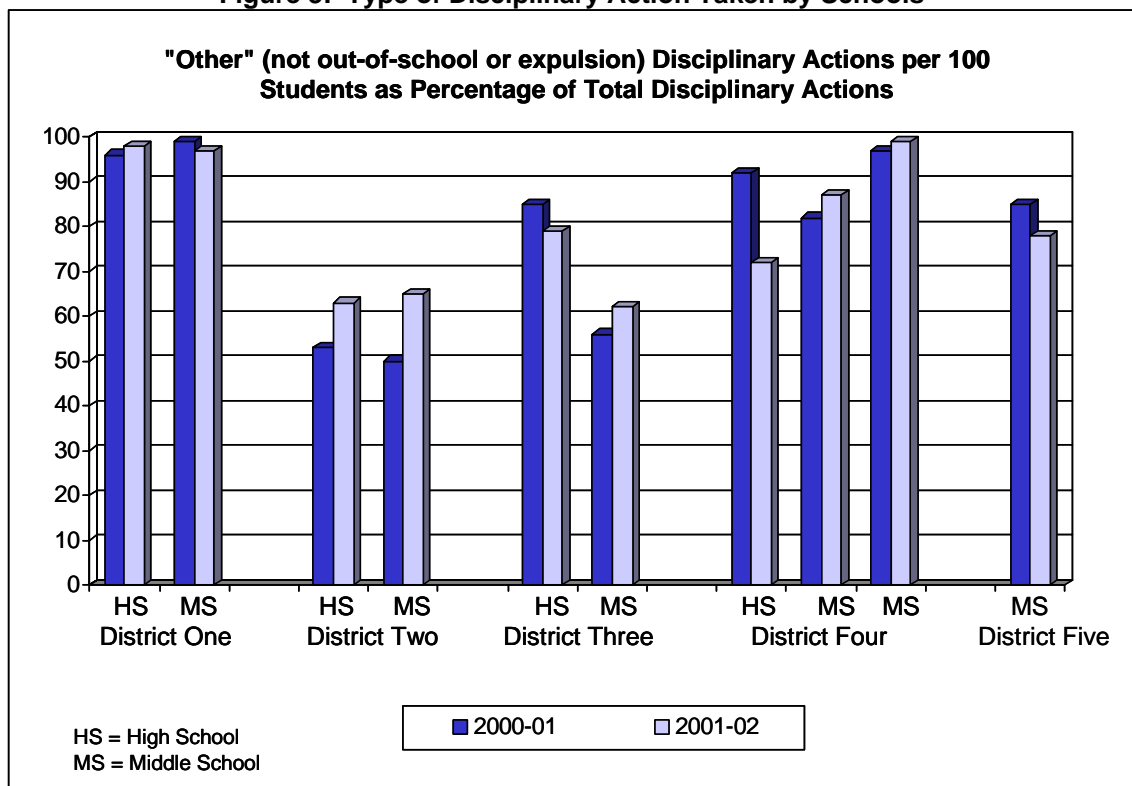
Improved Graduation Rates

During the process of planning and setting goals for the SRO program, school administrators from all but one of the sheriff's partner school districts identified truancy as a major area of concern. 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. At the time the program began, several of the school districts had so many entrenched cases of truancy that their graduation and promotion rates had fallen well below the state's mandated levels.

**Figure 2: Disciplinary Actions per 100 Students at the Junior and Senior High Level
by School District**

HS = High School
MS = Middle School

■ 2000-01   □ 2001-02

Figure 3: Type of Disciplinary Action Taken by Schools

**"Other" (not out-of-school or expulsion) Disciplinary Actions per 100
Students as Percentage of Total Disciplinary Actions**

HS = High School
MS = Middle School

■ 2000-01   □ 2001-02

As noted above, the SROs targeted the problem of truancy by counseling identified students, meeting with their parents or guardians, and, in some cases, performing home visits. Fortuitously or not, graduation rates for all five districts began to improve markedly. Table 7 shows the graduation rates from the four-year period before the SRO program began and for the three-and-one-half year period since 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 analysis. 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.

Table 7: Graduation Rates before and after SRO Program Implementation

	Year	School District One	School District Two	School District Three	School District Four	School District Five
	1996	70.4	74.8	74.2	74.1	82.8
Pre-SRO	1997	86	85.4	83.5	82.6	81.4
	1998	90.3	88.5	88.7	76.2	87.2
	1999	81.8	81.4	87.9	88.5	86.4
4 year average		*82.1*	*82.5*	*83.6*	*80.4*	*84.5*
	2000	90.6	78.5	85.8	90	90.1
Post-SRO	2001	92	87.5	91.1	87.3	86.7
	2002	90.5	91.6	94.5	89	92.7
	2003	92	90.8	96.6	89.1	94.5
4 year average		*91.3*	*87.1*	*92*	*88.9*	*91*

Benefits to Public Safety

By placing a deputy in the five school districts, the sheriff's office has freed road deputies to perform other vital patrol functions in the county. As table 8 shows, the number of incidents that the sheriff's office responded to at schools within its partnering districts increased from 261 in 1999 to 373 in 2001. However, the calls that officers other than SROs handled decreased dramatically during the same period, from 197, or 75 percent of the 1999 incidents, to 93, or just 25 percent of the 2001 incidents. 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 (which assumes no inflation resulting specifically from having the SROs in place), then deputies would have spent even more time away from their other patrol duties, responding to approximately 280 calls (75 percent of 373). Overall, then, the SRO program has enhanced the sheriff's capacity to maintain public safety, both by responding quickly to incidents at the schools and by freeing up resources to patrol elsewhere in the county.

Police Outreach and Community Programs

The SRO supervisor at the sheriff's office reports that, in addition to providing direct intervention and prevention services at schools, each district's SRO has promoted and strengthened the department's community outreach to surrounding neighborhoods. For example, before the start of the SRO program, the sheriff's office operated a popular children's fingerprinting campaign in shopping malls each holiday season. Once the SROs began their outreach to PTAs and other neighborhood groups, requests for this service began to grow. More people became involved, new organizations became sponsors, and the program gradually expanded from its once isolated efforts to its current pace of one to two sessions per week. Such results reflect the program's effectiveness in meeting one of the earliest, most fundamental goals articulated by the sheriff's office in its application for funding, that of augmenting the department's proactive involvement with community groups.

Community Support

In January 2003, a fiscal crisis, the end of the COPS in Schools grant, a weakening economy, and a shrinking county budget all combined to endanger the program's continuation. After voters defeated a proposed sales tax increase, the sheriff's office was forced to lay off 40 to 50 employees, including many recently hired deputies. These cuts prompted the agency to recall its five SROs from their schools and to redeploy them to conventional patrol.

Table 8: Sheriff's Office Incident Reports in the Five School Districts by Type of Officer

School District	1999[a]	2000	2001	2002[b]
School District One				
Total	261	358	373	199
Non-SRO	202	140	88	58
% by Non-SRO[c]	77%	39%	24%	29%
SRO	59	218	285	141
School District Two				
Total	261	358	373	199
Non-SRO	202	140	88	58
% by Non-SRO[c]	77%	39%	24%	29%
SRO	59	218	285	141
School District Three				
Total	261	358	373	199
Non-SRO	202	140	88	58
% by Non-SRO[c]	77%	39%	24%	29%
SRO	59	218	285	141
School District Four				
Total	261	358	373	199
Non-SRO	202	140	88	58
% by Non-SRO[c]	77%	39%	24%	29%
SRO	59	218	285	141
School District Five				
Total	261	358	373	199
Non-SRO	202	140	88	58
% by Non-SRO[c]	77%	39%	24%	29%
SRO	59	218	285	141
Program Total				
Total	261	358	373	199
Non-SRO	202	140	88	58
% by Non-SRO[c]	77%	39%	24%	29%
SRO	59	218	285	141

a) SROs were in their schools for only the last two to three months of 1999.
b) Reflects activity through 10/15/02.
c) Non-SRO refers to any deputy other than an SRO.

The schools, however, have backed their administrators' assertions that they were prepared to "do whatever it takes" to sustain the SRO program. Four school districts now use alternative funding streams to cover the costs of maintaining their SROs. According to the sheriff's office, each of these districts has agreed to pay its SRO's salary for the nine-month academic calendar, with the department picking up the cost for the remainder of the year. According to the SROs' commanding officer, "When times got tough, the schools decided that the benefits of having a full-time officer assigned to their district far outweighed the costs." Furthermore, because the SROs still participate in all required training, they are able to return to conventional patrols during school vacations.

It appears that residents in the only school district that failed to maintain the program 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.

Large New Site Three

Capsule Program Description

Large New Site Three, bordering two major east coast cities, has a racially and ethnically diverse population of 45,000. The town employs roughly 100 sworn officers to police its 10 to 12 square-mile jurisdiction. Its public schools serve an annual enrollment of 7,000 in grades K-12. Three School Resource Officers began working in the school system during the 1999-2000 academic year–one assigned to each of the town's two middle schools and high school.

Program Planning and Costs
Planners of the Large New Site Three SRO program viewed it as a means of improving communication and trust between local police and youth and for formalizing the long-standing, positive working relationship between town police and schools. Over its three-year duration, a COPS in Schools grant funded approximately 80 percent of the three officers' salaries and benefits, with the town assuming an increasing share from year to year.

The SROs
The police department recruited and screened 11 candidates for the three SRO positions. Police interviewed applicants on their own, although the school district provided a list of criteria for officers to meet. All three officers selected, as well as their immediate supervisors in the police department, attended a 40-hour basic training course offered by NASRO. One of the three officers also completed NASRO advanced "practitioner" courses. The police department includes SROs in all mandatory in-service classes, ensuring that they maintain their law enforcement skills. Supervisors believe that, because the SROs interact with so many students each day, their report writing, interviewing, and other "people-oriented" skills have improved since they have been posted to the schools.

Program Activities
School and police officers favor the triad model of program implementation that incorporates law enforcement, teaching, and counseling activities. The SROs report they concentrate on counseling, with informal conversations with students, guidance appointments, and parental conferences accounting for about two-thirds of the SROs' time. About 20 percent of their time is dedicated to classes or assemblies, and about 15 percent to enforcement-related duties. They also play a vital role in planning and maintaining school safety.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

SROs discuss their work daily with police supervisors and provide monthly summaries of their activities to the department. Principals routinely share comments and concerns with these supervisors although they have no formal process for evaluating the SROs' performance. Educators at this site resist assessing the program based on changes in disciplinary data. Police records do show, however, an apparent decline in arrests and criminal misbehavior at the three schools hosting SROs. Students say they appreciate the officers' approachability and assistance with personal, as well as law-related, concerns. Principals and teachers strongly advocate for the program's continuation.

The Site

Large New Site Three occupies approximately 10 square miles of prime real estate on the periphery of a large east coast urban center. The town has enjoyed relative economic prosperity over the years but exhibits a diversity of living conditions, with beautiful, large, well-maintained houses lining some streets and more distressed buildings occupying others. While several of the townships that surround the jurisdiction seem considerably more prosperous, those to the east suffer serious economic problems and high levels of crime. The Large New Site Three jurisdiction, in a sense, marks a transition point between this larger metropolitan area's struggling inner-city neighborhoods and its thriving suburbs.

Over the past fifteen years, Large New Site Three has experienced pronounced change in several demographic categories. In 1990 the township had a total of about 40,000 inhabitants, roughly 90 percent white, 5 percent black, and another 5 percent as Asian or Pacific Islander. Just ten years later, the town's populace had grown by some 5,000 inhabitants (nearly 13 percent) and had experienced significant shifts in its racial and ethnic composition. In 2000, 68 percent of the Large New Site Three population was white, 18 percent black, and 8 percent as Asian and 10 percent Hispanic. Thirty-two percent of the households reported speaking a language other than English at home.

Large New Site Three saw a spike in youth delinquency during the latter part of the 1990s with a number of juvenile arrests rising particularly steeply during the decade's

final three years. The Large New Site Three Police Department recorded 249 juvenile arrests in 1997, 280 in 1998 and 328 in 1999, an overall increase of nearly one-third. (Over the same time period, the rise in adult arrests was less than one percent). In response to this rapid increase, the township temporarily imposed a curfew that local youth reportedly resented. As enforcers of the ordinance, patrol officers were viewed by the youth as restricting their rights and privileges.

The increase in delinquency arrests notwithstanding, law enforcement officials have viewed Large New Site Three as relatively free of youth gang concerns. Unlike in the more distressed urban centers of the region, where the mix of drugs, handguns, and gangs has been well documented, police in Large New Site Three have considered widespread gang recruitment more a *risk* than a *reality* for their jurisdiction. On the "Community Policing Information" sheet submitted with its COPS in Schools application, for example, the department categorized motor vehicle theft, domestic violence, and property crimes as the town's most pressing public safety issues, ranking drug offenses, weapons, and gangs as the ninth, eleventh, and twelfth, respectively. Indeed, part of the rationale for placing SROs in the Large New Site Three schools, as stated in the original COPS in Schools proposal, involved employing proactive measures to head off a gradual spread of the urban region's crime problems—among them youth violence and substance use—into the township.

The Police Department

The Large New Site Three Police Department, despite its relatively small jurisdiction, employs more than 100 sworn officers. It responds to an average of about 50,000 calls for service each year and operates with an annual budget of approximately $10 million. The juvenile bureau, which incorporates the School Resource Officer program, conducts all of the department's investigations, crisis interventions, and outreach programs involving juveniles.

The Large New Site Three SRO program, funded through a 1999 COPS in Schools grant, consists of one full-time sworn officer assigned to each of the town's two public middle

schools (grades 6-8) and the town's public high school (grades 9-12). The officers work closely with the administration in their respective schools, but they receive direct supervision and training from the juvenile bureau. The SRO program also works in partnership with many of the department's long-standing community policing and juvenile outreach endeavors, including a D.A.R.E. initiative in the elementary schools.

The School System

Large New Site Three's public school system includes seven elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school that, together, serve approximately 7,000 students each school year. In keeping with trends seen in the town's overall population, enrollment at Large New Site Three schools has grown rapidly during the past several years—the student body grew by over 25 percent at one middle school just between 1998 and 2001.

Like the racial and ethnic composition of the surrounding community, the demographic make-up of public school enrollment has shifted toward greater diversity in recent years. Although about two-thirds of Large New Site Three residents identified themselves as white in the year 2000, the share of white students enrolled in the three secondary schools was only between about 15 and 40 percent. This disparity is attributable to the larger minority representation among the town's newly settled families. It may also partly result from the presence of several prestigious private schools in the town and surrounding area that enroll children from Large New Site Three's higher-income (predominantly white) families.

The general picture of the public school district is still average to slightly above average in overall performance despite the rapidly growing and changing student population. The high quality of instruction and diversity of curriculum attributed to the township's schools may correlate with the level of investment demonstrated by local residents and policymakers. In each of the past four school years, 89 to 90 percent of school district revenues came from local taxes—compared with an average of only 61 to 65 percent across the state.

Program History

Building on an existing close relationship with the school system, the police department began the program in 1999 in major part to reduce tensions between officers and adolescents.

Origins

School Resource Officers began working at the Large New Site Three high school and two middle schools in the fall of 1999. However, school district personnel had a positive working relationship with the police department, and with the juvenile bureau in particular, well before the program's inception. Previous to the SRO program, police presence at the high school was less formal and regular but on good terms according to the principal. Juvenile officers would occasionally stop in for coffee or to "reach out" to students above and beyond responding to calls for service. Principals from the two middle schools also recall a history of close cooperation with the police department. D.A.R.E. officers worked with 6th grade (first year) students until one or two years prior to SRO implementation.

When discussing the foundations of their SRO program, police officials emphasize this history of collaboration between their department and the school system. One SRO supervisor explained that, prior to occupying its present space at the department's headquarters, the juvenile bureau actually had its offices in the board of education building. This close physical proximity promoted communication and understanding between the two agencies. In addition, the high school principal noted, many juvenile bureau staff members, including two in the SRO unit, had graduated from Large New Site Three schools. This principal, himself, had taught several of the town's current officers before becoming an administrator. As a result, a reciprocal knowledge between schools and police seems to have developed rather naturally over time in this Large New Site Three.

Planners of the Large New Site Three SRO program envisioned that it would build on this groundwork in order to strengthen police-school collaboration and open new channels of communication between law enforcement and adolescents. At the time, juvenile bureau supervisors sensed that students had little understanding of the bureau's roles and responsibilities, perhaps viewing officers negatively as a group that entered their schools primarily to make arrests or question students. Juveniles also reportedly resented police because of their enforcement of the town's curfew. At least in part, then, the SRO program originated as a way of reducing these tensions. One high school administrator summarized that both partner agencies viewed the SRO program as a way "to humanize the police among young people."

Budget

The program's annual cost was about $150,000 in each of its first three years, with the Federal share declining each year from 97 percent to 80 percent to 70 percent and the town picking up the increasing balance of the cost.

Planning and Implementation Obstacles

The program experienced both planning and implementation difficulties.

Planning Obstacles and Solutions

Addressing community concerns about SROs' uniforms and guns. In seeking community support for and approval of the SRO initiative, school and police officials met with the town's board of education and spoke with various parent-teacher associations. The superintendent of schools recalls surprisingly little reaction from either parents or school board members to the proposed program. One topic that attendees did commonly raise at these meetings, however, involved whether or not officers should be in uniform and armed. Police representatives successfully argued for both. Having SROs in uniform, they suggested, would permit them to stand out, easily recognizable as law enforcement officers. This, in turn, would support two crucial goals of the program—deterring school violence and strengthening police-juvenile relationships. While seeing an officer in uniform might cause students and trespassers to think twice before engaging in criminal

activity, developing a trusting relationship with an SRO who was in uniform might help young people to view police more generally in a positive light.

Having officers armed while in school elicited more concern among parents and the school board. However, department administrators insisted that all sworn officers were trained to carry and protect their firearms while on duty. Asking an SRO to wear a police uniform, with the exception of a gun, might place the officer in greater danger, since some people might feel emboldened to act aggressively if they realized an officer lacked a sidearm. Moreover, in an emergency, SROs might have to respond to incidents off school grounds where they might need their service weapons.

<u>Overcoming school administrators' fears.</u> Unlike the community at large, administrators from the three affected schools, as well as the superintendent himself, *did* have several concerns that required discussion and negotiation with the police. Their apprehensions included the following:

> *Would the public think that the schools had requested a police presence because they were unsafe?* The superintendent did not want to project the image that Large New Site Three had dangerous or "bad" schools. He also did not want to unduly alarm parents or students.
>
> *Would the police use the SROs to "spy" on their children?* Similarly, *would SROs assume a "law and order" stance, pull kids out of class, question them, or use other scare tactics?* Administrators stressed that principals and assistant principals needed to maintain authority and control over discipline issues in their schools. Neither they nor the parents would tolerate the school's assuming the atmosphere of a "police state."
>
> *How would the minority community react to the program?* Administrators worried that the new police presence on campus might be seen as a reaction to "white flight" or increased diversity in the public schools. Parents and students from the minority community, moreover, might have genuine concerns about police bias in the schools and about the sensitivity of law enforcement to diversity in general.

The police department, it appears, capitalized on the basic trust it had developed over time with the school system to allay these fears. As reported by the district superintendent, the department presented a convincing picture of the grant's objectives as

based in prevention and community building rather than enforcement. The long-standing, positive working relationship between the two parties helped the schools to accept that the police would operate in as unobtrusive a manner as possible and that the department had no intention of creating new problems or "headaches" for the schools.

Police and school officials interviewed at Large New Site Three, therefore, uniformly emphasized the importance of relationship building and interagency communication in crafting the SRO initiative. The program's planners cited the following as keys to their success in navigating early uncertainties:

- An understanding of the purpose or objectives of the program among all parties, and a recognition that the grant was not just a public relations ploy, that it was being implemented for the "right reasons";

- An understanding not only of the benefits but also the obligations for each party under the grant; and

- An understanding that the school system and police department were partners in the SRO program.

Early Implementation Problems and Solutions.

At Large New Site Three, a consensus also existed on the need for SRO program partners to continue their collaboration and problem solving beyond the planning stage. Communication among local police and educators contributed to successful integration of SROs into school environments given that the cultures of police organizations and educational institutions do not necessarily mesh easily.

Bridging the divide between law enforcement culture and school culture. The principal at Large New Site Three high school recounted his struggles coming to terms with the SRO concept. Even as the program began in his school, he had difficulty reconciling the functions of arrest, suppression, and intelligence gathering that he attributed to police, with the functions of counseling, teaching, and skill building that he associated with educators. "After all, regardless of what you call a police officer," this principal reasoned, "he or she still will view most situations through the criminal justice lens."

The principal of Redwood Middle School (not its real name) recalled that he also had early misgivings about the SRO's ability to blend into school culture. He worried about how an officer would approach and interact with students. Compared with the criminal justice system, which he perceived as focused on law, order, and punishment, the educational system would require much more flexibility. "Dealing with kids," the principal stressed, "means you have to understand that kids make mistakes, they make them all of the time. You have to expect that kids make mistakes and use them as an opportunity to work with them, not slam them."

Another initial concern surfaced for Large New Site Three educators—that the police department might use SROs *primarily* in an information gathering and law enforcement capacity. The principals would have found this very much at odds with the child-advocacy role of other school staff. The high school principal thought that implementing the program might expose administrators to becoming caught in a quagmire of balancing the need for police intervention with the need for protecting students' civil liberties.

Decisions about when to involve police in school investigations, in practice, have evolved over time at Large New Site Three with insight from the involved officers and principals. The high school SRO describes his relationship with faculty as a "give and take" situation. While he may have little discretion in responding to criminal behaviors, school staff now know the level of offense for which they should involve the officer. In order to keep his reputation and relationships with the students, this SRO has tried to minimize his involvement in criminal reports. In some instances, for example, he has chosen to make faculty aware of situations he has heard about from students rather than triggering a police investigation. Principals can then resolve matters using their school disciplinary process. As an SRO, he indicates, "I often find myself in a balancing routine of my own, weighing possible risks to school safety and security against potential risks to my reputation and rapport among students."

At the middle schools, SROs similarly focus their work with students on relationship
building rather than intelligence gathering. At Redwood Middle School, however, the
SRO remembers that one assistant principal wanted him to stand behind kids in trouble in
order to show "muscle." To protect against any loss of confidence or trust in the SROs
that such work would likely provoke, the police and schools in Large New Site Three
generally follow an unwritten protocol: if a school incident requires police action, the
SRO will handle the initial reporting and possibly arrange for a juvenile conference but,
for any further investigation or enforcement responsibilities, the officer turns things over
to detectives in the juvenile bureau.

Integrating SROs within the school environment. The program's success in Large New
Site Three also lies with the willingness of administrators to welcome the SROs as valued
members of their school staff. According to the school superintendent, when the SROs
started their assignments, students, teachers, and staff treated them wonderfully.
Especially in the middle schools, their unique presence attracted curiosity and allowed
them to interact easily with students.

In discussing the SRO integration process used the Edgewood Middle School (not its real
name), the principal recounted that during the summer of 1999, immediately prior to the
SRO's start, the officer met with the principal and assistant principal in order to plan his
transition into the school environment. The principal asked the SRO to attend his first
faculty meeting, at which together they provided an overview of the SRO program.
Teachers mainly wanted to know what role the SRO would play and what types of
problems he would address. The principal explained that, although a police officer, the
SRO would serve the school as much more than a well-paid security guard. Rather than
acting as school disciplinarian, the SRO would work on relationship building at first in an
effort to begin breaking down the negative perceptions or stereotypes that students might
have of police.

As a next step, the principal called a parents' meeting in the early fall to introduce the SRO and explain the purpose of having an officer stationed among their children. The principal outlined the communication-building and role-modeling components of the SRO initiative, which allowed parents to see the officer in positive terms as a proactive presence rather than as a response to "a problem at Edgewood." The principal asked those who attended this initial session to "spread the word" to others in the community, which he believes they did effectively. Parents, he recalled, expressed much less concern than he had anticipated. In fact, many already knew the officer stationed at Edgewood from his patrol work and were aware of his positive reputation around town.

Edgewood's SRO did have some difficulty in making the transition from street cop to school resource. Owing perhaps to his Marine Corps experience, this officer outwardly appeared the most authoritarian of the SROs assigned to the three Large New Site Three schools. He wears all of his medals, stripes, and bars on his uniform each day. Nonetheless, he now seems an integral part of the campus landscape. He has his own page on the school's website, and at least a dozen kids approached him in the hallways as he escorted evaluators on a tour of the building.

Availability and visibility, from the perspective of one Redwood principal, form the cornerstones of the SRO's ability to build relationships with other school staff. The officer's willingness to devote time and attention to the job influences the degree of acceptance found among the faculty. "Sitting in the office is not the way to go about this," the principal advises. "Come out of the office. Talk to the students. Get to know teachers."

Location within the schools. At Woodland Oaks High School (not its real name), the SRO shares a small, centrally located office with the school's conflict resolution counselor. At first, the crowded space presented a difficult situation for both men. The counselor would request that the SRO leave if a student needed to share sensitive information with him, and the SRO also felt unsure about the best way to protect the confidentiality and privacy of his students. Over time, however, this situation has

resolved itself through a natural growth process, one that mirrors the cooperative relationship developed between the larger structures of police and school administration. Both individuals have come to trust that the other will avoid exploiting information "overheard" in the close quarters of their office, and both suggest that students feel this same confidence.

The conflict resolution counselor highlights the importance of office location. For the program to work, he observes, the SRO's office should be near the natural flow of students. This holds true for Redwood, where the officer has an ample, private office located adjacent to the school cafeteria. Students needing assistance have little problem finding the SRO. At Edgewood, on the other hand, the SRO office is a small space situated in a remote section of the school. While the office location allows for privacy and confidentiality, its isolation may act as a barrier to interaction with students. Since they have no "normal" reason to walk by the SRO office, students naturally have less "drop-in" opportunity, and their presence there might seem stigmatizing. As a result, the officer conducts most of his daily work from a private area of the school's front office.

Program Coordination

The underlying culture of cooperation that has developed over time between the juvenile bureau and the school system in Large New Site Three provides a background to the formal arrangements of the town's SRO program that have developed.

According to various individuals interviewed, a memorandum of understanding between the police department and the board of education helps to guide school administrators and SROs in their interactions. The fact that no one could produce a copy of the document, however, suggests it plays a minimal role in the program's daily operations. The interagency agreement reportedly offers few details, leaving "front line" staff to negotiate more specific aspects of program implementation. Thus, while the formal agreement between police and educators broadly defines the scope and nature of SRO work in Large New Site Three schools, the delineation of their day-to-day activities on each campus has emerged from dialogue among individual officers and administrators through a process of

trial and error. The high school principal, who contributed from the start to defining SRO roles, asserts that, at least in his building, administrators never intended to bring in an officer to "patrol the hallways." In order to avoid conflict and role confusion, he suggests, principals and other school staff "most definitely" should maintain responsibility for student discipline. Because the SRO works within the building, he informs school administrators of his activities and provides written documentation as requested. He reports directly to the police department, however, and receives supervision from his commanding officers at the juvenile bureau. Because of this, the high school principal says, "I have a problem when people say that [the SRO] is 'a member of the faculty,' because you cannot serve Caesar and serve God [i.e., the board of education and the police department]"

That said, a later discussion among high school staff, the SRO, and evaluators demonstrated that the boundaries around reporting responsibilities remain somewhat blurred. "I give [the SRO] a wide berth," the principal reported. "But you have to believe in the individual and have the right officer in your school. I have confidence in [my school's SRO]. I don't have to say 'I'm the boss'—I let people do their jobs." At this point, however, the SRO reminded the principal that he is not *his* boss. The SROs, in his words, "work for the department, but have open arms for the schools." For example, they have changed the start and end times of their daily work shifts to accommodate the school schedule and also regularly accrue and use compensatory time due to their presence at after-hours' events, such as sports contests and dances.

Another important distinction emerged from this same conversation. According to the high school principal, in the everyday functions and operations of the school he represents the building's highest authority. Even when school-related functions involve a police officer, the principal retains authority. The SRO, under most circumstances, cannot direct school staff to act or not act in a specific way, although the principal often can. When responding in a law enforcement capacity to a situation that requires police intervention, however, the SRO immediately assumes authority. "He becomes my boss," the principal said, in the sense that administrators and other school staff follow his lead

and direction. In a critical incident, the SRO becomes the de facto commander of the campus until detectives or other patrol units arrive. At that point, the SRO becomes a liaison between police and school authorities.

The assistant principal at Redwood Middle School reported that the division of responsibility in his building has followed the same pattern as the one established at the high school. Interestingly, though, he notes a difficulty that might interfere with its replication elsewhere: reluctance on the part of administrators (and teachers, as well) to "second guess" or provide constructive criticism to the SRO. He hesitated with this, himself, he revealed, having learned from childhood to revere, and at times even fear, the police.

The sergeant who initially headed the Large New Site Three SRO unit found one of his biggest problems to be providing sufficient supervision of the officers. Because of their irregular schedules, reporting protocols, and geographic separation from headquarters, the SROs sometimes found themselves in an "out of sight, out of mind" predicament. Early on, the sergeant held weekly meetings for the officers at the juvenile bureau. This became too cumbersome, however, due to time constraints. Daily "check-ins" and weekly reports now suffice. For this reason, selecting seasoned officers with strong decision-making skills has proven important to developing this site's SRO program.

The School Resource Officers

There were some problems associated with the recruitment and training of SROs in the site.

Recruitment

When police officials in Large New Site Three received notice of their jurisdiction's COPS in Schools award, they issued an internal call for resumes. Supervisors from various divisions in the agency interviewed the 11 officers who applied for the three openings. The department managed the recruitment and screening process on its own,

although the juvenile bureau had requested that the school board suggest selection criteria ahead of time. The school board provided a list of measures that each officer would have to meet. Police officials reviewed these, as well as examining the applicants' report writing skills, use of sick time and time off, and ability to work with little or no supervision. As a final step, the school board met with each of the three chosen officers. All three gained the board's approval, although the superintendent insists he would have denied participation to any candidate deemed unsuitable.

At least one applicant dropped out and others became apprehensive when they discovered the stronger community orientation than crime fighting nature of the position. The three eventually selected brought to the position a range of experience in law enforcement as well as some history of involvement with youth. As explained below, the three expressed a variety of motivations for wanting to become SROs.

In 2001, the high school SRO was in his eighth year of service with the Large New Site Three police department and his third year as an SRO. He had worked in narcotics and SWAT before his transfer to the juvenile bureau but said he had always had an interest in teaching and that his wife also was a teacher. The SRO position has allowed him to fulfill these interests and to interact with young people, both in and outside the classroom. If it were possible, he would love to finish out his career in this capacity.

The SRO at Everwood Middle School reported that he, too, applied for the position because he enjoyed reaching out to young people. Before joining the Large New Site Three force, he had worked in a nearby sheriff's department and had become certified as a juvenile officer. The Redwood SRO, in contrast, cited more practical reasons for applying to the unit. He wanted position's more predictable schedule, without the on-call requirements and "endless shifts" that marked his time in the detective bureau.

Training

All three Large New Site Three SROs, as well as their immediate supervisors in the police department, have attended the 40-hour SRO basic course offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO). One of the three SROs has completed advanced "practitioner" courses given by the organization. The high school officer, in particular, has become active in the NASRO community. Through this involvement, he provides support and direction to newer SROs and has worked to coordinate regional NASRO classes. As a result, all of the police personnel involved with the Large New Site Three program have had at least an introduction to the NASRO triad model, and some have developed expertise in NASRO guidelines, methods, and processes for balancing the SRO's law enforcement role with the counseling and teaching functions.

The high school sent one of its principals to a COPS in Schools' orientation session when the grant began. When a new administrator started at one of the middle schools, however, a good deal of frustration and "head butting" with the SRO occurred. The principal wanted to use the SRO for hallway monitoring, cafeteria duty, and bus patrol. Things began running more smoothly only after several "consultations" between the principal and the high school's other administrative staff. Program personnel now recommend that, whenever two SRO program training slots become available, one should be filled by an SRO and one by a principal. This will permit new administrators to understand the broad range of roles that SROs can play and help them to implement a fuller, richer program on their campuses. It will also help prevent the type of miscommunication and tension that occurred before.

The police department includes SROs in all its mandatory in-service training. As a result, neither the officers nor their supervisors believe that they will need re-training should the SROs return to regular duty. The sergeant, in fact, notes that SROs maintain their report writing skills through daily logs, contact forms, and weekly narratives, and that they actually enhance their interviewing and people-oriented skills through daily interactions with so many students.

Turnover

The current high school SRO and Everwood Middle School SRO have served in their schools since the program's inception in Large New Site Three. The officer originally stationed at Redwood left the assignment, apparently because of family circumstances, in the middle of his second school year. The police department selected his replacement to begin work in June 2001. The superintendent of schools stressed the importance of continued participation by education officials in choosing new SROs to join the program. The high school principal echoes the superintendent's call for participation in future SRO screening. If the SRO program has goals beyond police suppression, he contends, the principals should hold *some* veto power in hiring decisions. After all, the principal has daily responsibility for the welfare of all students with whom the officer will interact.

Despite this strong advocacy for inclusion on the part of education officials, the process used by police to replace the Redwood SRO apparently involved minimal contributions from the school's principal and administrative staff. The high school principal noted this as one of his criticisms of the program's start-up in Large New Site Three, as well.

Program Activities

The individuals who laid the groundwork for Large New Site Three initiative spent "hundreds of hours" researching different programs, according to one police official. This level of planning and preparation contributed to the program's early smooth functioning. It most likely also accounts for the remarkable similarity in SRO activities seen at the three schools despite clear differences in the personalities, working styles, and lengths of service of the involved officers and principals. One salient characteristic of the Large New Site Three SRO program is the agreed-upon vision of the officer as a "resource." The SROs all teach law-related classes, coach or supervise extracurricular activities, and advise administrators on crisis intervention.

Law Enforcement

High school administrators at Large New Site Three report that their safety and discipline issues "run the gamut" from minor problems, like pushing and shoving in overcrowded hallways, to extraordinary situations, like the bomb scare and sniper threat that brought a SWAT team to campus in the fall of 2000 (see the box "Anything Could Happen").

A (not Necessarily Typical) Day in the Life of an SRO in Large New Site Three

During a 10th grade driver education class, the SRO lectures on the implications and consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. He teaches about other law-related topics to classes whenever requested by faculty. The SRO also fits coaching sessions into his schedule. He works with the girls' volleyball and softball teams. (In order to safeguard his weapon while he is in gym clothes, he locks it in a safe that he had drilled into the wall of the principal's office specifically for this purpose.) Since the school board pays him for his coaching activity, he must in effect "clock out" from police time for this 60–90 minute period. He then tacks this time back onto the end of his workday by returning to headquarters, filing reports or other paperwork, and sharing pertinent information with the afternoon and night shift officers.

Later in the evening, he will be discussing Ecstasy and other designer drugs with a parents' group. He has arranged for local counselors to attend and present information on the psychological effects the drug. He speaks once or twice a year at PTA meetings, when invited. In addition, he always attends parent-teacher nights at the high school, as well as proms, awards nights, and graduation. He and the school district's other SROs attempt to participate in all events of significant importance to students.

In order to address routine behavior infractions, the school has a full administrative team of deans, conflict mediators, counselors, advisors, and nurses. The SRO generally becomes involved in low-level cases only when requested or when needed to deescalate potentially more hazardous conduct. In these circumstances, the officer often elects to arrange a "juvenile conference" at police headquarters, during which the affected students, parents, and school personnel discuss ways to correct repeat problems, prevent harmful behaviors, or make appropriate restitution.

"Anything Could Happen"

The high school principal recalls, in vivid detail, a critical incident that occurred on his
campus in November 2000. During morning classes, the administrative office received a
bomb threat. Following standard procedures for such cases, staff members began
evacuating students to the athletic fields, a safe distance away from all buildings. In the
midst of this mass movement, however, the office received a second call reporting that a
sniper was outside, ready to start shooting. Suddenly, the idea of channeling the school's
1,700 students into an open field became a potentially nightmarish situation. For the
principal, the threat raised his own feelings of being a target and his own realization of
how little he could do to safeguard his students.

According to administrators at the school, the SRO demonstrated poise and
professionalism during the crisis and took control of the situation. He assumed
immediate authority on the premises until other emergency personnel, juvenile bureau
officers, and a SWAT unit arrived. At that point, the SRO became a liaison between the
school and the response team. His knowledge of the building and how to secure it proved
an invaluable resource, saving potentially critical time.

If the school had not had an SRO to call upon, the principal notes, he would have had to
assume the daunting responsibility of becoming the campus' intermediate commander, a
role for which neither he nor many other administrators have training or preparation. As
students began calling home on their cell phones, parents started arriving at the school,
demanding information. They wanted to know that their children were safe. Effective
communication became almost impossible under the circumstances. Never, until actually
confronted by such a terrifying situation, had the Large New Site Three principal
understood so fully the meaning of one simple question: "Who is in charge?"

Officers at the two middle schools also use this type of early intervention with regularity.
A case described by one Everwood teacher demonstrates the resourcefulness and
creativity that the SROs sometimes use in their efforts to keep kids "out of the system."
This particular teacher frequently had snacks stolen from her classroom cupboard and
was afraid that, if left unaddressed, the behavior might lead to more serious thefts. In
response, the SRO hid in a classroom closet during the thief's usual striking time and
caught a female student taking the food. Rather than charging the girl, however, the SRO
worked with her, her parents, and the school to arrange a less punitive outcome. In this
instance, the student received a short in-school suspension and a warning that, if the

teacher had wanted to file a police report, the SRO would have taken her into custody and processed her through the juvenile system. The girl's parents received the same information during a conference at the juvenile bureau.

All three officers working in Large New Site Three always process incidents involving alcohol, drugs, or weapons as criminal infractions. However, these offenses occur rarely at the middle schools. More common offenses involve fights between students, cigarette smoking on campus, or occasionally graffiti and other acts of vandalism to school property. Redwood's principal reports that, during his tenure, the most serious incidents involved a student sexual assault on another student and the use of a stun gun by one student to "zap" some other students.

Records maintained by the SROs, detailed in table 1, show that a majority of the SROs' enforcement activities involve relatively minor infractions, such as stolen property complaints and graffiti. However, even when incidents rise to the level of criminal misconduct, Woodland's SROs file only preliminary reports, turning over any further investigative duties juvenile detectives. This division of labor helps the SROs maintain their positive rapport with students so they may achieve their other program goals.

Table 1: Sixty-one Enforcement-Related Activities Documented in SRO Logs from March-June and September–October 2002

Weapons arrests	2
Drug arrests	1
Trespassers	6
Assaults	4
Stolen property complaints	7
Criminal mischief/Graffiti	12
Truancies	7
Court appearances	3
Other-non criminal*	19

*These include smoking complaints and other incidents that required no follow-up from the officer.

The partner agencies at Large New Site Three also use a cooperative process to handle school safety matters. Three security guards paid by the school district manage routine safety operations at the high school. However, these guards, like the administrative staff,

lack the expertise, training, and resources that responding to a school crisis or serious accident would require. The SROs have filled some of these voids. They periodically review their schools' crisis plans with faculty and staff for handling emergencies like student intoxication or suicide attempts. According to the principals, even while sensing that their own community is relatively safe, teachers, parents, and students alike have expressed fear as a result of the Columbine and 9/11 tragedies. One middle school parent, for example, recalled how grateful she felt because of the SRO presence at her son's school during the chaotic, terrifying hours immediately following the World Trade Center attacks. At that time, all area schools were forced into a "lock-down" mode.

Teaching

The absence of major crime contributes to the SROs' ability to teach and mentor. The SRO at Redwood acknowledged this connection when he said that the paperwork, alone, can take 2–3 hours to complete for each arrest. Multiple arrests on a routine basis would greatly reduce the time, not to mention the energy, he would have left for teaching or counseling.

All three SROs have worked with teachers to integrate law-related education into their lesson plans whenever possible. One Redwood teacher said she finds it easy to incorporate the SRO into classes related to civics or law and that, more generally, faculty invite the officer in for "advisory period," a 20-minute discussion group that students attend each day. Because these meetings are smaller and less formal than regular classes, the SRO uses them to talk about alcohol, gang violence, theft, or other issues of relevance to teens.

Everwood's SRO estimates he teaches on average one period each school day. At the beginning of each term, he gives faculty a list of topics that he and other Large New Site Three SROs can address in the classroom, and then teachers invite him in as a "guest lecturer." Table 2 provides a partial roster of these classes, some of which NASRO makes available through its web site and others of which the SROs have developed using their own expertise. The Everwood SRO has also begun to integrate a few lessons from the G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) program into his repertoire

because of the school district's proximity to several major cities with heavy gang recruitment. He indicates that Everwood has a number of "wanna-bees," but not real gang members, and that he would like to do whatever he can to keep it that way.

Table 2: Classes Taught by SROs in Large New Site Three

High School	Everwood Middle School	Redwood Middle School
Fatal vision DWI program	Gang awareness	Self esteem
Search and seizure	Reducing violence	Peer pressure
Being a good witness	Computer safety	Cultural diversity
Ecstasy presentation	Gun safety	Bullying and teasing
Becoming a police officer	Bill of Rights	Being a good witness
Internet crimes	Zero Tolerance	Alcohol awareness
Driving while intoxicated	Close the Door on Hate	Harassment

A sizable majority of middle school students questioned at this site report they have had at least one assembly or class with their SRO (see table 3). Moreover, they give the SROs high marks for their lectures. Students say that they appreciate hearing about topics like drugs and violence from a police officer because, more than a "regular" teacher, he discusses them from a real life, "street" perspective.

Table 3: Large New Site Three Student Perceptions of the SRO Education Component

Had students attended at least one SRO assembly?	WOHS (N) %	Redwood (N) %	Everwood (N) %
Yes	(12) 24%	(47) 38%	(43) 61%
No	(38) 76%	(77) 63%	(27) 39%
Student rating of SRO assemblies attended			
Very Helpful	(7) 64%	(17) 36%	(28) 67%
Somewhat Helpful	(3) 27%	(28) 60%	(13) 31%
Not Very Helpful	(0) 0%	(2) 4%	(1) 2%
Not at All Helpful	(1) 9%	(0) 0%	(0) 0%
Had students attended at least one SRO Class?			
Yes	(23) 46%	(92) 71%	(20) 27%
No	(27) 54%	(37) 29%	(53) 73%
Student ratings of SRO classes attended			
Very Helpful	(18) 78%	(56) 62%	(13) 62%
Somewhat Helpful	(3) 13%	(30) 33%	(8) 38%
Not Very Helpful	(0) 0%	(4) 4%	(0) 0%
Not at All Helpful	(2) 9%	(0) 0%	(0) 0%

Outside of the classroom, Everwood's SRO provides another type of learning experience for students. Twice a year he brings Large New Site Three kids to the youth detention center for tours to help them to see potential consequences of delinquent behavior. So many students have asked to attend these trips recently that he has had to limit the number he enrolls. He tries to have participants discuss what they observe on the visits—the group always stops at a fast food restaurant on the way back to school so that they can talk. In addition, he assigns an essay with three questions: What did they expect to gain from the trip? How did they feel during the trip? What impact will the experience have for their future?

Like the middle school officers, the high school SRO supplies teachers with a list of courses he is available to teach. Most of the teachers support the SRO as a "guest lecturer" and get involved in his discussions. The education component works best, he finds, when it ties into teachers' normal curriculum. A class on the Constitution, for example, might benefit from an SRO presentation on search and seizure. Even less obvious subjects often have connections to police work. An algebra teacher recently requested that the SRO invite accident-scene specialists to her class, since these officers use mathematical equations regularly in their work.

The high school SRO teaches a class on the effects of alcohol and drugs on driving each term to the 10th and 12th grade health classes studying substance abuse. The SRO uses "Fatal Vision" goggles that simulate intoxication, photographs from drunk driving accidents, and first-hand accounts of responding to alcohol-related crashes. During the lecture, students are engaged, and the officer encourages as many of them as possible to participate. He also invites students to stop by his office with questions or to speak privately. The officer demonstrates good rapport with the kids and also the teacher, who stays in the classroom during his talk.

Beside providing lectures, the high school SRO has organized numerous after-school events and initiatives designed to close the social distance between police and students.

The SRO has established an open gym program and game room at the high school and arranged annual "police vs. student" and "teacher vs. student" athletic events. In addition, he secured grant funding to start a thriving Students Against Destructive Decisions (S.A.D.D.) club. Overall, the SRO has become well integrated into the rhythm and culture of his school, both inside and outside of the classroom.

The Large New Site Three SROs have participated in a large number of teaching-related activities. In a six-month sample of their work logs (March-June and Sept-Oct. 2002), the SROs documented teaching 173 classes, as well as attending 165 school events such as PTA meetings, award nights, or other after-school programs. On average, each SRO participated in almost 20 education-related functions per month.

Mentoring

Of the three broad areas that constitute the triad model, the officers at Large New Site Three have devoted perhaps the most time and energy to counseling and mentoring. According to a high school advisor, the school may see the need for SROs to provide law enforcement and teaching services, but the student advising role is the one that helps kids the most and allows them to accept the officer in the other two roles. A faculty member echoed these comments in describing the effect the SRO's counseling work at the high school. "He plays an important role in helping students transition from the kids that they enter high school as to the young adults that they become." He does this, the teacher suggests, by presenting "information on choices and consequences, on responsibility for one's actions in the real world."

The majority of counseling by all three SROs takes the form of informal "rap sessions" with students. On a typical day, kids approach them to talk about problems with parents, conflicts with other students, and relationship issues. A middle school principal notes that in many situations students will approach the SRO more readily than they would a member of the administration. Unlike the principal or deans, the SRO will not suspend or assign them detention. This underscores the importance of keeping the disciplinarian role away from the SROs at this particular site.

For tracking and recording purposes, the SROs maintain daily logs of their meetings with students. Whenever they speak in depth to someone or make a referral to another staff member or agency, they also complete a "contact sheet" or counseling form. Excerpts from a few of the high school SROs' forms suggest that students and staff seek the officer's help for a wide range of problems.

From a December 2000 report—
Reason for conference— . . . [principals said that they] spoke with the subjects to circumvent a possible fight. They were advised that, if a fight took place, they would all be suspended for ten days and possibly taken to the board for long-term suspension.

School Resource Officer Action: Spoke with the subjects and advised patrol to keep and eye out for a fight in the area of [club name].

From a February 2001 report—
Reason for conference— . . . [two students] came to me because they were concerned about [a third student] who has been on-line instant messaging with misinformation claiming that [a fourth] threatened him and cut him with a knife.

School Resource Officer Action: . . . contacted [the student's mother] and explained the situation to her. [She] spoke to her son and he admitted lying. She appreciated being contacted and asked that [the victim] contact me if there were any other problems.

Students at all three Large New Site Three schools speak highly of the program's counseling and role modeling function. They most commonly say that they appreciate their SRO's approachability and that the officer listens to them. One Redwood student, for example, said, "[the SRO] listens to your side of things, then helps you see the other side in order to see things differently. He gives you time to think about things and get it out. It doesn't have to be just related to school, either."

Table 4 presents and overview of the three officers' counseling and advising work with students at Large New Site Three schools. The three SROs combined logged an average of nearly 210 such entries per month.

Table 4: Counseling-Related Activities Documented in SRO Logs from March-June and Sept-Oct. 2002

SRO activities across all three schools	6-month total
Conflict resolution	46
Crisis intervention	18
Counseling with parents	186
Meetings/Research	851
Referrals to other agencies	12
Special assignments	142
Total	1,255

Table 5 suggests that the racial considerations that program planners initially feared might interfere with the SROs' effectiveness have not materialized, at least according to the demographic figures kept by the SROs for their student contacts (which include counseling, mentoring, and informal contacts).

Table 5: Race of Student Contacts Documented in SRO Logs from March-June and Sept.-Oct. 2002

Student's Race	# contacts	percent of total
White (non-Hispanic)	6,265	33.5%
White (Hispanic)	4,362	23.3%
Black	6,958	37.2%
Asian	1,063	5.7%
Other	52	0.3%
Not Recorded	7	0%
Total	**18,707**	100%

In keeping with the goals established by the police department and school district at the start of the SRO program and maintained thereafter, the SROs at this site have adopted a triad model to guide their work. A summary of the officers' work logs during the six months sampled appears in table 6. These records, depicted graphically in figure 1, reflect their concentration on activities associated with serving as a resource to students. However, education or school-related activities constitute an important component of the site's SRO program, as do enforcement-related duties.

Table 6: Activities Recorded in Officer Logs
Large New Site Three SRO Totals for the Six-Month period March-June
and Sept.–Oct. 2002

Activity	6-month total
Incident reports written	61
Weapons arrests	2
Drug arrests	1
Trespassers	6
Assaults	4
Stolen property complaints	7
Criminal mischief/Graffiti	12
Pager reports	3
Truancies	7
Court appearances	3
Total--Law Enforcement	**272**
Activity	**6-month total**
Conflict resolution	46
Crisis interventions	18
Counseling with parents	186
Meetings/Research	851
Referrals to other agencies	12
Special assignments	142
Total--Counseling/Mentoring	**1255**
Activity	**6-month total**
Special events attended	165
Classroom presentations	173
Total--Education Related	**338**

Figure 1 SRO Activities—March-June and Sept.–October 2002

SRO Activities--March-June and Sept. - Oct. 2002

18%   15%   67%

- Enforcement-related
- Counseling/mentoring
- Education-related
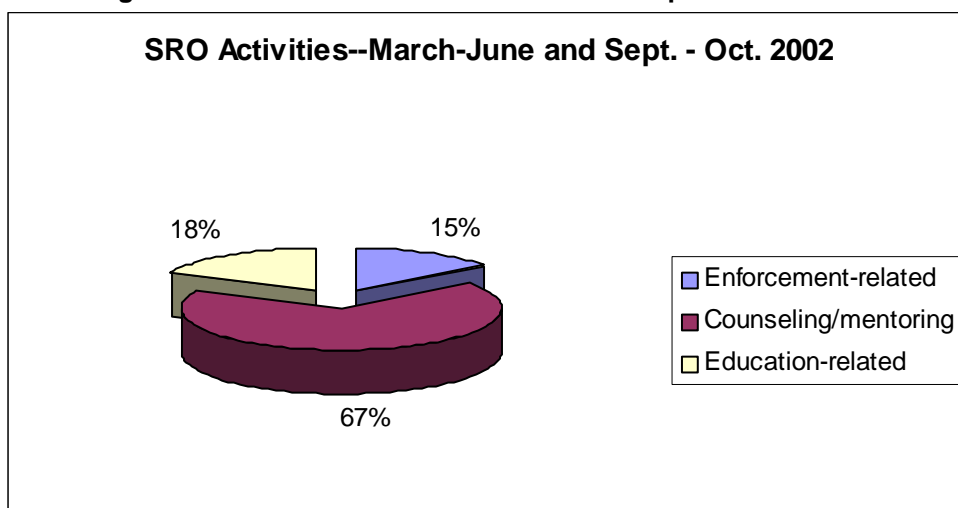
Program Monitoring and Evaluation

The site uses traditional means of monitoring the SROs' performance. There is suggestive evidence that the program has achieved some of its goals.

Monitoring

The agencies implementing the SRO program in Large New Site Three have developed no formal means for reviewing SRO performance outside of standard police department procedures. The officers provide monthly summaries of their work to police supervisors, and the unit's two sergeants routinely interact with and observe the SROs, both at the juvenile bureau and at the schools. School principals report that they have sufficient opportunity to share comments and concerns with the sergeants, with whom, they say, they have developed good rapport. Moreover, the positive history between the police department and the school system in town has translated into a culture of collaboration and communication among supervisors in both organizations.

Evidence of Program Effectiveness

Although program participants were reluctant to assess whether the program has achieved any positive results in terms of reducing student crime and misconduct, there may have been some positive results in this regard—and in terms of improvements in public perception of school safety—that that can be attributed at least in part to the program.

School Violence and Safety

Large New Site Three educators repeatedly expressed reluctance to estimate the SRO program's effects on discipline and delinquency in their schools due to concern that parents and other community members might misinterpret changes in these data. The superintendent of schools noted, for example, that a *rise* in school violations might easily coincide with the SRO's introduction on campus not because of deteriorating circumstances on school grounds but as a consequence of greater student opportunity and willingness to report victimization. Similarly, the "extra set of eyes" that the SRO initiative affords school districts easily could contribute to spikes in reported disciplinary concerns. Large New Site Three educators objected to measures like student suspensions

and expulsions to determine SRO success precisely because the data lend themselves to such distortions in perception.

School officials at this site, moreover, *philosophically* resisted evaluating their program based on changes in disciplinary data. If their jurisdiction's goals for implementing the initiative centered on a desire to improve youth-police relationships, they asserted, then outcome indicators based on changes in delinquency or school violations would hold limited value. Instead they proposed assessing the SROs' influence on student views of and trust in police.

As discussed below, these measures show promising results in Large New Site Three. That said, police department records show an apparent *decline* in arrests and criminal misbehavior on campus that coincides with the SRO program's implementation. Figure 2 illustrates a sharp rise in the number of arrests made by Large New Site Three police at participating schools just before the program began. A modest decline occurred during the program's first year followed by a much steeper drop in the second year. Although arrests rose again during year three, they still totaled only 42 percent of the arrests made in the year before the SROs began work.

Figure 2: Arrests at Large New Site Three High School and Middle Schools
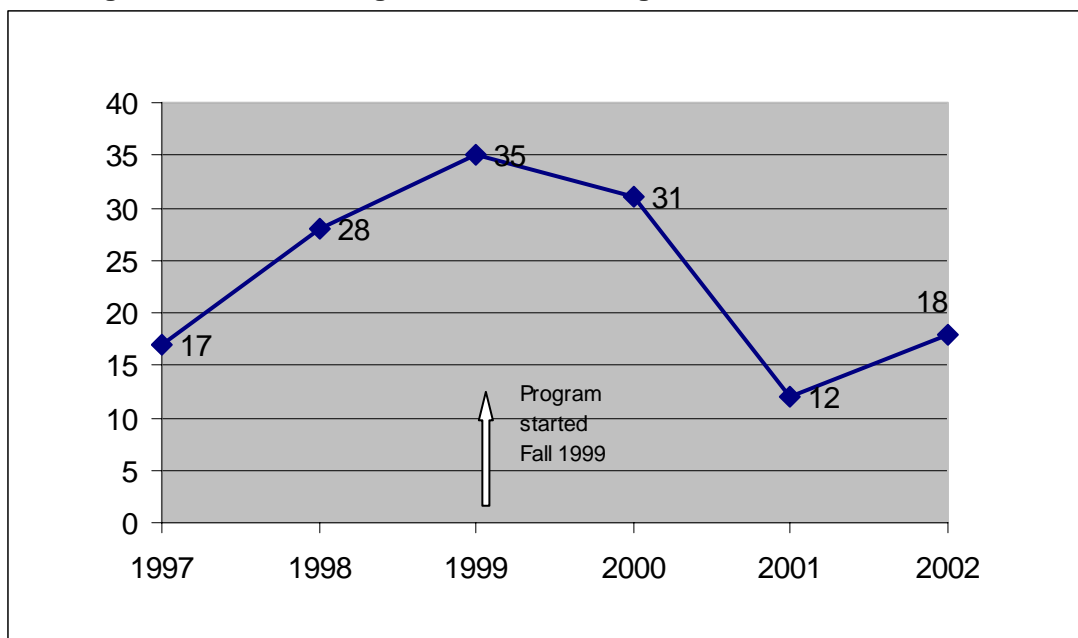
Calls for service to the three participating schools showed similar trends. As the data in
figure 3 show, during the 2-1/2 years prior to the SROs' arrival, police responded to a
rapidly increasing number of incidents on school grounds. This activity reached a peak
in 1999 and then gradually started to descend after the program's initiation. SROs radio
in to headquarters each time they are called to respond to any police-related matter, on or
off school grounds. Thus, if a principal calls an SRO to clear a disturbance in the
cafeteria, an SRO questions a suspicious party on campus, or the officer catches a student
speeding through a parking lot, the SROs records this activity as a call for service.
Because of this, one might expect to see a large jump in calls coinciding with the
program's start, rather than the decline that actually occurred.

Figure 3: Trends in Large New Site Three Activity Pre- and Post-Program Implementation
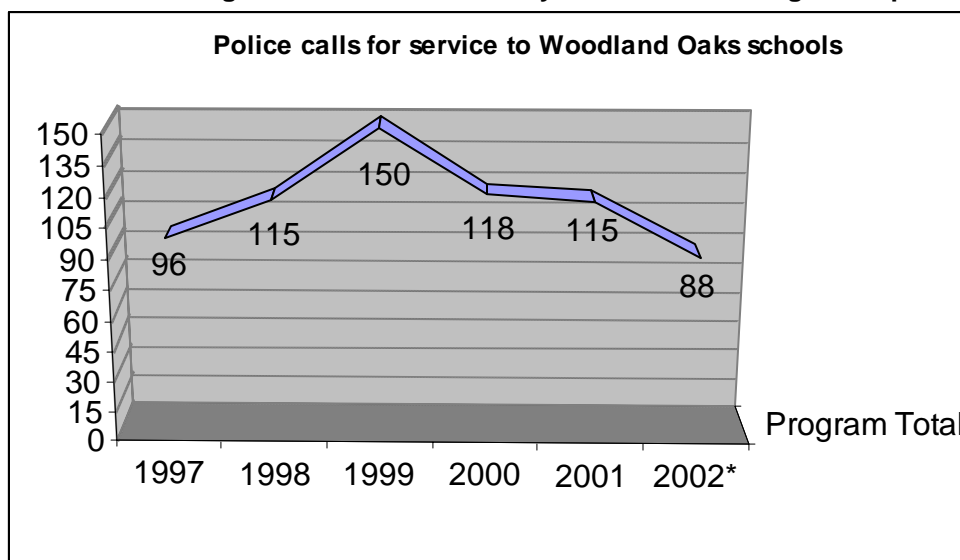
What may explain the decline is that, as SROs became better accustomed to handling the
"routine" events of everyday school life, they may have begun interpreting fewer of these
incidents as rising to the level of a "call for service." Similarly, as teachers and staff
learned to distinguish those situations requiring police intervention from those handled
more effectively through the school system, the frequency with which the SROs recorded
calls for service may have diminished still further. Indeed, department records suggest
that this differentiation started to occur as soon as the SROs began work.

The data presented in figure 4 suggest that Woodland Oaks police classified a greater proportion of calls to these schools as noncriminal (presumably lower-level) offenses prior to the program's initiation.

Figure 4: Calls for Service Classified as "Noncriminal" (1) as a Proportion of "Criminal" (2) and "Noncriminal" Cases Combined

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
non-crim as %total	41.0%	26.2%	18.8%	9.4%	12.9%	13.8%
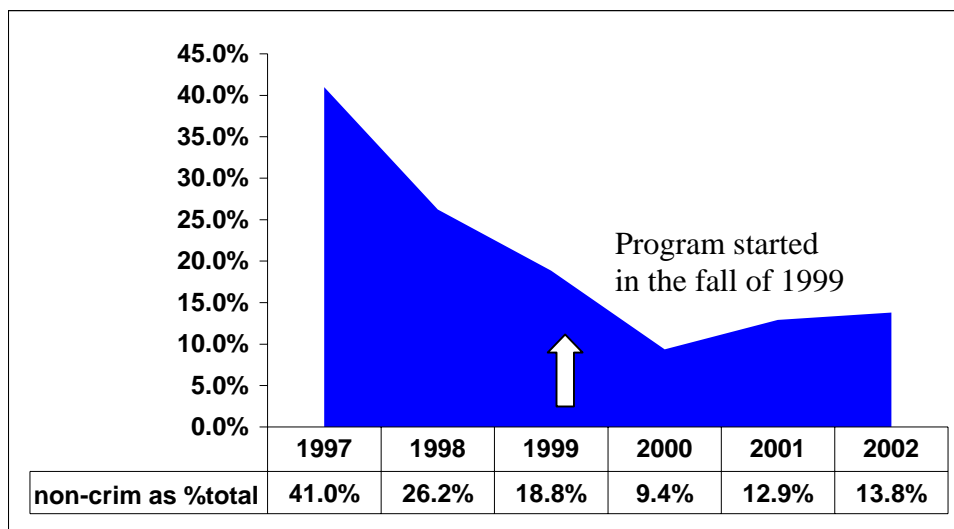
(1) Includes only calls specifically designated as "non-criminal" incidents
(2) Includes cases classified as criminal misconduct, assault, theft, weapon, or drug-related.
*2002 data reflect calls through October 30.

Educators in Large New Site Three assert that many of the "safety" benefits from the SRO program come in the area of public perception. People feel safer and less concerned about violence in the school as a consequence of the program. Moreover, students indicate they would feel at ease reporting a crime to the SROs at this site. Among 255 students who participated in a survey,[1] about two-thirds said that they would feel at least somewhat comfortable approaching the SRO for this reason (see table 7). Almost half reported they would feel at least somewhat comfortable discussing school-related problems with the officer. This level of confidence, combined with the easy accessibility

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[1] Specifically for the National Assessment, surveys of student perceptions of the SRO program were conducted in selected school districts in three large new sites. In Large New Site Three, the 38-question survey was administered to the entire 10th and 12th grade classes. However, because students had to return a signed form from their parents approving their participation in the survey, only 255 surveys were filled out.

of SROs at their schools, may produce the type of proactive benefit that program planners
envisioned, although such intangible outcomes are not easily measured.

Table 7: Student Comfort Level Approaching SROs at Large New Site Three

Q: How comfortable do you think you would be in approaching the SRO to:	Total (N) %	High School (N) %	Redwood (N) %	Everwood (N) %
report a crime?				
Very Comfortable	(78) 31%	(22) 44%	(31) 24%	(25) 35%
Somewhat Comfortable	(91) 36%	(14) 28%	(51) 40%	(26) 36%
Somewhat Uncomfortable	(52) 21%	(7) 14%	(28) 22%	(17) 24%
Not Comfortable At All	(29) 12%	(7) 14%	(18) 14%	(4) 5%
	(N = 250)	(N = 50)	(N = 128)	(N = 72)
discuss a problem you're having at school?				
Very Comfortable	(49) 20%	(13) 27%	(20) 15%	(16) 22%
Somewhat Comfortable	(72) 29%	(11) 22%	(33) 26%	(28) 38%
Somewhat Uncomfortable	(73) 29%	(16) 33%	(38) 30%	(19) 26%
Not Comfortable At All	(56) 22%	(9) 18%	(37) 29%	(10) 14%
	(N = 250)	(N = 49)	(N = 128)	(N = 73)

In addition, many of the students who wrote remarks or clarifications at the end of the
survey commented that they *felt safer* having an SRO at their school. A sample of their
thoughts follows:

- "he is good at stopping fights and problem solving."
- " . . . he is a good SRO that keeps the school out of trouble."
- "The SRO is really working because our school feels safer when he is there."
- ". . . [having an SRO] makes me feel safe and comfortable. The SRO often prevents fights at school."
- "It helps to have someone with a gun discouraging troublemakers in the school."

A small number of students indicated that the presence of an officer at school made them
feel *less* secure or *less* comfortable.

- "I don't believe the SRO should have a gun on him because he might flip out and shoot people."
- "I feel very uncomfortable knowing there is a person in the school carrying a gun. I do not like the idea and wish that there would be no SRO in my school."
- "No use other than to scare kids."

- "They make me feel protected. However, sometimes when I see them they make me feel as if I am in a prison on lock down. This school already feels like a prison, they just enhance it."

Improvements in Police-Youth Relationships

Other outcome measures may provide a more meaningful assessment of the Large New Site Three SRO initiative, however. As noted above, the program's main goals involved relationship building between the partner agencies and between individual officers and students, as well as improving the police image among the town's youth (a desire to "humanize" police). School district and law enforcement personnel repeatedly stressed these benefits of the initiative, focusing on the "resource" aspects of the SRO position much more than on its enforcement features.

Students participating in the survey were afforded the opportunity to make additional comments about the program or officer in their school at the end of the questionnaire. Of those who did, a significant majority expressed appreciation for the counseling and mentoring functions of the initiative and, specifically, for their SRO's ability to solve problems and listen to students. In addition to more general statements about the SRO's positive attributes, such as "he is helpful," "he is nice," "he is thoughtful," and "he is cool," many students wrote specifically about the officers' ability to gain the respect and trust of students in their schools. A sample of these comments appears below:

- "He is always there when you need him. He is the best!"
- "He is a very helpful, respectful person. He loves children and is always willing to help."
- "He is a really great guy! He is really close to a lot of the students which makes me feel good."
- "He is very helpful and easy to talk to. If you have a problem you go to him and he helps you out with it."
- "He is very nice and friendly. I see him a lot helping other kids with their problems and I think every school should have one."
- "He is a very intelligent man. He deserves the respect he gets and even an award."
- "I think the SRO program is very helpful because [our school's officer] is fun to be around and he's more comfortable to talk to instead of a teacher."
- "I believe the SRO is a wonderful system. It is very good to have a role model."

- "I think . . . they should continue this program because it encourages students
  and leads them in the right direction."
- "He's there when you need him and he just doesn't talk about school related
  things."
- "It is great for teens and kids to have a person they can trust and reach out to
  in the event of a conflict at home, school or anywhere else."
- "They know what they are doing; they are not afraid to tell you you're doing
  the wrong thing."

Certain students, like those quoted below, made less flattering observations about their

SRO's willingness and ability to "connect" with them.

- "I don't really see or talk to him because he is not very open."
- "I don't understand the necessity of having the SRO. He is nice, but doesn't
  solve problems. It seems like a waste of money and time."
- "I'm not sure what [the program] is all about. I know I see officers at school
  but I would not know if they are SROs or not."
- "Our SRO is not that fun."
- "I never see him and he seems preoccupied with other things."
- "The SRO should make more of an effort to talk to students without us
  approaching him."
- "I know he seems fair and nice. I wouldn't go to him if I had a problem,
  though."

Of the students who commented specifically on the SRO's approachability or

interpersonal effectiveness, however, a clear majority expressed their approval—they

outnumbered those who criticized or questioned the officer's ability to interact with

students by a 4:1 margin (95 to 24).

The largely favorable tone of these open-ended assessments matches the students'

responses to short-answer questions on the survey. Table 8 shows responses to a

question that specifically addressed the character traits of the site's SROs. Students were

asked to place a check mark next to the adjectives that would describe their school's

SRO. While 72 percent of the responding students from Large New Site Three indicated

that their SRO "cares about kids," only 3 percent answered that the officer "doesn't like

or trust kids." While 65 percent described their SRO as fair and as someone who likes

his or her job, only 2-4 percent called him useless, unavailable, or unapproachable.

Fifty-six percent of respondents said that they think their SRO is a good role model.

Table 8: Student Opinion of the SRO in Large New Site Three

Q: What is your opinion of the SRO?	Total (N) %	High School (N) %	Redwood (N) %	Everwood (N) %
(asked to check all that apply)				
Thoughtful	(132) 52%	(24) 48%	(58) 45%	(50) 68%
Fair	(164) 65%	(24) 48%	(76) 59%	(64) 87%
Smart	(124) 49%	(19) 38%	(52) 40%	(53) 72%
Cares About Kids	(184) 72%	(35) 70%	(83) 64%	(66) 89%
Problem Solver	(157) 62%	(27) 54%	(74) 57%	(56) 76%
Strict	(42) 16%	(9) 18%	(17) 13%	(16) 22%
Good Role Model	(143) 56%	(22) 44%	(62) 48%	(59) 80%
Useless	(7) 3%	(2) 44%	(5) 4%	(0) 0%
Unapproachable	(9) 4%	(2) 4%	(5) 4%	(2) 3%
Unavailable	(5) 2%	(1) 2%	(3) 2%	(1) 1%
Doesn't like or trust kids	(7) 3%	(4) 8%	(2) 2%	(1) 1%
Likes his or her job	(166) 65%	(28) 56%	(78) 60%	(60) 81%

When asked if these positive opinions carry over to the students' view of police more generally, respondents were less clear. In fact, one SRO himself questioned the level of influence he might have in this area. Although he tries to form bonds with his students, "kids' perceptions are only as good as their *next* interaction with police."

The data in table 9 show that roughly half the students surveyed said that their opinion of police had improved since knowing the SRO, and roughly half indicated that there had been little or no change in their perspective. Given the high levels of mistrust and defiance that middle and high school students normally express toward authority figures, however, one might consider these results commendable. Moreover, only three percent of Large New Site Three students indicated that their opinion of police had deteriorated since they first met the SROs.

Table 9: Change in Student Views of Police Generally

Q: Since you have known the SRO, has your opinion of police officers:				
	Total (N) %	Woodland High School (N) %	Redwood (N) %	Everwood (N) %
Improved	(118) 49%	(17) 38%	(50) 40%	(51) 73%
Stayed about the Same	(115) 48%	(26) 58%	(70) 56%	(19) 27%
Decreased	(7) 3%	(2) 4%	(5) 4%	(0) 0%
	(N = 240)	(N = 45)	(N = 125)	(N = 70)

The superintendent of schools notes a related benefit of the SRO program that he has seen in the township. Having officers in the school system has shown the school's administration, perhaps, that perceptions of the Large New Site Three schools as bad or dangerous are mistaken. The SROs have become good "PR people" for the schools. The high school SRO, for example, emphasizes that he has never felt unsafe—he feels more comfortable in the school than on patrol because he knows the population because the population stays relatively the same from day to day. When a law enforcement officer dispels myths about schools and youth in this way, it may also improve the community's perceptions of kids in general. In other words, the superintendent sees the image improvement as two-way.

Public Safety Benefits

Improved rapport between officers and students may have "spillover" effects for the larger community. Police now have greater ability to solve problems with young people than before the SRO program began. For example, the department received several complaints from senior citizens about speeding drivers in the area of the high school. The SROs discovered that the senior center's chess club met in the neighborhood of the school and ended just as students were dismissed. Because of his presence on campus and his reputation as "a good guy," the SRO was able to intervene. He spoke with a few kids, who agreed to drive more respectfully, and the chess club modified its schedule, thus averting further tensions.

Internally, the department also reaped certain benefits. 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 has more officers available for responding to other juvenile problems. Transfer of intelligence between the schools and the bureau has also allowed the department to respond proactively to potential youth-related problems. If the SROs learn that a fight or party might happen after school, for example, they might request extra patrols on school grounds during dismissal or might alert the weekend shift to increase its

patrol at local youth gathering spots. Similarly, if a fight between students has begun over the weekend and the bureau believes the dispute may carry over to school on Monday, the SRO can report this to school administrators even before classes begin.

Community Support

Despite the end of the COPS in Schools grant, the police, town, and schools have made a commitment to sustaining the program. Nearly every school administrator, police official, student, and teacher contacted at Large New Site Three expressed unflinching support for the SRO initiative. One middle school principal indicated that he had worked in his school both before and since the SRO program began, and he now believes that all middle schools and high schools should have an SRO. While D.A.R.E. may work as an intervention at the elementary level, he asserts, the relationship-building component of the SRO model is essential for the higher grades. In middle school, most students are still formulating their opinions about law enforcement. A positive experience with an officer, therefore, on the non-threatening "turf" of their own school, may help kids to generalize a better overall image of the police.

A second middle school principal commented that, during introductions at school assemblies and after-school events, the SRO usually receives the most applause from both parents and kids. Should the program end completely, this principal says, he would be "devastated." The SRO has offered his school three enormous dividends: the value of lessons in the classroom "which cannot be underestimated"; a great relationship with students and parents; and security in the event that a threat ever arose at the school.

Finally, when the high school principal was asked what he might tell other school administrators about the 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."

Large New Site Four

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Capsule Program Description

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Large New Site Four is a city of more than 250,000 in the southwestern United States. Its population is diverse with a significant number of Hispanic residents. The police department employs more than 600 sworn officers to cover the city's more than 150 square miles. The school system has more than 70,000 students in more than 100 schools. Thirty-eight school resource officers assigned to the city's 30 middle and high schools began working in the school system in 1999 with funding from the COPS in Schools program.

Program Planning and Costs
Those involved with the development of the SRO program viewed it as the next phase of a long-standing commitment to having police work in schools. Local police have worked in schools in Large New Site Four for more than 25 years. These efforts have included D.A.R.E. officers, G.R.E.A.T. officers, and now SROs. The city has a significant gang and violence problem in several schools as well as many neighborhoods. As a result, stationing police in the schools has been viewed as a public safety priority. The budget, fully funded by a COPS in Schools grant, had an initial cost of $1,218,269.

The SROs
The police department assigns SROs to schools without consulting school administrators. Most of the SROs have had considerable police experience. They have worked in a wide range of areas within the department including SWAT, white-collar investigation, drug enforcement, juvenile investigation, and patrol. However, except for one SRO and one school administrator who attended a COPS-sponsored training, there has been no other formal training for SROs. Because of a very high turnover rate, the department has had trouble filling the vacancies; as a result, the department has had to use "reverse seniority," assigning the newest officers to the SRO unit.

Program Activities
The SRO program has is no clear model or structure. As a result, officers perform varying sets of activities. However, the most common forms of interaction with students involve coaching athletic teams, community service, summer camps, and informal contacts during the school day.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation
Because SROs are stationed in multiple schools, school administrators do day-to-day monitoring. A police officer who supervises the SROs deals with problems as they arise.

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The Site

Large New Site Four occupies approximately 175 square miles and has a broad range of economically and ethnically diverse neighborhoods. The population is more than two-thirds white but has a large proportion of Hispanics. Approximately one in four families speaks another language at home, most commonly Spanish. Approximately 13 percent of the population lives below the poverty line and 17 percent is under 18 years of age.

The Police Department

The police department in Large New Site Four has more than 600 sworn officers and more than 250 civilian employees. The department has a decentralized command structure with five area command substations and five community substations. The department receives more than 400,000 calls for service each year and has been involved in a community policing program for more than a decade. Large New Site Four experienced an increase in crime during the middle of the 1990s, after which the crime rate decreased to a level slightly below that of 1990.

The police department has had a long-standing presence in the schools. While the SRO program is the latest variation and the most popular, police from this community have been involved in school-based programs since the 1970s. This involvement has taken the form of the D.A.R.E. and G.R.E.A.T. programs and more informal programs in which patrol officers were recommended to visit the schools in their patrol areas. This long-standing involvement with the schools made for an easier transition as SRO officers were introduced into high schools and middle schools. Conversely, the long history of police in involvement in the schools offered a challenge to both police officials and school officials in terms of wondering, "Why does this program need to be different from what we have always been doing?"

The School System

The Large New Site Four school system serves nearly 800,000 students in more than 100 separate schools. Security for the system is provides by uniformed but unarmed school security officers employed by the Large New Site Four school department.

Because of the large number of schools in Large New Site Three, the characteristics of two sample schools are presented below as examples of the diversity of the city's schools.

High school #1, the oldest of the city's public high schools, is located north of city center in a relatively high-crime neighborhood. Over 2,000 students attend, mostly from Hispanic families. The main student problems described by the SRO include fighting, truancy, and marijuana use. The school population struggles academically, if measured by standardized test results. Its recent performance falls below the district average.

High school #2 is located near the city center in a high-crime, high-poverty neighborhood. The school has a heterogeneous population of under 1,000 students, ranging from children of university professors to children of unemployed immigrants. Many come from transient families of migrant workers, resulting in a high rate of change from year to year in the student body. For many, English is a second language. According to the SRO, there is some gang affiliation among the students, although it is not pervasive.

Student surveys in these schools[2] indicate that students' perception of safety in their own neighborhoods are fairly similar for both sample schools, with high school #1 students reporting greater risk of crime and gangs. Student infractions and crime occur more frequently at high school #1 than high school #2. However, given that the SRO from high school #2 believes that few teachers would intervene in cases of student misconduct,

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[2] Specifically for the National Assessment, surveys of student perceptions of the SRO program were conducted in selected school districts in three large new sites. In Large New Site Four, the 38-question survey was administered to the entire 10th and 12th grade classes. However, because students had to return a signed form from their parents approving their participation in the survey, only 425 surveys were filled out, representing 47 percent of the total student enrollment in these classes.

the disparity may also reflect a greater willingness on the part of high school #1 staff and administrators to enforce rules and report crime. In fact, among 10th and 12th graders, a larger share of students from high school #2 (25 percent) than high school #1 (12 percent) indicated that they feel "somewhat unsafe" or "unsafe" at school. A larger share of students from high school #2 (18 percent versus 14 percent at high school #1) also reported that they had avoided school at least once during the previous six months because they feared being harmed or harassed.

Program History

The SRO program represents a continuation of a long-standing police department involvement in the schools.

Origins

Large New Site Four has had sworn officers in schools since 1972. One SRO recalled that about 12 years ago, owing to budget shortcomings, police were removed from the schools. School district security officers attempted to bridge the gap but, according to both police and school officials, the substitution did not work very well. The students did not respond in the same way to the security officers as they had to the local police. Retired police officers have also worked in the schools and continue to do so. When a COPS in Schools grant was made available in 1999, the existing school security force largely vacated many facilities when city police officers were assigned as SROs, shifting its focus, instead, to the elementary schools.

The COPS in Schools application was originally funded in June 1999. The application requested funding for 10 full-time SRO officers. In early 1999, the police department expanded the duties of its 18 D.A.R.E/G.R.E.A.T. officers working in the middle schools to take on the broader range of functions outside of the classroom generally associated with SRO programs. Subsequent COPS in Schools funding permitted the department to place two full-time SROs in each of the city's public high schools.

Budget

The budget that was fully funded by the COPS Office grant provided for 10 full-time officers at an initial cost of $1,218,269. The cost per officer in year one was $35,467, totaling $121,826 for the three-year period of the grant.

Planning and Implementation Obstacles

Because of the large number of students and staff, the city's high schools function as geographically compressed, self contained, independent communities. Gangs, drugs, violence, and other criminal behavior pose serious problems for the safety and well-being of public high school staff and students. During the 1997–98 school year, the city's high schools collectively reported 369 felony crimes, 793 misdemeanor crimes, and 291 narcotics-related crimes. Over 100 weapons were seized at city high schools, including 23 firearms.

Traditionally, the officers assigned to each school's neighborhood provided police services on campus. Because of the high level of demand across the average police beat, however, patrol officers generally had limited, strictly reactive, contact with the schools. In the department's COPS in Schools grant application, officials asserted that "[t]he application of traditional law enforcement tactics on high school campuses (i.e., the dispatch of a police officer initiated by a specific call for service) ignores problem solving opportunities that would be apparent to a permanently assigned SRO who would be and integral part of the campus . . . ."

The mission of SROs in the high schools was seen primarily in law enforcement terms—reducing crime in and around high school campuses. Beyond responding to calls for service, SROs would conduct crime and safety awareness programs for students, staff, and neighborhood groups; participate in truancy and drop-out reduction programs; serve as mentors to at-risk students; monitor the behavior of court-involved students; and serve as liaisons between the law enforcement, the campus community, and the surrounding neighborhood—that is, work with community groups to address youth crime and neighborhood safety issues and act as mediators when needed.

Institutional Politics/Interagency Mistrust

Two additional law enforcement departments have Large New Site Four schools within their jurisdictions. The sheriff's office provides service to county schools, while the board of education employs an independent force of 27 unsworn security officers to serve the whole district. The carrying of firearms by SROs distinguishes them from their school security counterparts. While the chief of school security had pressed the board to change its no-guns policy for years, recent votes have authorized arming the officers only during "non-school" hours. As result, a complex, more or less two-tiered, system of policing has emerged. The county and city sworn officers who serve as SROs in the high schools and middle schools handle the majority of drug, gang, and weapons violations. These SROs respond to calls for service at their schools during the day. School security officers primarily work in the elementary schools, but they also investigate after-hours alarm, trespassing, or vandalism incidents at secondary school campuses.

A fundamental mistrust and frustration between the Large New Site police department and school district seems to persist. The MOU that establishes each agency's responsibilities with regard to the SRO intervention remains unsigned by the school department more than two years after its original drafting (see below). While the police department has played a role in the public schools since the mid-1970s through the D.A.R.E. and G.R.E.A.T. programs, as well as through the periodic placement of plainclothes detectives in city high schools, the advent of the SRO program reportedly strained this collaboration. The local police chief at that time came from a community where the SRO model had flourished. He had a good rapport with the school superintendent, and together they planned for a police-school collaboration that moved away from D.A.R.E. toward the SRO model. In April 2000, the school superintendent commissioned a "professional assessment," or audit, of the school security department, by individuals affiliated with the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO). The police chief apparently failed to consult the school security chief about this audit, which caused some bad feeling between the two. He rumpled feathers still

further by advocating the absorption of the school security police into his agency (an idea later abandoned as impractical).

The school district uses its own force for internal investigations—e.g., allegations of teacher abuse—and, according to police supervisors, only reluctantly shares information about these cases. As a result, SROs report frustration over what they consider to be a one-way flow of information in which, in order to comply with state mandates, they must advise school security police of cases they handle, but school security police fail to notify them of potentially serious situations like staff misconduct that could profoundly impact the environment on their campuses.

Internal Police Department and School Department Struggles and Restructuring
The superintendent of schools at the time that the SRO program began left his position after a series of incidents that were described as "gross misconduct," including allegations of widespread "kickbacks" and problems relating to alcohol use. School board meetings became highly politicized during his administration (even more than usually). Several board members openly criticized and actively opposed the superintendent. Other members defended him and his suggested policy changes. This struggle attached a political stigma to and polarized opinion around most aspects of the superintendent's "agenda," including the SRO initiative.

When the SRO program began, police officers reportedly began debating about whether school safety was a state responsibility. Some of the field captains believed that the state should provide this service so that local agencies could "take back" their SROs and reassign them to the street. At the same time, police officials noted, the mayor began restricting the department's growth, which resulted in an estimated shortage of some 30 to 40 officers. As a result, the SRO unit, with 38 officers, had to compete with the department's other divisions for increasingly scarce resources.

The location of the SRO unit in the youth services section, a largely investigative bureau, rather than under field services, also drew speculation among police staff. The unit

operates at a considerable distance from headquarters, at a site with several child

protective agencies. While this may link the SRO program to other youth-focused

programs, such as child abuse and exploitation, such a link may actually point the unit

more toward investigation and intelligence gathering than if it were housed in the broader

frameworks of patrol or community policing.

Size of Program—Turnover/Lack of Consistency

The size of the program—38 officers—provided a series of challenges. The scope of the

program led to little interaction among SROs and limited supervision of many officers.

A number of officers moved from their original SRO positions to other law enforcement

opportunities. This resulted in a number of patrol officers being involuntarily assigned as

SROs. As a result, in some cases these officers were not as well suited to the program as

the original officers who had volunteered for the position.

Lack of Understanding among Principals

Local police officials request opportunities to address all principals at a superintendent's

district-wide summit each fall. This helps the department to inform administrators about

the overall goals of the SRO program and to begin discussing how best to use the officers

at each school. In at least one year, however, 2001–02, the school department denied this

request. As a result, the lieutenant who oversees the SRO program reported that

individual officers must "train" their principals as they work together over time.

However, because personalities and communication styles vary from school to school,

some SROs have forged excellent relationships with administrators, while others have

floundered or even dramatically clashed. Certain principals have called the lieutenant as

late into the school year as March or April asking, "What is your officer supposed to be

doing here?"

Poor Role Definition

Police supervisors provide only general guidance to their officers on the roles they should

assume within their schools. Officers generally have a clear sense of their obligations as

sworn law enforcers but some, when they first enter the school environment, have little

idea about their other duties. As a result, the SROs themselves often negotiate sensitive topics directly with administrators, such as when and to what degree to become involved in student disruptions. In some situations, administrators perceive SROs as threats to their authority and attempt to curtail their day-to-day activities. Other administrators see the SROs as legitimizing, rather than undermining, the administrator's role as disciplinarian. One assistant principal, for example, explains that the police presence indicates that "something can be done" and gives some form of empowerment to the discipline system. A principal may say to a student, "I don't want to suspend you, but I'd like you to go speak with [the SRO] about what might happen should your behavior continue." The SRO at this school also accompanies principals to long-term suspension or expulsion hearings at the district level. This lends credibility to their reporting of events and to their assessment that school safety would be compromised without the SRO present.

Regarding accountability and for whom the SRO works, this assistant principal sees his school's SRO as a peer—as a school district employee—although the police pay his salary. The SRO participates in staff and other administrative meetings. "[He] realizes that he works for the school, but he has to say what the appropriate issues are for him to cover." Then again, in specific situations, such as when the SRO handled a string of burglary investigations involving students, this administrator acknowledges that "I work for [the SRO]" in that he must assist the officer in any way possible.

At another high school, the principal clearly likes to set a different tone. He states that in his school the SRO must report to him, "but we don't arm wrestle about who's the boss." Because SROs will want to "please both cooks in the kitchen" (the police department and school district), administrators must help them to blend into the school climate. This same principal has indicated, however, that he would prefer that the SRO never use his radio, since media sources listen to police scanners. As an example of this principal's extremes around control issues, the SRO recounted how the administrator once criticized him for requesting back-up while responding to an explosion at a nearby apartment

complex. Perhaps not surprisingly, the officer listed "understanding how to play 'the political game' with administrators" as one important quality for SROs to possess.

Moving into the future, the sergeants who supervise the program say that they look forward to securing a finalized, signed MOU. This will help them and their officers to more clearly define their roles and standardize their work across schools. It will help eliminate problems with the principal who believes the SRO is there for "his purposes only," for example.

Supervision and Communication between SROs and the Police Department
SROs rarely respond to calls for service off school grounds and they do not appear at roll calls. They spend most of their time indoors, rather than in the cars, with the result that at times they do not hear their police radios. As a result, they sometimes find themselves isolated from their peers and only loosely tied to the rest of the department. Shift times influence this as well because SROs generally begin work before the day shift and end before the second shift. Information, crime trends, and new activities get shared among SROs during their weekly briefing. Other police department units also communicate with SROs through this briefing mechanism. Individuals from the gang and narcotics units, for example, generally attend the sessions. However, some SROs report that field division personnel make negative comments about their work because they do not understand what the SRO unit accomplishes.

Program Coordination
One obstacle that caused confusion from the outset was the failure to sign and implement a detailed memorandum of understanding that specified the expectations of the police and schools in terms of the responsibilities of each organization. The MOU that was developed, but never signed, identified, for example, the following division of labor:

- Police to perform the daily function of security for schools.
- Schools agree to report all criminal activity coming to the attention of school staff to the SRO.
- Police to serve as primary responder and investigative agency for all violent and sex crimes.

- If staffing shortages occur, police may reduce the SROs' work at schools to part-time.

- SROs will continue to attend assigned training, keep scheduled court appearances, and transport individuals they take into custody.

- While SROs will not be dispatched to calls for service outside of their schools, they are required to respond to any situation they encounter.

The MOU also specified:

- the permitted law enforcement activities of SROs on school grounds and
    —the conditions under which SROs may detain individuals
    —the conditions under which SROs may question individuals, including minors
    —the conditions under which SROs may conduct pat-downs and searches
    —the conditions under which SROs may respond to incidents that violate school policy
- the required duties of school principals
    —meet at least weekly with their school's SRO to exchange information
    —apprise the SRO of any crimes or investigations involving students or staff
    —meet twice yearly with the SRO's supervisor from police department
    —invite the SRO to in-service training when possible.

As the agreement suggests, a great deal of discussion went into the development of the MOU, but when it was to be implemented a number of school officials expressed reservations and the agreement was never signed.

The School Resource Officers

School administrators are not involved in the selection of SROs. Turnover is high. The officers are not trained before—and, generally, not after—they go on the job.

Recruitment

With such a large SRO unit, the police department has trouble filling vacancies left by retiring or transferred officers. Four such slots remained open at the start of the 2001–2002 school year, requiring the department to use a "reverse seniority" system, with newest officers forced involuntarily into the SRO unit. A lieutenant expressed a need to make SRO positions more attractive to motivate qualified applicants.

The Large New Site Four police department does not consult with school administrators prior to assigning officers to their campuses. This creates a number of potential problems, including not knowing what skills and characteristics work best within each school culture or environment. It misses an opportunity to build connections from the start between administrators and the officers eventually assigned to their campuses. This lack of involvement from schools has resulted in a number of "mismatches" where the skills and interests of an SRO do not meet the expectations of local school officials.

One SRO has a strong affinity with his role and positively identifies himself with students and staff, alike. His daughter attends the school. He has 14-½ years' service with the police department, the first 8 spent in field services patrolling the city's roughest sectors. He transferred briefly to the detective squad but did not like the paperwork it entailed. He spent six subsequent years as a D.A.R.E./G.R.E.A.T officer and still teaches a G.R.E.A.T. parenting course. Roughly three years ago he became an SRO, the first to be stationed at a middle school.

The SRO at another high school is within two years of retirement and wants to stay in the position until he retires because it is a break from street work. Few of the students acknowledge the SRO, and this officer does not seem particularly engaged with students. The lack of involvement of the SRO in school activities is palpable—teachers, staff, and students all fail to acknowledge his presence.

Training

Most of the site's SROs have been on the force for more than 10 years working in a wide range of areas, including SWAT, white-collar and juvenile investigation, and patrol. However, since the department provides no systematic orientation for these officers, their varied backgrounds often lead them to emphasize different aspects of the SRO role.

According to an SRO who attended a COPS in Schools training, the sessions were a key to his 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. He commented that the COPS Office training was very good and felt that other officers would have benefited if they had had the opportunity to attend. Only one school administrator from the school district attended the COPS in Schools training. The SRO felt that there was a need to bring more administrators in the process, either by shared training or more widespread discussions, so that there would be a better integration between functions of the school and police department.

Turnover

Developing positive rapport with students may take long-term commitment and effort on the part of SROs. Because of this, one SRO believes it is best for the police to keep the same officers stationed at a particular school from year to year rather than rotating them through different facilities or transferring them to other units too quickly. When asked if any police officer can perform the SRO role successfully, this officer definitively answers "no." He felt that about 10 to 20 percent of officers have no ability to deal with children and that officers who work well in middle schools may not necessarily work as well in high schools. The officer pointed out that the job requires very strong communication skills.

Program Activities

According to several SROs, a number of factors influence the types of activities of any given SRO in Large New Site Four:

- past work history of the officer;
- management and communication styles of the principal;
- willingness of the principal to integrate and include the SRO in the school environment;
- willingness and ability of the officer to adapt;
- characteristics of the student population (mobility/transience, parental support, language);
- types of crime and discipline problems that confront the school; and
- types of problems students encounter in their neighborhoods and homes.

As noted above, the 38 SROs primarily report to two sergeants whose perspective about supervisors and the SRO role are dramatically different. The first supervisor had spent more time "away from the street" and had been an SRO. The second supervisor had transferred from a different unit and had never worked in the schools. While the first sergeant sees teaching as an important and "very rewarding" component of SRO work, the second believes that his SROs have enough to keep them busy without entering the classroom. He indicates that SROs "need to establish their priorities." The first sergeant encourages coaching, or similar activities like chess club or theater, as "one of the best tools for elevating the relationship between officers and kids." The second sergeant mentions that these activities raise sticky issues, particularly around schools paying officers directly for overtime.

SRO Unit "Snapshot"—Activities for January 2001

181 police reports written resulting in:
     20 felony arrests
     20 misdemeanor arrests
     20 misdemeanor citations
     17 truancy citations
     11 weapons seized
      7 moving citations
      7 accident investigations

Other activities
     7 high school basketball events attended
     4 after school sessions supervised—middle school model-building club
     2 neighborhood events—community center's family day; children's health fair
     2 special school functions—middle school awards night, winter dance

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The lack of a clear model or structure to the SRO program at this site has resulted in officers performing and emphasizing widely varying sets of activities. The summaries below highlight some of these differences and identify conditions that may have influenced the SROs' approaches to their positions.

High School #1

The SRO in this school estimates that he spends roughly 25 percent of his time handling and following up investigations or writing reports. Vandalism, theft, and fist fights over dating situations are the incidents that occur most frequently in his school. The SRO files an in-school incident report on anything that is a crime but a police report only in some situations. The officer is clear about his need to act in his law enforcement role. However, school administrators handle "gray areas" on a case-by-case basis, factoring in their knowledge of the kids and their families. As a result, the SRO sometimes addresses more minor problems using only parental intervention. Other times, if a student has committed previous offenses, the SRO may report a "gray-area" incident to the juvenile probation officer but not make an arrest.

Another SRO at this school classifies SRO work as more "preventive," with mediation the number one activity. When kids report bullying to either SRO, mediation takes place. Staff resist using either SRO for day-to-day duties like monitoring halls or the cafeteria because "You want the SRO to be able to roam around and find out what is happening." The SRO can act almost as "the eyes of the principal." According to this school principal, the SRO's visible presence, as well as the rapid response to safety issues the SRO offers, make the program invaluable to the school.

Beyond security and conflict resolution, the SRO provides a limited number of law-related classes to students. In driver education classes, he has presented topics such as "how to conduct yourself during a traffic stop." A history teacher requested that he discuss human rights in one of her classes. This SRO classifies this education component of his work as "informal but effective." He has used his experience as a patrol officer during meetings with parent groups.

During the summer, because the police department often needs to fill personnel gaps, it schedules SROs for field duty. This SRO disagrees with doing this, however, because many enforcement activities related to kids that the SRO conducts on the street may carry

over to the next school year and damage the rapport the officer has spent months
attempting to establish.

High School #2

The SRO acts as counselor, mediator, and coach in this school. He gives advice and
builds rapport with students. Special education students and gang members make up the
majority of his caseload. He claims a high level of discretion in which matters he
processes through the legal system. He attempts to secure parental involvement and
commitment but, when this proves unavailable or unsuccessful, he sometimes refers
students to juvenile probation.

The main discipline or delinquency problems at this high school include gang activity,
drugs, bullying, and truancy. In 2001, the drug ecstasy created a lot of problems because
a former student was dealing it. Truancy also became a matter of greater concern when,
according to the SRO, "a ring of 12 kids" that always skipped class began breaking into
the homes of a nearby wealthy subdivision. Eventually, when a fellow student provided a
tip to the SRO, police cleared 22 robberies stemming from this group. They recovered
five or six guns that the students had stolen and planned to sell on campus.

This SRO estimates that he spends 60 percent of his time on investigative work and
following up on a wide variety of offenses. The remaining 40 percent he devotes to
counseling or mentoring activities. His office usually "fills up" at lunch time. On one
occasion, he successfully secured a psychiatric placement for a suicidal/homicidal
student. He became involved when he learned the girl had brought a knife to school and
threatened to kill herself and her stepmother. The SRO confiscated the weapon, which
the student claimed she made for a class assignment.

High School #3

The opportunity to positively influence high school youth offers the biggest reward to the
SRO in this school. Working within the education system proves the biggest challenge,
since the school's procedures and police procedures do not always mesh. Administrators

sometimes want the SRO to do things that are not permitted to him. The principals deal predominantly with school-related business and take cues from the SRO on what deserves police involvement. As a result, the two realms operate fairly separately at this high school. Administrators have not included the SRO in staff meetings, and the SRO reports that he has little or no interaction with teachers. He views his role as addressing criminal issues. He intervenes informally with most cases because he reports he has no faith that the overburdened juvenile system can address his school's relatively minor delinquency problems.

Unlike many of his peers, this SRO attends almost no after-school events. As a single father of a 5 year-old, he usually foregoes the opportunity to work at sporting events or dances. School security officers provide security at these events in the SRO's absence. This further isolates this SRO from the community and school life, however. This SRO seems to expend as little energy as possible on the job.

The principal at this high school differentiates between police and school interventions. In discipline matters, she instructs her staff to *always* contact parents before turning a child over to the SRO. She expects that SROs "know their limitations" and appropriately refer students to counselors, rather than handling difficult emotional or family issues themselves. Likewise, she sees no need for officer involvement in the classroom, although she has asked the SRO to provide limited staff training. By the time students reach high school, she claims, they have become bored with law-related education, tired of hearing "the same old messages" so many times. According to the principal, by the time they enter high school, kids see the officers as law enforcers and expect them to act as such. Students, she says, feel safer with police on campus but generally do not bother with the SRO unless they need him.

High School #4

In this school the SRO is not connected significantly with the disciplinary process—"When I am called, I respond." The SRO patrols the campus, with limited interaction with students or teachers. There is a common area with vending machines and lockers in

a big open space where many students hang out. The SRO, who is also a football coach here at the school, spends much of his time in this area. The SRO turns in reports of incidents to his immediate supervisor. They get approved, copied, and filed. The individual in charge of security for the school makes copies and files them in his system. Campus security is the group with which the SRO interacts most.

High School #5

This is one of the city's largest high schools, with almost 2,400 students. Most of the neighborhoods surrounding the school are plagued by crime and poverty. The school has more gang activity than any other school in the district. The principal estimated that about one-tenth of the students have a gang affiliation.

The SRO reports that fights and assaults occur every day at the school, occasionally involving as many as 50 students. At times, those students not actively fighting form barriers by locking arms in order to prevent police intervention. The officer expressed concern for his own safety in such instances, because he had had to break through a large number of students in order to reach the core of the fight. He suggested that most teachers or administrators look the other way rather than risk involvement. On one occasion, the SRO demonstrated remarkable professionalism and bravery breaking through more than 100 students to break up a fight between three students.

High School #6

This is the oldest of the city's public high schools, with over 2,000 students. The main student problems described by the two SROs are fighting, truancy, and marijuana use.

The focus of one SRO at the school was unclear because both the principal and this SRO were new to the school. The SRO coaches football but spends most of his day walking through the campus, identifying problems and reaching out to students. The other SRO assigned to the school performed most of the program's counseling functions. However, the principal had concerns about the police department's scheduling of the SRO's vacation time and other time away from the school. She commented that recently both

SROs were away at the same time and that she was looking for officers to act more
carefully around this issue and demonstrate more concern for and commitment to the
school.

High School #7

This is an older high school, located near the city center in a high-crime, high-poverty
neighborhood. The school has a heterogeneous population of close to 2,000 students,
ranging from children of university professors to children of prostitutes. Many come
from transient families of migrant workers, resulting in a high turnover rate from year to
year. For many students, English is a second language. The principal reported some gang
affiliation among the students. The SRO saw the school as a place run largely by
students, where few teachers take responsibility for maintaining order.

This school's SRO, who serves as a liaison with probation personnel, created a
community service program for students who violate school rules and developed a "teen
court" for students who commit low-level offenses. The SRO seems to have developed
good rapport with students; many approach him or greet him in the hallways. The SRO
asserts that this positive relationship has resulted more from his own outreach than from
any effort undertaken by school administrators or police supervisors.

Although clear differences exist among the SROs in the 10 high schools in terms of the
degree to which each officer emphasizes the position's various responsibilities, the
outcome of this community's program, *as a unit*, generally falls into three groups of
activities: law enforcement, teaching, and counseling and mentoring.

Law Enforcement

Police department 2001 and 2002 violence and vandalism reports provide the number and
nature of police reports filed by each law enforcement agency for every public school in
the district. Table 1 shows the number of reports filed by police officers assigned in the
10 high schools that host SROs. Although officers other than the SROs may have filed a
small share of these reports, it is reported that the SROs filed the vast majority, given the

officers' daily on-site presence at the schools. These data, therefore, suggest that the SROs engage in a fair amount of activity related to enforcing the law.

Table 1: Violence (Simple and Aggravated Assaults) and Vandalism Reports Filed by the Police Department in Large New Site Four High Schools

School	2000-01	2001-02	2 year total
HS #1	80	109	189
HS #2	49	82	131
HS #3	53	69	122
HS #4	59	56	115
HS #5	68	42	110
HS #6	56	83	139
HS #7	117	64	181
HS #8	82	61	143
HS #9	114	116	230
HS #10	130	142	272
Total	808	824	1632

Teaching

Unlike in middle schools where SROs use D.A.R.E. and G.R.E.A.T. lessons as an integral part of their contact with students, teaching in the high schools appears to be the least emphasized of the SRO's three roles. The students surveyed confirmed this impression regarding the limited scope and impact of classes taught by their schools' SROs. Only 18 percent of respondents from high school #1 and 12 percent from high school #2 recalled having attended a demonstration or assembly given by their SRO. Even fewer said they had attended a class given by their SRO—8 percent from high school #1 and 2 percent from high school #2. Those students from the two high schools who had had an assembly or class with an SRO generally rated it well—96 percent found their assemblies and 91 percent found their classes to be at least somewhat helpful. At high school #2, the majority of students in the survey also rated SRO assemblies and classes well, although not as highly as did the students in high school #1—roughly two-thirds said that they found the class or assembly at least somewhat helpful.

Mentoring

The most common forms of interaction with students involved coaching, community service, summer camps and, most importantly, informal contacts with students on a

day-to-day basis in hallways, entrances and exits, and other common areas. Survey results in the two sample high schools[3] (see table 2) suggest that a significant minority of students have regular contact with and also feel very comfortable talking with their SROs.

Table 2: Student Experience with and Perception of SROs

Q: How often have you had a conversation with the SRO in past 6 months?	Total	High School #1	High School #2
	(N = 425)	(N = 185)	(N = 210)
Never	62%	57%	65%
Once	17%	12%	20%
Several Times	21%	31%	15%
Q: Does the SRO say hello to you?	Total	High School #1	High School #2
	(N = 425)	(N = 185)	(N = 210)
Yes	36%	54%	22%
No	41%	29%	49%
Never passes by	23%	17%	28%

Q: How comfortable do you think you would be in approaching the SRO to:	Total	High School #1	High School #2
	(N = 370)	(N = 134)	(N = 206)
report a crime?			
Very Comfortable	(69) 19%	(32) 24%	(30) 15%
Somewhat Comfortable	(134) 37%	(60) 45%	(61) 31%
Somewhat Uncomfortable	(74) 20%	(24) 18%	(48) 24%
Not Comfortable At All	(87) 24%	(18) 13%	(61) 31%
discuss a problem you have at school?			
Very Comfortable	(60) 16%	(22) 16%	(34) 16%
Somewhat Comfortable	(104) 28%	(44) 33%	(53) 26%
Somewhat Uncomfortable	(86) 23%	(30) 23%	(45) 22%
Not Comfortable At All	(120) 33%	(38) 28%	(74) 36%

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3   See footnote 1.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Program monitoring is left largely up to local school administrators. Some statistical data suggest that the program may have achieved some positive results.

Monitoring

Two sergeants supervise the SRO/G.R.E.A.T. unit, each responsible for 15 schools.

The sergeants occasionally visit the schools, especially when high profile cases occur. They also require all SROs to attend a unit briefing once a week. However, because most officers assigned to the program had been in the department for many years and because of the long history of police involvement in the schools, the supervisors felt there was little need to monitor the SROs closely. Furthermore, with 30 schools, the sergeants would have found daily interaction with each SRO difficult to arrange. Finally, the supervisors felt that, if problems arose, the SROs or school administrators would bring these concerns to their attention. This largely "hands-off" approach allowed school administrators to direct the daily activities of the SROs assigned to their schools.

While they acknowledge that supervisors from other divisions have more "hands-on" interaction and greater awareness of their officers' everyday activities, the two supervisors see their SRO unit as "empowering its officers to make decisions." Since the SROs average 12 to 14 years of service, the sergeants say they have confidence in the officers; the SROs, in turn, appreciate "the freedom of not having a supervisor breathing down their necks."

Evidence of Program Effectiveness

While data suggest the SRO program may have achieved some positive outcomes, they must be treated with considerable caution. Other events that occurred at the time the program began and thereafter could have been responsible for some or all of the positive changes that took place during the life span of the program to date.

School Crime and Disorder Measures

There are data on suspensions, weapons on school grounds, violence reports, and substance abuse violence that suggest some improvements during the life of the program—but the benefit cannot be attributed to the program because of other possible influences.

Suspensions

The number of suspensions issued by high school administrators (see table 3) rose in each of the last four school years. However, the number of these suspensions classified as "long-term," those over 10 days, fell markedly in each of the last two years. Since the length of suspension generally coincides with the gravity of student infraction, these data suggest that the frequency of the most serious offenses had begun to decline in high schools that had an SRO. However, as noted above, other factors in each school may have also contributed to or been entirely responsible for the reduction in long-term suspensions.

Crime

Table 4 presents data available on police reports on high school campuses over the course of four academic years, 1998-99—the year before the SRO program began through 2001-02—the third year of the program's implementation.

These three incident types represent the major categories identified in school district annual reports to the state. Overall, incidents on high school campuses declined by roughly 15 percent over the four years reviewed. The analysis below examines each type of offense.

Table 3: Suspensions at 10 High Schools by School Year (SY) 1998–2002

Total Suspensions				
school	SY 98-99	SY 99-00	SY 00-01	SY 01-02
#1	315	149	333	343
#2	302	341	330	393
#3	242	195	242	374
#4	158	197	182	353
#5	33	88	89	104
#6	174	132	156	223
#7	421	373	223	248
#8	195	175	318	278
#9	285	197	303	404
#10	320	402	587	510
total	2445	**2249**	2763	3230
Long-Term Suspensions				
school	SY 98-99	SY 99-00	SY 00-01	SY 01-02
#1	23	15	7	6
#2	49	32	16	11
#3	12	5	17	9
#4	27	22	11	13
#5	12	84	42	17
#6	8	4	7	6
#7	27	39	13	19
#8	11	18	16	6
#9	10	25	9	16
#10	26	36	22	23
total	205	280	160	126

Table 4: Police Reports Filed in 10 Large New Site Four High Schools by Type and Year

Violence Reports	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
	362	286	252	258
Weapons Reports	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
	104	86	60	59
Substance Abuse Reports	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
	273	233	298	306

Weapons on School Grounds

Reducing the number of weapons brought to high school campuses constituted a primary

goal of the SRO program. As shown in table 5 and figure 1, police reports that cited

weapons possession decreased on every campus between the year prior to the SRO

program's start-up and the third year of implementation. While these decreases may
seem minimal in some cases, taken together the total decline in weapons reported
suggests that the program may have contributed to improving school safety.

Table 5: Police Reports for Weapons Violations by Year, 1998–2002

School Type/Year	Weapons 98-99	Weapons 99-00	Weapons 00-01	Weapons 01-02
HS #1	9	8	4	2
HS #2	17	4	3	5
HS #3	9	10	6	4
HS #4	6	8	8	2
HS #5	10	23	6	6
HS #6	5	5	2	5
HS #7	11	11	11	8
HS #8	3	0	5	3
HS #9	12	10	4	9
HS #10	22	7	11	15
Total	**104**	**86**	**60**	**59**

Figure 1: Weapon Reports from High Schools with SROs by Year, 1998–2002

Police reports for weapons violations
in high schools by year

	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
weapons	104	86	60	59
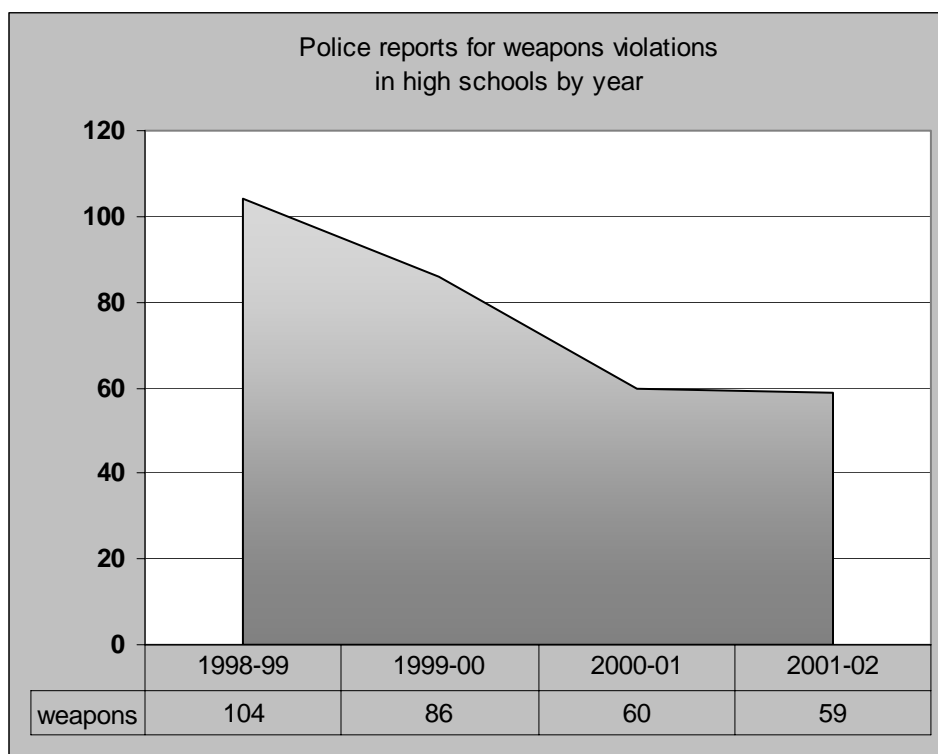
According to annual school district reports to the state department of education, the total
number of weapons violations for all schools in the district decreased over the same
four-year period. Weapons reports for the 10 high schools hosting SROs, however,
declined at a greater rate than did the rates for the school district as a whole (see table 6).
Although impossible to attribute the more significant reduction in high school weapons
reports to the presence of SROs, those schools where SROs were stationed showed more
promising results than did the entire school district.

**Table 6: Weapons Possession Reports in SRO Schools Compared with all Public Schools
by Year, 1998–2002**

weapon possession reports	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	% change
all public schools	329	284	271	240	-27%
high schools with SROs	104	86	60	59	-43%

Violence Reports

Violent incidents at the 10 high schools hosting SROs also declined between the year
before the program began and its third year of operation (table 7).

Table 7: Police Reports for Violent Incidents in High Schools over 4 Years

School Type/Year	Violence 98-99	Violence 99-00	Violence 00-01	Violence 01-02
HS #1	73	41	50	58
HS #2	32	14	19	25
HS #3	31	24	19	25
HS #4	31	28	14	18
HS #5	29	23	22	16
HS #6	13	8	21	31
HS #7	32	36	17	10
HS #8	12	13	11	11
HS #9	37	40	40	28
HS #10	72	59	39	36
Total	**362**	**286**	**252**	**258**

Although following a different pattern in each school, the number of violent offenses
reported decreased between school year 1998–1999—one year before the SRO program's
start—and school year 2001–2002—the third year that the SROs were stationed in the
high schools—in all but one school (high school #6). The increase in police reports filed
for incidents in this high school coincides with the arrival of a new SRO with a clear
emphasis on targeting violence. Viewed from this context, the increase might indicate an
increase in reports more than an increase in actual incidents.

Substance Abuse Violations

The 10 schools hosting SROs experienced an increase in substance abuse-related police
reports over the course of the four years (table 8). This may indicate either an increased
awareness of drug-related activity resulting from the full-time presence of officers on
school grounds, or it may point to an actual increase in substance abuse among students
at the 10 schools. The SROs in Large New Site Four seemed to be more focused on
stopping violence and reducing weapons on than dealing with substance abuse in the
schools. It may be that, once violence is reduced, SROs increase their focus on substance
abuse by students.

Table 8: Police Reports of Substance Abuse by School Year, 1998–2002

	Substance Abuse 98-99	Substance Abuse 99-00	Substance Abuse 00-01	Substance Abuse 01-02
HS #1	19	15	16	37
HS #2	29	10	15	29
HS #3	29	12	22	11
HS #4	19	17	15	25
HS #5	23	23	22	20
HS #6	23	8	26	28
HS #7	21	23	35	24
HS #8	15	18	49	26
HS #9	33	60	39	49
HS #10	62	47	59	57
Total	**273**	**233**	**298**	**306**

Student Opinion

On the whole, students who responded to a survey (see footnote 1) expressed positive opinions about the program, but important differences exist between the two schools studied in depth (see table 9). Given a list of adjectives and phrases, students from the sample schools most often checked that they would use "fair," "likes his or her job," "cares about kids," and "problem solver" to describe their SROs. However, while the most frequent answer from high school #1 was "cares about kids," the most frequently checked response among high school #2 students was "strict." Moreover, 27 percent of high school #1 students said that they would call their SRO "useless" compared with only 9 percent of students in high school #1. A full 20 percent from high school #2 indicated that their SRO "doesn't like or trust kids," while only 1 percent from high school #1 responded similarly.

Table 9: Student Opinions of Their SROs

Q: What is your opinion of the SRO? (check all that apply)	Total (N = 425)	HS#1 (N = 185)	HS#2 (N = 210)
Fair	30%	40%	24%
Likes His or Her Job	30%	41%	23%
Cares About Kids	28%	46%	18%
Problem Solver	27%	36%	21%
Strict	24%	20%	31%
Useless	20%	9%	27%
Thoughtful	19%	28%	24%
Smart	17%	24%	14%
Good Role Model	15%	30%	6%
Doesn't like or Trust Kids	13%	1%	20%
Unavailable	10%	5%	13%
Unapproachable	12%	9%	14%
Other	8%	5%	14%
%"other"- positive/favorable	*17%*	*50%*	*7%*
% "other" negative/unfavorable	*64%*	*10%*	*86%*
% "other" neutral	*15%*	*40%*	*7%*

At the end of the survey, students had an opportunity to write additional comments. Among students from the two sample schools who did, most expressed concerns or disparaging views about their school, in general, rather than about the SRO program, in particular. Some students from these schools expressed troubling perceptions about their own vulnerability and safety, including the following:

> "All the gang members in my school torment me. I feel as though I'll just go insane."
> "Make sure you guys know who you are hiring so that things don't happen to kids at school."
> "I think our community needs to get more cleaned up, I mean drugs and gang violence."
> "I personally believe that no matter what you try to do to make a school safe won't work."

Seven students from high school #1 made statements specifically relating to the SRO or program at their school. Four of these expressed views more positive than negative:

> "I think that SROs need to be in schools because some people feel safer with them around."
> ". . .[our] narcs should stay because they are cool"
> "I used to be in a gang until I got to [high school #1]. I needed to change. Our cop is very cool, nice."
> "The SRO is important and helps safety at the schools."

Two students wrote that they were not sure if they knew the SRO at their school. One wrote, "The SRO should protect students that are in danger by other gangs."

Fifteen students from high school #2 made SRO-specific comments that were, on balance, negative. Ten criticized SRO or the SRO program, including:

> "He is racist."
> "I think that our SRO program is very dysfunctional. If it worked people wouldn't get stabbed."
> "I think the SRO should walk around more, pay attention to thugs, and wear his uniform correctly."
> "The school narcs are disrespectful, you try to talk to them like a person, but they are big jerks."
> "The SRO needs to be more open to everyone. Not just the really good and the really bad kids."
> "The SRO should be here for the students, he is not."

Two student made positive comments:

> "I believe the SRO makes people feel safe in school."
> "SROs are helpful."

Three student wrote "neutral" remarks:

> "I think he can put more order in the school. We don't want crime."
> "I think our officer needs to be here all the time. Something can happen at the school and no one knows what to do."
> "Well I think that we need more officers in our school."

The majority of students indicated that their experience with the SRO program had little effect on their view of police officers generally, although those from high school #2 were three times as likely as their peers to say that the SRO had a negative influence on their opinion of police officers.

Table 10: Students' Opinions of Their SROs

Q: Since you have known the SRO, your opinion of police officers			
	Total (N = 350)	High School #1 (N = 127)	High School #2 (N = 195)
Improved	28%	31%	27%
Stayed About the Same	54%	61%	46%
Decreased	18%	8%	27%

Community Support

The police department and the school district hope to continue the program. The department has been associated with the schools for nearly 15 years and considers the SRO program as the best model for school-police interaction. Police administrators see the SRO as a way of reducing patrol officers' workload (e.g., by handling calls from the schools for help) and meeting an important community need. School officials believe the program provides useful security and, in some schools, improves the learning environment. While reductions in Federal support may alter the scope of the program, all parties expect that it will continue for the indefinite future.

Small Established Sites

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Capsule Program Descriptions</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">

Case Studies

All five small established sites are in North Carolina. Two began in 1993, two in 1994, and one in 1995.

</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Established Site One:</td>
<td>This program involves a police department with fewer than 40 sworn officers in a county of over 40,000 people. As part of a written agreement, one SRO is stationed at the one high school, which has over 1,500 students. The SRO spends about 50 percent of his time on law enforcement activities, including traffic control, supervising lunch periods, and responding to calls from the elementary schools; 30 percent on law-related education, including teaching Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.); and 20 percent devoted to 20–-30 counseling sessions a week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Established Site Two:</td>
<td>The local police department that sponsors this program has fewer than 50 sworn officers serving a town with slightly more than 20,000 residents. The one high school and two middle schools where the three SROs are stationed have between 700–2,000 students. A community panel interviews all applicants for SRO positions, although the chief makes the final choice. SROs receive a five percent supplement to their salaries. The amount of crime in the schools influences the ratio of time the SROs spend on law enforcement, education, and counseling. For example, one middle school SRO spends only 20 percent 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Established Site Three:</td>
<td>In this county of 60,000, two SROs from the sheriff's department (50 sworn deputies) are assigned to two high schools, and a third SRO covers three middle schools. Student enrollment at the schools ranges from 600 to over 900. The program began in response to an increasing number of bomb threats and drug trafficking at the schools. As the program developed, the SROs' initial primary focus on law enforcement shifted to a more even balance with education and counseling, but the proportion of time each SRO spends on these three areas varies considerably by school.</td>
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Small Established Site Four:	The sheriff's department that operates this program has about 30 sworn officers serving a community of 27,000 people. The four SROs are assigned to two middle schools and two high schools with student populations ranging from 500–700. When the initial grant that funded the SROs ended, community support for maintaining the program prevented the county commissioners from eliminating it. Initially, SROs spent most of their time on law enforcement, including supervising a deferred prosecution community service and counseling program for students the officers have arrested. Over time, the SROs have spent more time counseling, as well as teaching about date rape, civil law, and other topics at teachers' requests, and D.A.R.E. at the four elementary schools.
Small Established Site Five:	The program in this rural county of 35,000 people began in response to the statewide emphasis on school crime prevention and to violent incidents in nearby school districts. Four SROs from the sheriff's department of 30 sworn officers serve two high schools and two middle schools with student bodies ranging from 700–1,000 each. The officers spend about 30 percent of their time on law enforcement, a large portion of it investigating crimes through reviewing surveillance videos; 30 percent on law-related education, including teaching D.A.R.E.; and 40 percent on counseling and mentoring, including participating in PTAs, school plays, and pep rallies.

Similarities and Differences Among the Programs

In some respects, most or all of the five programs are very similar; in other respects, they differ considerably.

Program Planning and Costs

Program planning and implementation vary among the five sites largely due to different initial community reactions to the programs. Two communities strongly opposed having an armed officer in the schools, forcing one SRO initially to drive his own car and not wear a uniform as well as go unarmed. In two other sites, there was confusion about what the SROs' role should be. However, four of the five sites experienced relatively smooth beginnings, not because of prior planning but because of direct discussions between police chiefs and sheriffs with school superintendents who knew each other and "sealed" their agreements with a handshake.

The State provides funding to all school systems for high school SROs. However, in two of the five programs the funding does not cover the full cost of the officers' salaries and equipment, which the local law enforcement agencies or county or municipal government has to pay for. In one site, a COPS in Schools grant from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (the COPS Office) has funded one of the program's middle school officers for three years, with the school system agreeing to pay the cost in full for the fourth year; school systems fund the middle school SROs in two other sites; and the county pays for the middle school SROs in the two remaining sites.

Program Activities
All five programs require SROs to be trained at the North Carolina Justice Academy, where officers are introduced to a tripartite SRO model that expects them to perform as law enforcement officers, law-related educators, and law-related counselors. However, SROs spend very different proportions of time on each of these roles across—and even within—the five sites. After law enforcement, the SROs devote the most time to counseling. SROs also mentor students by coaching athletic teams, advising extracurricular clubs, and hosting summer camps for at-risk youth. In their education roles, some SROs rarely taught in the classroom while others taught as many as 2–3 days a week for 6–10 weeks just at their assigned schools' feeder schools

Monitoring and Evaluation
The principal means of monitoring the SROs is through informal contact between law enforcement agency officials and school administrators. However, SROs in one site submit a report to their sheriff's department supervisor each month, and principals are asked to fill out a performance review for each SRO in their schools. While each jurisdiction has annual crime incident figures for its schools, the data could not shed light on whether the SRO programs were reducing student misconduct largely because the very few crimes committed by students at most of the schools studied made comparisons between the number of offenses before and after the SROs programs began unreliable. However, several administrators, teachers, and students reported that they felt safer as a result of the SRO program, observing that the officers provided a "comfort level" that they liked. With the exception of the SROs in two sites' middle schools, SRO supervisors from the participating law enforcement agencies along with school district administrators in all five sites felt that their programs would endure, in some cases because the funding sources were stable, there was significant public support for the programs, or both.

All five small established sites studied in this report were in North Carolina. The sites were chosen from among over 100 in the state by the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Center for the Prevention of School Violence using several criteria, including the size of the law enforcement agency (fewer than 50 officers); age of the SRO program (had to originate before 1995); and geographic diversity. The school districts in which the five small established SRO programs are located are all county school districts.

Case Studies

The previous chapters provided a separate case study for each of the five large established programs and four large new programs. The present chapter devoted to the five small established programs is organized differently. The chapter begins with a briefer

description of each of the five small established programs than was provided for the large programs. These brief descriptions of the five small established programs are then followed by a discussion that compares the five small established programs in three areas: program history (funding, and program planning and implementation obstacles); program activities; and monitoring and evaluation. The organization for this chapter (and in the following chapter on the five small new programs) was used because, as small programs, the sites' lack of complexity obviated the need for a lengthy description of each one. In addition, because the five small established programs are all located in the same state, receive state funding, send their officers to the same academy for training, and share other similarities, describing the components of each program when they are identical in all five sites would have involved considerable repetition. By discussing the similarities and differences among the programs after the brief descriptions of each program, such repetition was avoided.

Small Established Site One

The Site

Small Established Site One is located in the mountains of North Carolina in the western part of the state. The county has a population of approximately 40,000 people. The average family income is about $50,000. Almost 95 percent of the community is white. The small city police department's one SRO serves the only high school in the county.

The city police department, with 35 sworn officers, serves the two square mile area that makes up the municipality. The police chief who provides the SRO has a strong commitment to creating a police force that is responsive to community needs. Because students from both the city and the county attend the high school, some students do not live in the SRO's jurisdiction. As a result, the SRO has experienced challenges solving problems that originate outside the jurisdiction. In response, the SRO has had to work hard to develop strong relationships with the sheriff's department that has law enforcement jurisdiction over the homes of all the students who attend the high school.

The high school, with over 1,500 students and 100 teachers, has always been among one of the state's highest performing schools according to state testing data. Reflecting the county population, the school's student body is similarly culturally homogenous.

Program History

The SRO program began in 1995 with a plain-clothes officer placed in the high school. The SRO, who used his personal car instead of a marked police cruiser, was viewed primarily as a law-related counselor and law-related educator under the school's supervision rather than what he was—a law enforcement agent reporting to the police department. In 1999, a change in the SRO model occurred which created a more traditional SRO program with clear guidelines for the now uniformed SRO to report directly to supervisors in the police department. The SRO also began teaching Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) at the three elementary schools in the city limits that are the high school's feeder schools.

The idea of stationing an SRO at the high school met with considerable resistance from the community because residents disliked the idea of placing a "gun-toting, uniformed officer" in the public schools. This became the major planning problem for the program. The SRO made use of his personal car due to the concern that a marked cruiser in front of the school building would foster the perception of an unsafe campus. The SRO was also not allowed to wear his police uniform or carry a gun on campus to lower his profile and thereby reduce community concerns.

The most serious implementation problem came when the school and police department set up only an informal arrangement. The SRO program had no system of accountability in place with the police department, and neither party knew what the SRO's duties should be. After two years of informal agreements, the police department and the school system decided to professionalize the position and increase the SRO's accountability.

Funding for the SRO position is allocated to the school system from the state legislature that, in turn, reimburses the police department for the SRO's salary, equipment, and other expenses. The approximate annual cost of the program is $45,000 per year.

The School Resource Officer

Initial interviews for the SRO position, conducted by the police department, were open to officers in any law enforcement agency. However, the program administrators realized that an "outsider" would not function effectively in the position because the SRO would need to be knowledgeable about the community to function effectively, and the community would have to be familiar with the SRO in order to accept the program. During the last interview process, only internal applicants were sought to ensure the hiring of an officer who knew and was known by the community. The current SRO, a white male in his mid-thirties, had applied for the position for the past three years.

Program Activities

The SRO spends about 50 percent of his time on law enforcement activities, 30 percent on law-related education activities, and about 20 percent on counseling.

- *Law Enforcement:* The SRO performs traffic control four to five times a week; investigates tips left on the CrimeStoppers Program line which he started; supervises lunch periods; and is on call for the three elementary schools in the school district.

- *Teaching:* The SRO teaches three sixth-grade D.A.R.E. classes; participates in two student clubs in which students are offered in-depth information on the workings of the police department; and teaches classes on law enforcement at the request of teachers.

- *Counseling:* The SRO averages about 20 to 30 counseling sessions per week (the sessions range in topic from family issues to relationships to life plans) and receives referrals from teachers to discuss problems students are having in class.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

The SRO's supervisor is the chief of police. Both describe communication between the police department and the county school system as excellent. They operate without a formal contract or memorandum of understanding, relying instead on spoken agreements.

Constant and consistent communication of problems and concerns, as well as addressing problems immediately with those involved, is a focus in the partnership. If no resolution is achieved, the superintendent and the chief address the matter. However, as a result of open lines of communication, most difficulties are handled at lower levels.

Informal discussions with about 50 students in two classrooms, 5 teachers in the lunchroom, and the school system superintendent indicated there was a consensus in terms of their perceptions of fear of crime and trust of the SRO and police in general.

Student Perceptions

- The students believe that there is a need for the SRO.
- They feel they can trust the SRO because the SRO trusts them.
- The students do not trust other police officers because other officers are not visible enough, while the SRO and students have daily contact.
- The students feel the SRO puts forth the effort to fix problems permanently.
- The students are not distracted because the officer carries a gun.

Teacher Perceptions

- The teachers reported feeling safer with the SRO on campus.
- The teachers feel more secure on campus because the SRO has a gun.
- The SRO gives them legal advice on a number of issues.

Superintendent's Perceptions

- The superintendent reported that trust in the police department as a whole has slowly increased over the years because of the SRO placement.
- According to the superintendent, increasing trust is a function of the SRO's role becoming more "professional."
- The superintendent believes that the school is generally regarded as a safe environment. The SRO is considered a part of an overall team that makes the environment safe.
- The superintendent said that the SRO has also contributed significantly to what is perceived to be an improved "quality of life" at the high school.

The individuals responsible for funding the SRO programs all expected the program to continue with no serious challenges to its sustainability. The superintendent reported that "Even without state funding we would find a way to make sure this program continues."

Small Established Site Two

The Site

Small Established Site Two is located in the central part of the state in a small town with a population of about 20,000. The town and surrounding county populations have grown significantly over the past decade—the current population of the town represents a 44 percent increase since the 1990 census. The town's population is about two-thirds white and about one-quarter African American. The average family income is $64,000. Because this site is the only one in which the schools are part of a very large county school system both in terms of the number of students and geographic area, the site's (i.e., the town's) demographics do not necessarily reflect the school's demographics. As a result, the site's average income is significantly lower than the county's.

The town's police department, with 44 sworn officers, puts a strong emphasis on community-oriented policing. Officers are assigned the same beat for two years and rotate shifts to enhance relationships with community members. Officers, all of whom have received training in community policing, attend community meetings on a regular basis. Within the town limits are seven elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. The schools where the SROs are stationed range in enrollment from 700–2,000, with from 50–120 teachers. The student population that makes up the schools comes from some of the poorest neighborhoods of the nearby city as well as the poorest neighborhoods in the town. Student test scores in the schools served by the SROs are similar to the state average.

Program History

The SRO program began in 1993 with the town's high school principal and the president of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) approaching the chief of police following a school shooting in a nearby city. Initially, the high school hired off-duty officers to provide security until the details of the SRO program could be worked out. The off-duty police officers remained in the school until the end of the school year. During the summer that followed the school shooting, the first SRO was hired to serve the high school. In 1998, the program was expanded to include an SRO assigned to one of the middle schools. In 1999, after receiving a COPS Office grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (the COPS Office), another SRO was added to serve the second middle school. These three officers are still assigned to the high school and each of the middle schools.

Because the planning and implementation of the SRO program were prompted by public concerns over a school shooting in the nearby city, the process moved quickly. The most serious problems related to planning involved the town's rush to put an officer on the high school campus. In their rush to get officers on campus, neither the school nor the police department set up any ground rules or structure for the SRO position. In fact, as noted, during the first few months of the program the school employed off-duty police officers. The planning problem was overcome when the police department hired a full-time SRO for the high school.

A problem related to implementing the program involved middle school administrators' failure to understand the role of the SROs when the officers were originally posted to the schools. The police department felt the confusion was caused by an SRO being shared between the two middle schools and sought to solve the problem by hiring an additional SRO.

The approximate cost for the SRO program is $180,000 per year. The town council paid for the SRO position at the high school until 1996 when the state began paying for the position. In 1998, the town took the funds originally allotted for the high school position

and hired an officer to cover the two middle schools. The police department used COPS Office funding for the second middle school SRO.

The School Resource Officers

A community panel interviews applicants for the SRO positions. The panel consists of school officials, parents, the chief of police, the department head for the community policing division, and a representative of the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Center for the Prevention of School Violence. The chief of police considers the recommendations of the panel but makes the final choice.

All SROs hired by the town are required to attend SRO basic training at the North Carolina Justice Academy. SROs are also encouraged to attend the SRO advanced training class after their first year on the job. When SROs are hired, they receive a five percent supplement to their salary and must agree to work in the position for at least three years. All three of the SROs are white males in their 30s. The SRO employed at the high school has been in the position for six years, while both middle school SROs have been in their positions for two years. All live close to the schools to which they are assigned.

Program Activities

The SROs use the three-prong approach taught at the North Carolina Justice Academy consisting of law enforcement, law-related education, and law-related counseling:

- *Law Enforcement:* Each SRO's school assignment influences how much time is spent on this particular role. The SRO at one of the middle schools spends only about 20 percent of his time doing law enforcement responsibilities, while the SRO at the other middle school and the SRO at the high school devote about 60 percent of their time to this role. The major difference in the time allotted reflects the number of crimes committed on the different school campuses. The two SROs who spent a majority of their time focusing on law enforcement duties have to investigate incidents and file a number of petitions. Other law enforcement responsibilities include making arrests, going to court, filing paperwork, doing site patrols, and investigating gang activity.

- *Teaching:* Despite a desire to expand this role, most of the SROs said that they spend only about 15 percent of their time as a law-related counselor. The middle school SROs teach lessons from a "Teens, Crime and the Community"

curriculum, while the officer at the high school creates his lessons to meet teachers' needs.

- *Counseling:* As noted, one of the SROs at the middle schools spends almost as much time counseling as on law enforcement. However, the SRO at the high school and the other middle school are able to spend only 25 percent of their time counseling. All three SROs are involved in coaching and mentoring. Along with every other officer in the police department, each SRO mentors at least one student from the school system. All of these students attend a challenge camp during the summer hosted by the SROs and designed to help keep the youth off the streets during the summer and teach them life skills. These activities also help the SROs build rapport with students, which improves the officers' effectiveness as counselors.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

The program keeps qualitative and quantitative records, including weekly summary forms completed by each SRO. The head of the police department's community policing division supervises the SROs, making sure they complete the activity forms properly, observing them teach, and meeting with them individually.

Informal discussions with about 60 students in two classrooms at the high school and 50 students in two classrooms at one of the middle schools, with 10 teachers in three different schools, and with the police chief indicated there was a consensus in terms of their perceptions of fear of crime and trust of the SRO and police in general.

Student Perceptions

- Students said they feel safer because of the SROs' presence on campus.

- Students trust the SRO working on their school campus, but that trust does not necessarily transfer to other police officers.

- Students trust the SROs because the SROs are advisors and mentors.

- Students do not feel that the officers' carrying a gun is a distraction, but they also do not feel that having a gun made them safer.

- Students find their SROs to be very approachable and would feel comfortable discussing a problem with them.

Teacher Perceptions

- Teachers reported they feel safer with the SROs on campus.

- Teachers refer students to the SROs if the situation is appropriate for them to handle.

- Teachers believe the SROs are useful because they know the legal ramifications of student behavior.

- Teachers believe that the SROs provide useful information regarding conflict resolution information and serve as a deterrent.

Police Chief's Perceptions

- The primary goal of introducing SROs into the schools was to reduce the fear of crime, and the chief believes that this has occurred.

- The SROs are seen as an important part of various strategies the police department uses to improve the quality of life throughout the town.

Currently, the SRO program is funded by a COPS Office grant, state money, city police department funding, and school system dollars. All but the Federal funds are stable funding streams. Program administrators are concerned about how to secure funding once the COPS Office grant runs out. However, all the program administrators firmly believe that a combination of funding sources will be made available to ensure the continuation of the program. However, there is no plan currently in place to secure these funds.

Small Established Site Three

The Site

Small Established Site Three, a county with a population of nearly 60,000 people, is located in eastern North Carolina. The total population is approximately 57 percent white and slightly over 40 percent African American. The average family income is under $50,000. The county sheriff's department has 50 sworn officers.

The local school district consists of 11 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 3 high schools. The SROs are assigned to two high schools and three middle schools. Student

enrollment in these five schools ranges from 600-900, and the number of teachers ranges from 40-75. Test scores show that the high schools are performing at or above the state average and the middle schools above the state average.

Program History

The SRO program began in 1992 with the county sheriff's department and the county public school system agreeing to place off-duty, uniformed officers at each of the county's high schools to deal with an increasing number of school bomb threats along with an increasing problem of drug trafficking. After state legislation was passed in 1993 supporting the SRO program, the school system and sheriff's department decided to move the high school officers to the county's middle schools and create new SRO positions for the high schools. As a result, initially two high schools were to be covered by two SROs and three middle schools would be covered by two SROs.

The most serious problem in planni*ng* the program involved the community's concern that establishing an SRO program suggested the schools needed a law enforcement officer to control students. This perception changed after the community learned about all the services and benefits the program provided.

The major problem with implementing the program was the school administration's lack of understanding of the SROs' roles and responsibilities. It took some time for the administration to fully realize that the SROs' immediate supervisor was the sheriff's department. The sheriff solved these misunderstandings through personal discussions with the principals.

The school system and the sheriff's department were involved together in developing the program's goals and SROs' objectives. The initial funding for the program came from monies given to the school system by the North Carolina General Assembly to address school safety issues. When local budget constraints occurred, the sheriff's department cut one of the middle school SRO positions, leaving only one SRO to cover the three middle schools. A total of three SRO positions were then available to serve two high schools and

three middle schools. Currently, the high school SRO positions are funded through the state, and the sheriff's department funds the middle school position. The cost of the SRO program for one year is about $130,000.

The School Resource Officers

The sheriff's department retains all hiring, firing, and evaluation responsibilities for the SROs, although the principals are consulted regarding placement of the officers. Formal contracts between the school system and the sheriff's department, simple in nature, state that the sheriff's department agrees to provide officers for the SRO positions. The SROs are not considered school staff; they report directly to a supervisor in the sheriff's department. The three SROs are white males, ranging in age from their mid-twenties to late thirties. They have been SROs for two to four years.

Program Activities

The SRO program is based on the three-prong approach of law enforcement, education, and counseling. The initial focus was primarily law enforcement. However, as the program developed, and especially as the SROs began to form relationships with the students, the focus shifted to a more balanced division of time among the three roles. Nevertheless, a majority of the SROs' time—an average of 60 percent—is still spent on law enforcement, with 10 percent spent on education and 30 percent on counseling.

The exact percentage of time spent on each role differs among the SROs due to the characteristics of each school. The SRO at one of the high schools spends the majority of his time on law enforcement duties. This is the SRO's first year at the high school, and he is enforcing school rules and laws with a "heavier hand" than the previous SRO in an attempt to gain the students' respect back for the sheriff's department before he can focus on other duties such as teaching. He does, however, spend considerable time counseling students, averaging 15-20 sessions per week.

The other high school SRO is able to balance his time among all three roles because he has been at the school for a number of years and is well established in his responsibilities. He spends the majority of his time on law enforcement and education.

The middle school SRO emphasizes education the least in part because, having been assigned to three middle schools, he spends time driving from one to the other that he might otherwise devote to education. The SRO does receive recommendations from middle school teachers for student counseling sessions.

- *Law Enforcement:* The SROs often direct traffic in the mornings and afternoons, along with occasionally patrolling school parking lots. As members of their school safety committees, they assist the schools in creating safe school plans and set up the security for school events. SROs are also involved in helping the schools create crisis prevention plans. They walk the halls and respond to administrators' requests for assistance. One SRO sends memos to teachers and staff informing them of school problems that have arisen

- *Education:* The SROs' teaching schedules vary. One high school SRO teaches six to seven classes on topics such as the law and search warrants. Another SRO visits classrooms two to three times a week, sometimes answering law-related questions. The SRO assigned to the middle schools also teaches D.A.R.E. at the elementary schools. A Law Awareness Prevention program documents the actions of students who break the law and provides information about the acts committed and the specific laws that were broken. The form is given to and signed by the student, parent, and SRO. The program serves as a warning and educates students and parents about the possible consequences of their behavior.

- *Counseling:* The SROs average 15-20 counseling sessions per week. The sessions are initiated by students and range in topics from domestic problems to personal relationships.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

All SROs submit a monthly summary report to their supervisor at the sheriff's department that includes the school incidents that occurred that month and the outcomes or actions taken by the SRO. Actions range from a written citation to a juvenile petition to documenting a drug dog visit. The principals are also given a chance to evaluate the SROs by filling out a performance evaluation form they return to the SRO supervisor. Informal discussions with about 125 high school students in five classrooms, 75 middle school students in two classrooms, 6 teachers in two different schools, and the school system's

associate superintendent indicated there was a consensus in terms of their perceptions of fear of crime and trust of the SROs and police in general.

Student Perceptions

- The majority of students like having an SRO on campus.

- Students said they feel safer on campus because of the SRO's presence.

- Students at the middle schools where the SRO is shared said they do not know the SRO and would not go to him if they had a problem.

- The SROs help prevent school violence.

- Students trust the SROs but expressed distrust for other law enforcement officers.

Teacher Perceptions

- A middle school teacher said that, when the school had a full-time SRO, student behavior was better and bullying was reduced.

- Teachers reported a more comfortable school atmosphere with an SRO present and a sense of security and safety.

- Teachers said they would go straight to the SRO rather than the school administration if a problem with a student occurred.

- The teachers believe that having an SRO is not a distraction but is a deterrent for misbehavior.

Associate Superintendent's Perception

- Surveys of students by the school district have shown that they feel the SROs are trustworthy.

- The associate superintendent believes that fear of crime has never been a significant issue in the schools because the campuses are generally viewed as safe locations. The SROs, however, through their presence and participation in school activities, are viewed as playing an integral part in maintaining the perception of the schools as safe places and maintaining the quality of life at each school they serve.

The only concern mentioned about the sustainability of the program was in regard to the middle school position. Because the middle school position is shared among three schools, each school feels underserved. As a result, there was not as much support for the program

from the administrators at the middle school level. Since the school system pays for the officers, this support is necessary to sustain the program. While middle school administrators did say they would support having one SRO at each of the three middle schools, school system officials reported that adding two more positions would not be financially possible at this time.

Small Established Site Four

The Site

Small Established Site Four is a county located in a southern North Carolina community with a population of close to 30,000. The average family income is about $50,000. White residents make up 70 percent of the population, and 22 percent are African American. The county sheriff, with 31 sworn officers, has been a strong supporter and advocate for the SRO program. For example, at the sheriff's urging the SROs and the court counselor office have formed a partnership to give students charged with certain crimes a second chance.

Four SROs are assigned to the two middle schools and two high schools in the county. The schools have student populations ranging from 500-700; the number of teachers ranges from 30-50. All the schools have test scores below the state average. The county has four elementary schools where the SROs teach both D.A.R.E. and Child Abuse Resistance Education (C.A.R.E.).

Program History

During the early 1990s, the county sheriff's department was answering a high volume of calls at the schools. This, along with a community perception of increasing drug use among the student population, was the impetus for the placing an SRO in the middle and high schools during the 1994-1995 school year. County commissioners, the sheriff, and officials from the county school system played vital roles in creating the program. They felt having an officer on campus would reduce the number of incidents, in addition to

decreasing the stress street officers were said to be experiencing having to answer calls from the schools. Support for implementing an SRO program was widespread among civic leaders and community members.

The most serious problem in planning the SRO program was the lack of funding. Initially, a state grant from the Governor's Crime Commission awarded to the county sheriff's office and school system funded the program. While civic leaders and community members supported the program, the county commissioners considered eliminating it after the initial grant ran out. As a result, the biggest problem with the implementation process came after funding was no longer available. The outcry from the community supporting the program was enormous, leaving the commissioners with only one option: keep the program in place. As a result, the county sheriff's department provides funding for the SRO program through an annual county allocation of $200,000 for four officers.

The School Resource Officers

The school system and the sheriff's department were both involved in creating program goals and objectives. School administrators also participated with the sheriff's department in the first interviews conducted for the SRO positions. Because the sheriff's department is currently the funding source, the primary responsibility for running the program has shifted to his office. Two of the SROs are African American and two of the SROs are white. Their ages range from late twenties to late forties, and their tenure as SROs ranges from 2 to 10 years.

Program Activities

The SRO program in place is based on the three-pronged approach of law enforcement, teaching, and counseling. While the initial focus was primarily on law enforcement, as the program developed, and especially as the SROs began to form relationships with students, the focus shifted to a more balanced division of time with 20 percent of the SROs' time devoted to law enforcement (mainly traffic control) and 40 percent each to teaching and counseling. This shift was a result of the SROs becoming involved in school activities. While three of the four SROs have good relationships with local school administrators, the

new principal of one of the middle schools is restricting his SRO's activities because the administrator does not yet fully understand the roles and responsibilities of the SRO position. The SRO is not informed of incidents that occur on campus, and teachers are not allowed to send him students—they must go through the principal's office first.

- *Law Enforcement:* With the exception of the middle school at which teacher referrals are prohibited, most of the teachers have found that they get a better response from students by sending them to the SROs for discipline problems than sending them to the office. The SROs have good relationships with the juvenile court counselors and, with advice from the counselors, have formed a Deferred Prosecution Program. In this program, juveniles facing prosecution by the courts are allowed to defer their punishment and in its place serve a specified number of community service hours, usually under the SRO's supervision. As part of the program, the juvenile offender is also required to attend counseling. The SROs often direct traffic in the mornings and afternoons along with occasionally patrolling the parking lots. They are also members of their school safety committees.

- *Teaching:* The SRO program operates in conjunction with the D.A.R.E. and C.A.R.E. programs. Several SROs, certified as D.A.R.E. and C.A.R.E. instructors, spend time in the classroom teaching these courses. At the request of teachers, SROs also teach about drugs, date rape, civil law, and other law-related topics.

- *Counseling:* As a result of the SROs' increased involvement with school activities, students voluntarily go to them for law-related counseling. During the summer, the SROs frequent student hangouts in order to stay in contact.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

SROs report directly to the sheriff's department. They are not considered school staff. The sheriff's department retains all hiring, firing, and evaluation responsibilities. There is no formal contract between the school system and sheriff's department. At the beginning of the year, the SRO supervisor sends a letter to the principals of the schools briefly describing the role of the SROs and suggesting that the SRO and principal meet to discuss the officers' duties. The supervisor also offers his phone number if concerns arise. Informal discussions with about 75 high school students in three classrooms, 25 middle school students in one classroom, 8 teachers in three different schools, and the schools' director of auxiliary services indicated there was a consensus in terms of their perceptions of fear of crime and trust in the SRO and police in general.

Student Perceptions

- Students and parents feel safer because of the SROs' presence.

- Students trust their SROs but do not trust other police officers.

- Students reported they would go to the SROs if they had a problem.

- Students like having someone immediately available who can react to a crisis situation.

- The students feel the SROs could protect the schools.

Teacher Perceptions

- Students get an opportunity to "see behind the badge."

- Teachers reported feeling safer with SROs on campus.

- Teachers believe the SROs are an invaluable resource.

Director of Auxiliary Services' Perceptions

- The administration and faculty have a high level of trust in the SROs, and students have grown to trust them more, particularly over the past few years.

- Fear of crime has greatly diminished because of the SROs.

- The quality of life in the schools has increased because of the reduction of fear among both students and staff members.

The state, the school system, and the sheriff's department provide funding for the SROs. Administrators from all three sources of funding expressed a strong commitment to the program. The sheriff said that "The work we do with the schools is among the most important duties we do to serve to the community." The only challenge to the program that might occur was if another sheriff were elected who did not feel committed to the program, but this seems very unlikely (one of the two previously elected sheriffs had been a D.A.R.E. officer and the other sheriff was instrumental in bringing the D.A.R.E. and the SRO programs to the schools.

Small Established Site Five

The Site

Small Established Site Five is a rural county in the eastern part of the state with a population of approximately 35,000. About 60 percent of the population is white and about 40 percent is African American. The average household income is under $50,000. The county sheriff's department provides primary law enforcement services with 30 sworn deputies. The sheriff's department says it follows a community policing philosophy that involves forming partnerships with community agencies such as the Mental Health Department and the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, thereby trying to provide the best possible services to students as possible.

Program History

The SRO program began in 1995 both due to what was perceived to be a statewide emphasis on school crime prevention and also as a reaction to violent incidents in nearby school districts. SROs are posted to two middle schools and two high schools in the county with populations ranging from 700–1,000 students and 50–65 teachers per school. The four schools have performance test scores below the state average. The SRO program operates in conjunction with the D.A.R.E. program and offers these classes in the county elementary schools.

The most significant problem in planning the program was vocal opposition to the SRO carrying a gun on school grounds. The support for the SRO program, however, far outweighed this opposition and the matter was eventually dropped. The lack of willingness by teachers to allow SROs into the classroom was the most daunting implementation issue. The resistance was caused by lack of understanding about the role SROs performed in the schools. In one of the high schools, teachers did not feel comfortable allowing the SRO into the classroom to teach until halfway through the school year. SROs overcame this obstacle by persistently informing teachers that their roles included law-related education.

The county pays for the SRO positions at the two middle schools. The two high school positions are funded by the North Carolina General Assembly as part of a statewide allocation to address school safety issues. The money is provided to the school system and reimbursed to the sheriff's department through a written contract. In the 2002-2003 school year, the total program cost was $155,239 for four SRO positions.

The School Resource Officers

The sheriff and his staff conduct interviews to fill vacant SRO positions, as well as handle all other hiring and firing responsibilities regarding the SROs. Despite the desire of some principals to participate in the selection of the SROs, the school system has no involvement. All four SROs attended basic training at the North Carolina Justice Academy. Two of the SROs are African-American females and two are white males. The SRO ages range from their late twenties to mid-forties, and SRO longevity ranges from two to seven years.

The sheriff's department has a written policy and procedures manual detailing the SROs' duties, responsibilities, and chain of command. Although they are not school personnel, SROs are accepted members of the school community as suggested by their listing in the school handbooks.

Program Activities

SROs in the county use the three-prong approach taught at the North Carolina Justice Academy to perform their jobs. The program began with a primary emphasis on law enforcement but has since shifted more toward education and counseling.

- *Law Enforcement:* The SROs report that their main focus is proactive crime prevention. Reflecting this focus, their current primary law enforcement activities, estimated to account for 30 percent of their time, are school security and safety, and crisis planning. However, with the installation of new surveillance equipment, the SROs report that they are being asked to spend more time reviewing the videos to investigate crimes. As a result, a large portion of the time SROs spend on law enforcement is devoted to investigating crimes through reviewing surveillance videos. Furthermore, the time they

spend reviewing the tapes has begun to decrease the proportion of time they
spend preventing, rather than reacting to, crime.

- *Teaching:* Education activities include teaching D.A.R.E. and other law-related
  topics. The SROs reported that this role accounts for about 30 percent of their
  time.

- *Counseling:* Counseling is estimated to account for 40 percent of the SROs'
  time. This includes counseling sessions with students and parents (an average
  of nine sessions per week with students) and collaboration with school
  counselors and local mental health officials. SROs, seen as liaisons to the
  community, are also involved informally with many school activities such as
  athletic teams, PTAs, and booster clubs. The SRO at one of the high schools
  participates in school plays, skits, and pep rallies.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Aside from tracking major incidents, the sheriff's department collects very few quantitative

data. Some qualitative data are tracked such as reasons for counseling sessions. Informal

discussions with about 95 high school students in three classes, 3 teachers in the school

hallways, and a high school principal indicated there was a consensus in terms of their

perceptions of fear of crime and trust of the SRO and police in general.

Student Perceptions

- Students trust the SRO working on their school campus but that trust does not
  necessarily extend to other police officers in the community.

- Students stated that the SRO is necessary for security purposes, is a deterrent,
  and is a role model.

- Students said the SRO is someone else they can talk to other than the school
  administration.

- Students said they felt comfortable with the SROs' carrying a gun because the
  officers had been trained to use the weapon. Students added they felt safer
  knowing the SRO had a gun to protect the school.

Teacher Perceptions

- Teachers reported that the SROs are a resource regarding legal information and
  law enforcement.

- Teachers believe they can go to an SRO if they have a problem with students.

- Teachers said that the SROs' presence makes them feel safer on campus.

- Teachers believe the sheriff, rather than the school administration, should be responsible for supervising the SRO.

High School Principal's Perceptions

- The principal reported that the SROs have created bonds between staff and students, thereby increasing trust.

- According to the principal, fear of crime has dropped primarily due to the mere presence of the SRO.

- The principal said the SRO has created a number of new programs in the school that involve students. This involvement has helped to create a higher quality of life in the school.

The high school SRO positions are funded through state dollars, and no one seemed concerned that funding would stop. The middle school positions that were funded through local dollars were not considered to be as stable. Because in the past middle school SRO positions experienced greater turnover than at the high schools, middle school administrators have had more concerns about whether the program would last.

Comparisons Among the Five Small Established Programs

The following section reviews significant similarities and differences among the five small established programs in three principal areas: program planning and implementation, program activities, and monitoring and evaluation. Where most or all of the programs operated in a similar manner, the text describes one site's operations and then indicates that all or most of the other sites function in the same way.

Program History

Below, the text compares the five programs in terms of program planning and implementation.

Only Small Established Site One experienced significant planning and implementation problems as a result of initial community resistance. The other four sites had relatively smooth beginnings, but this cannot be attributed to effective planning. In fact, several of the sites do not remember doing any special planning to get the program off the ground.

Since most of these sites are located in small communities, the discussions that occurred before the placement of the SROs were held directly between sheriffs or police chiefs and school district superintendents. The agreements they created were often sealed with handshakes. However, a site located in one of state's largest school district, took a different approach; the police department had direct discussions with the high school principal who had requested the SRO.

Overall, planning and implementation of the SRO programs in the small established sites varied considerably, largely because of different initial community reactions to implementation at local schools. However, the most common obstacles encountered were community disapproval and confusion in three sites about the SROs' roles and responsibilities. The other obstacles were idiosyncratic to one site only. Because the planning and implementation experiences among the sites were so dissimilar, the discussion below reviews the obstacles and solutions site by site.

As noted above, ***Small Established Site One experienced the most difficulty implementing the program.***

Obstacles

- **Community disapproval** — As noted above, community members were originally opposed to placing "gun-toting" officers in their schools. Many in the community also felt that having a police presence in the schools was unnecessary.

- **Professionalism of the SRO position** — Because during the first two years the SRO was not allowed to wear a uniform or carry a gun and was required to drive his personal car, many residents believed that the officer was no longer a member of the police department.

- **Supervision problems** — During the first two years of implementation, the program did not have a clear line of supervision because of the desire of the school system and the police department to understate the police presence on campus.

Solutions

- The program's supporters persisted in pushing the program because the school system and the police disagreed with the public's opposition for two reasons: first, the school system and police department thought their school needed a police officer's presence to deter a growing drug use problem; second, they did not want to miss out on available state funding to hire SROs.

- The community eventually accepted the program as a result of several circumstances. (1) The police chief and school system transformed the position to reflect the tripartite SRO program model so the community could see that the officer on the school campus was teaching and mentoring, not just enforcing the law. (2) There were well-publicized and serious school shootings in 1999, most notably at Columbine High School. (3) The police chief had his department play a more active role in supervising the position after he discovered an SRO was taking advantage of the lack of supervision to shirk his responsibilities.

Small Established Site Two's planning process was rushed by public demand for a police presence on campus because of a school shooting in the same school district.

Obstacles

- **Off-duty officers** — The school originally hired off-duty officers to meet the public's demand for a police presence. This caused problems because a different officer was on the campus each day, which meant the officers were not familiar with the facility and they could not establish rapport with students. This system was put in place only as a "quick fix" until the school and police department could make other arrangements.

- **Role confusion** — The first SRO was placed at the high school by means of an agreement between the police chief and the school principal. No written guidelines were developed and, if problems occurred, the police chief and principal would call each other to work through the issues. This system worked until the program was expanded to the middle schools whose principals had very little understanding of the roles of the SROs at their schools.

- **Shared coverage** — When the SRO program expanded to the middle school level, the police department had enough money to fund only one position for the two middle schools. This created problems because each principal expected that an officer was going to be present on his school campus at all times.

Solutions

- More formalized rules were written to govern the SRO program in the jurisdiction.

- The police department applied for and received a COPS in Schools grant to fund a second middle school SRO position. Having the second officer eliminated the complaints by administrators about the one SRO spending too much time at the other school.

- The schools and SROs agreed that they still needed to work on educating school staff members about the role of the SRO. This was much more the case in the middle schools where the officers' presence was still much newer. The SROs were going to accomplish this by presenting their program at the first staff meeting of the school year.

Stakeholder misunderstanding of the SRO roles hindered small Established Site Three's implementation.

Obstacles

- **Community misconception —** Community members opposed the placement of the SROs because they felt that putting SROs in the schools sent the message that the schools were unable to control their students.

- **Administration lack of understanding —** The schools' administrators did not fully understand the extent of the SROs' roles and responsibilities. Some administrators did not use the SROs to their full capacity. Some school administrators wanted to supervise the SROs instead of letting the sheriff do this.

Solutions

- After the SRO positions were in place, the community began to see the benefits of having SROs. Parents began to feel more comfortable with the marked police cruisers parked in front of the schools.

Small Established Site Four had funding obstacles to overcome during the planning and implementation process.

Obstacle

- **Funding —** Initially the SRO positions were funded by a grant. When the
  grant ended, county commissioners discussed eliminating the positions.

Solution

- Since the beginning of the program, community members and civic leaders
  strongly supported the SRO program. Once the grant expired, the SRO
  supervisor went to commissioner meetings to advocate for the money to
  continue the positions. This, along with the strong support from community
  members, left the commissioners no choice but to fund the SRO positions with
  county money.

***Small Established Site Five experienced problems during the planning process with the
community's opposition to having an officer on campus with a firearm and, during
implementation, with teachers' reluctance to allow the SROs in their classrooms to
teach***.

Obstacles

- The community took issue with the SROs carrying a firearm while on the
  school's campus.

- Teachers did not want SROs coming into their classrooms and teaching because
  the faculty did not have a full understanding of the SRO roles and, in particular,
  the law-related teaching role.

Solutions

- Not all community members shared a concern about the firearm. After the
  position was in place, the community members who had been concerned
  quickly discovered the value of having the SRO.

- The SROs overcame the issue of teaching in classrooms by frequently
  promoting their abilities to teach law-related topics.

Effective communication seemed the most successful strategy for dealing with problems

that arose because of personalities and relationships. For the most part, this

communication was personalized and informal, and this can be attributed to the rural

locations and small sizes of the localities. In rural settings, there is often a network of

interpersonal acquaintanceships formed between law enforcement and school officials. Familiarity and informality play an important role in how these programs function and why those involved in them saw little or no need to create written agreements governing these programs. In two sites, the solution to implementation problems was simply a matter of allowing time for the community to see the value of the program.

The small established sites had very similar funding sources for their high school SROs because all school systems in the state receive funding as part of an annual allotment from the state earmarked specifically for high school SRO positions. The school systems reimburse the participating law enforcement agencies for incurred expenses. The one exception is Small Established Site Two, where the high school SROs' salaries and equipment are not fully covered by the state allocation. The town's board of aldermen pays the remaining cost.

The four sites with middle school SRO positions are not funded by the state for these officers. One of the middle school positions in one site is financed through a three-year COPS in Schools grant; the school system has agreed to pay the cost in full for the fourth year. The town, as part of its annual police department budget, pays for the second middle school officer. In another site, the school system pays for the two middle school SROs, while at the remaining two sites the county pays for the two middle school positions.

Program Activities

All five of the small established sites in North Carolina require SROs to be trained at the North Carolina Justice Academy where the officers are introduced to the tripartite SRO model of law enforcement officer, law-related educator, and law-related counselor. Past research by the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Center for the Prevention of School Violence has shown that SROs typically spend approximately half their time performing the law enforcement role, one-third of their time performing the counseling role, and the remainder of their time as an educator. Over time, the role emphasis shifts from the law enforcement role to the law-related counseling and educator role; however, law enforcement typically remains the highest priority. While

by and large this was the pattern in the five small established sites included in this study, these three SRO roles developed differently in some of the sites.

Law Enforcement

Among the five sites, the proportion of the time the SROs spend on law enforcement ranges from 20 percent to 60 percent, with no consistent percentage among the programs— or, in some cases, within the same program. In programs with a *high* crime rate, SROs spent a greater percentage of their time on law enforcement responsibilities, spending most of their time investigating cases, filing petitions, and going to court. These activities are time consuming and often pull the officers away from their other responsibilities. An SRO from a school with 20 criminal incidents in the past year reported, "It is hard to be proactive when you are in court." In addition to investigating crimes, officers in the school districts with *less* crime completed site assessments, performed traffic control, patrolled the campus, and monitored surveillance cameras as part of their law enforcement role. As a result, these officers were able to be much more proactive in preventing crime. In districts with only very few criminal incidents per year, officers were also much better able to focus on teaching and counseling.

Teaching

The second role SROs performed was law-related education. Once again, some SROs spent as little as 20 percent of their time teaching, while others spent over 40 percent. The type of teaching the SROs engaged in also varied considerably from site to site. In some school districts, officers rarely taught in the classroom, while in other districts officers taught at feeder schools in addition to their assigned schools. In three jurisdictions, the SROs were certified D.A.R.E. instructors. One jurisdiction has officers trained as C.A.R.E. instructors, a local program created to curb the high rate of child abuse. In districts where SROs are certified D.A.R.E. and C.A.R.E. instructors, SROs spent as many as two or three days a week teaching at elementary schools over a period of 6 to 10 weeks. In districts where the SROs are not certified D.A.R.E. and C.A.R.E. instructors, SROs taught law-related topics within their assigned schools. These officers typically spent

much less time in the classroom compared with the D.A.R.E.- and C.A.R.E.-certified SROs.

Counseling

The final—and second most time consuming role—for the SROs was counseling. However, here, too, there was a range in emphasis—SROs devoted anywhere from 15 to 30 percent of their time counseling students. However, most SROs reported that counseling was the role that made the most difference in preventing crime on school campuses. Officers who tracked the number of counseling sessions they performed averaged between 4 and 25 sessions a week. These sessions ranged from discussing problems that students were having in school (e.g., getting along with other kids, suicidal thoughts, conflicts with teachers) to students asking the SROs for advice on how to handle a speeding ticket. Because the counseling the SROs provide is sometimes related to students' personal problems and not always "law-related," some school guidance counselors have expressed concern that, because SROs are not licensed mental health care providers, the officers need to be careful not to engage in psychological counseling. In addition to counseling sessions, officers performed a number of mentoring-related activities, including coaching athletic teams, advising extracurricular clubs, hosting summer camps for at-risk youth, and leading a Police Explorer's troop. SROs said that these activities were extremely significant because they helped them build rapport with students.

Collaborative Problem Solving

Two of the five sites had strong community-oriented policing divisions in their law enforcement agencies, but none of the sites truly focused on collaborating with the community to solve problems. The three agencies that did not focus on community policing did, nevertheless, place a strong emphasis on community involvement. These three agencies were also highly committed to creating safer school environments. For example, one site used half of its sworn personnel on any given day to provide services to schools ranging from the SROs to crossing guards.

Although most of the programs did not use the Scanning, Analyzing, Responding, and Assessing (SARA) problem-solving method, a number of officers were beginning to analyze where incidents were occurring on school grounds. Officers who had been through one of the COPS in Schools regional training conferences were using the SARA approach to analyzing incidents.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

The principal means of monitoring the SROs is through the use of weekly logs that the officers in some programs fill out and turn in to their supervisors in their respective law enforcement agencies. While each jurisdiction has annual on-campus incident figures, the data could not shed light on whether the SRO programs were reducing crime or other student misconduct largely because the very small number of crimes committed by students at most of the schools studied made comparisons between the number of offenses before and after the SROs were posted to the schools unreliable. However, although strictly impressionistic and not based on random sampling, several administrators, teachers, and students reported that they feel safer as a result of the SRO program and have considerable trust in the SROs working in their schools.

Perceptions of Fear of Crime

In four of the sites, students, teachers, and administrators perceived crime in their schools to be low in both prevalence and seriousness, and they expressed relatively low levels of fear of crime. In three sites, there were expressions of fear of exceptional events that happened recently either in the school or elsewhere, including the September 2001 terrorist attacks, a suspected hostage situation, and violent events in nearby school districts. However, in all five sites, students, teachers, and administrators reported that they experienced reduced fear of crime because of the activities or at least the presence of SROs.

Small Established Site Two participants strongly attributed the extent of the reduction of fear to the SRO, probably because the officer took up his post in response to a campus shooting in the school district. As a result, this particular school may have had room for experiencing the greatest amount of improvement. Because of the time lag between the

original placement of the SRO at the high school in this site and the research conducted for this case study, most of the individuals interviewed for the study were not present when the original SRO began work. However, one teacher who was present when the program began said, "The placement of the SRO on this school campus did more to reestablish a feeling of security and safety at our school than any other strategy we attempted."

A potentially more important effect of SROs on campus, given the relatively low levels of crime, is the reduction of uncertainty concerning security and safety. Many administrators, teachers, and students described a certain comfort level associated with having an SRO in the school. School administrators were often quick to point out how invaluable the SROs had been in helping the schools construct crisis plans. One administrator reported that "The school staff felt a greater level of confidence in our crisis planning knowing the SRO had reviewed and assisted in writing our school's crisis plan." Often school administrators and teachers stated that it just made them feel good seeing "that police car" parked in front of the school. This feeling is probably a reflection of the effects that SROs have on the school "climate," which is often important in creating and maintaining a safe school. One could expect that where the SRO is visible and active at those times of the school day when students are most likely to interact and potentially get into trouble (bus arrival, class changes, lunchtime, bus departure), perceptions of the school climate and therefore of safety and security would be improved. These perceptions could also be enhanced through SRO interactions with students and involvement in school activities.

Perceptions of Trust in the Police

Based on informal conversations at all five sites, student, teacher, and school administrator levels of trust in their SROs generally increased over time to a high level. Students in all five sites stated almost overwhelming that they trusted their SROs, and they thought their SROs would treat them fairly. Only in one school was this sentiment not shared, probably because the SRO in the school had been replaced. Students in this school continuously compared the new SRO to the previous SRO, whom they trusted a great deal. When asked if their high level of trust for their SRO could be transferred to other police officers in the community, most students in all five sites responded that they trusted their particular SRO

but not necessarily other law enforcement officers. One student said, "I know our SRO, but I don't know that officer on the street, and he has to gain my trust. You know that they are not the same people."

School administrators, teachers, and counselors had a high level of trust in the SROs. Some teachers and administrators expressed concern, however, that students might come to trust the SRO *too* much. Since the SRO was not really part of the school hierarchy, some students might feel more comfortable talking to the SRO than to counselors, teachers, or administrators. This could potentially be problematic if the topics discussed were more appropriately handled by the school rather than by the SRO. In fact, when students were asked if they would report something to the SRO that might cause harm to the student body, a large majority said they would feel comfortable doing so. Furthermore, students added they would be *more* likely to speak to the SRO than to any other staff member about issues they were having in their personal lives. Although this concerned some administrators, most said this attitude was a great benefit, and they trusted their SROs to handle these situations appropriately.

Community Support

With two exceptions, SRO supervisors from the participating law enforcement agencies and school district administrators in all five sites felt that their programs were secure because the funding sources were stable, there was significant public support for the programs, or both. Although the sites' high school positions were not considered to be in jeopardy, there was uncertainty about whether the middle school SROs in Small Established Sites Three and Five would survive. Except for the school administrators at these schools, law enforcement and school district administrators alike felt that their programs were valuable and popular enough to sustain challenges to their survival. However, none of the sites had any plans for how to go about maintaining funding should their optimism prove to be unfounded.

Small New Sites

Capsule Program Descriptions

Case Studies

All five of the small new sites selected for this evaluation were in Kentucky. The programs were recent recipients of COPS in Schools grants from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (the COPS Office). Three of the programs began in the fall of 1999, and two programs began in February 2000. With the exception of interviews with school district and police department supervisors, all of the observations and interviews for the case studies were conducted at the high schools and middle schools to which the SROs are primarily assigned.

Small New Site One: This program is located in a rural county of about 500 square miles with a population of approximately 25,000. The school district is countywide with a total enrollment of about 4,000 students enrolled in 12 schools, including one high school with about 1,000 students and a middle school with over 500 students. Two SROs are assigned primarily to the high school but respond to calls and occasionally patrol all of the district's schools. The program's host agency is a small-town police department with about 10 sworn officers. The SRO program was designed to deter drug activities, crime, and disorder in the schools. The SROs engage in a variety of safety and enforcement activities ranging from traffic control to criminal investigations, as well as teaching, counseling, field trips, and athletic events, but estimates of the time distribution across activities could not be provided.

Small New Site Two: The county in which this program is located, with about 300 square miles, includes areas categorized as rural and suburban. There are about 4,000 students enrolled in six schools within the county. The program's lone SRO is assigned to the district's only high school, which enrolls approximately 1,000 students. The SRO serves a small sheriff's department of fewer than 20 sworn deputies. The SRO program was intended to address fighting, smoking, drugs, and general disorder among students. The SRO spends most of her time on enforcement duties and patrol. The heavy focus on law enforcement appears to be a result of poor discipline within the school. What little time she spends on teaching and counseling is done on an informal basis.

Small New Site Three:	This site is located in a county of about 25,000 residents distributed across about 500 square miles in a rural part of the state. The county school district enrolls approximately 4,000 students in seven schools, including one high school housing the SRO program. The SRO's host agency is a county sheriff's department with about 10 sworn deputies. The SRO program was designed to address problems of disorderly conduct, smoking, truancy, and occasional instances of students bringing weapons to school. An overarching program goal was the presumed deterrent effect an SRO would produce and ability to provide quick response capabilities for serious crimes or other disasters. The original orientation of SRO activities emphasized law enforcement, but the SRO's role has shifted significantly so that he currently spends roughly half his time in enforcement and patrol, with 2-3 hours per week teaching classes and about 12-14 hours per week mentoring students.
Small New Site Four:	This site is situated in a rural county of under 300 square miles with approximately 20,000 residents. About 3,000 students are enrolled in the nine schools in the county, including one high school with about 1,000 students. The program's SRO, one of about 20 deputies in the county sheriff's department, is assigned to the high school. The main impetus for the program was the chief deputy's concern about the number of violent incidents in schools across the country. The program began with a focus on enforcement but has evolved incrementally toward a much heavier emphasis on crime prevention, student counseling, and teaching classes. The SRO is also actively involved in disciplinary cases with the assistant principal. He spends about 10-15 hours per week of his own time planning and patrolling after-school extracurricular activities.
Small New Site Five:	This site abuts a small city within a county of 500 square miles, with areas classified as urban, suburban, and rural. Over 10,000 students are enrolled in the district's 25 schools, which include three high schools and three middle schools. The one high school and one middle school participating in the SRO program have approximately 1,300 and 700 students, respectively. The schools are served by one SRO from the local city police department with fewer than 100 sworn officers, and one SRO from the county sheriff's department, with fewer than 10 sworn deputies. The program's initial intent was to help youth develop positive relationships with, and impressions of, the police. Although the schools are perceived to have little serious crime and fewer other problems than do most middle and high schools, there were still concerns about drug and alcohol abuse, smoking, truancy, and general discipline that the program was intended to address. The SROs spend about 15 hours per week on law enforcement duties and about 5 hours per week in meetings with school-related organizations and community groups. The rest of the officers' time is spent teaching, counseling, and mentoring.

Similarities and Differences Among the Five Small New Programs

The program locations were widely distributed throughout the state: two in the west, two in the north, and one in the east. The school and community populations were not racially diverse—the student bodies of four of the five school districts and counties were at least 85 percent white.

Throughout this capsule description and later in this chapter, many of the observations made about the five small new sites are presented collectively, except where substantial differences merit special attention. On many important dimensions, there are significant similarities in program design and implementation, and widespread agreement about how the programs were regarded by their constituencies.

Program Planning and Costs
Planning and implementation of the SRO programs proceeded in a variety of ways. The sponsors initiating the program varied across sites. In one case, the county sheriff (the host law enforcement agency for the SRO) applied for grant funding and pushed for the school district leadership and high school administration to accept it. In other sites, the programs were advanced initially by district superintendents or principals.

All five programs began without a detailed plan for exactly how the SROs were to be used. There was a general idea that the officers would spend part of their time on patrol and that they would respond to crime and serious disorder, as well as disciplinary incidents. Beyond that, there was a wide range of often-conflicting expectations. Initially, SROs learned their responsibilities by trial and error on the job and over time developed standards for appropriate and inappropriate activities. The most serious implementation problems related to disagreements about where to draw the line between criminal violations and other serious incidents meriting SRO attention, and disciplinary activities more properly handled by teachers and staff. Other common areas of disagreement were whether the SRO would be available beyond normal school hours, direct traffic, or routinely teach or give presentations.

All of the programs were funded by COPS Office grants covering the SROs' salaries. Grant funding was supplemented to various extents by the school districts, the police departments, or both in the form of training, equipment, and office space. Many of the program costs beyond salaries were not precisely recorded as SRO program expenditures.

Program Activities
The SROs in four of the five sites operated in a relatively traditional law enforcement mode: patrolling and responding to calls for service. In the fifth site, the SRO spent the majority of his time teaching, giving presentations, holding meetings, and actively fostering relationships with various constituencies. Partly because each SRO began the program with little initial direction, this range of emphasis evolved primarily as a result of the interests and abilities of individual officers.

Most SROs make few arrests a year because of the relatively low crime rate in the schools. Instead, most enforcement activity addresses misdemeanors, and officers usually issue citations rather than make arrests. Most officer calls for service involve disruptions and suspicious behavior. The SROs in all five programs are very available to students for informal chats and serious conversations about problems. In addition to the obvious mentoring benefit, the significant time the SROs invest in informal conversations with students serves to aid law enforcement by establishing trust and rapport that increases the likelihood that students will report problems, as well as tapping into an excellent source of intelligence about past incidents and potential trouble brewing among students. Most of the SROs periodically teach or give presentations, although the frequency of these activities varied widely among sites and SROs.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation
Police and school district administrators monitor the program on an as-needed basis by reviewing expulsion records of cases in which SROs were involved. Records of SRO activity vary widely across the five small new programs. While all officers keep required records of misdemeanor citations and the relatively rare arrests, documentation of other SRO activities varied from none to the completely and meticulously detailed.

While there is no systematic empirical evidence of the SRO program's impact on school crime and disorder, there is promising anecdotal and qualitative evidence of its effectiveness among all five programs. Several teachers report feeling more secure knowing that an SRO is able to respond quickly to serious incidents. Many students also report that they feel safer because of the SROs' presence. Students in focus groups report small but positive changes in attitude toward the police.

In all five sites, interest in sustaining the SRO programs after COPS Office funding ends is strong among school administrators, law enforcement administrators, and parents. Regardless of who initiated the program and who resisted initially, the pockets of resistance soon dissolved, and in all five sites the SRO programs subsequently experienced widespread and strong support. Parental support is very strong for the SRO programs, even in sites in which parents strongly resisted the program initially.

The five small new sites selected for study were all recent recipients of COPS in Schools grants from the Office of Community Oriented Police Services (the COPS Office) and had never previously had an SRO program. The sites were all chosen from Kentucky because the state had recently made a concerted effort to implement SRO programs statewide and because a sizable number of small rural departments had received COPS Office grants in comparison with other states. Geographic concentration also helped to minimize the resources needed for data collection during three visits to each of the five programs.

Case Studies

Following site-specific discussions is a discussion of the similarities and differences among the programs.

Small New Site One

The Site

Small New Site One is located in a rural county of about 500 square miles with a population of approximately 25,000. This is one of the poorer counties in the state, with a median household income of about $16,000, less than half the median income for the state ($33,700). About 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, a rate two and one-half times the state poverty rate. Significant countywide problems in addition to widespread poverty include high levels of illegal drug and alcohol production and distribution. The population is overwhelmingly white—about 95 percent. There are no urban areas in the county. The largest town, which includes the high school served by the school district's SRO program, has a population of 1,500.

The countywide school district has about 4,000 students enrolled in 12 schools, including a high school with about 1,000 students and a middle school with over 500 students. Reflecting the demographics of the county, the high school and middle schools are overwhelmingly white, and approximately 75 percent of students are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program.

A city police department with 10 sworn officers is the primary law enforcement entity in the county, relying on backup from the sheriff's department and the State Police when necessary. Two full-time officers were assigned primarily to the high school and middle school but also respond to calls for service from other schools in the county. The officers

were initially assigned to the schools through COPS Office funding, which began in the
fall of 1999.

Program History

The most pressing problem in the county schools prior to SRO's program implementation
was the illegal use and sale of prescription drugs and the use and sale of illegal drugs,
primarily marijuana and, to a lesser extent, methamphetamines.

The SRO program was designed to deter drug activity, other crime, and disorder in the
schools through deterrence (prosecution and punishment), changing the culture of the
school to one that would be more civil, and providing positive role models for students.
There was little formal needs assessment or planning associated with the implementation
of the program. However, it appears that the program emerged, at least in part, in response
to three major incidents. The first was a non-custodial parental abduction from the high
school that resulted in the strangulation of the child. The school district and staff were
successfully sued, and a judgment of several million dollars was rendered against them.
The second incident was the moonlighting of a local city police officer as a high school
security guard. Initially he worked in a security uniform but subsequently worked in his
city police uniform. He was reportedly a "con man" and, because of some extremely
serious problems, was removed from his duties. Finally, a "hit list" was discovered in one
of the schools soon after the Columbine tragedy, and parental panic reportedly ensued.
The award of the COPS Office grant in December of 1999 led to the hiring of two officers
serving schools throughout the county but assigned primarily to the high school and middle
school. While the school district and the police department signed a memorandum of
agreement, there were significant initial difficulties identifying the SROs' role. The SROs
were not familiar with school policy and working directly with students, and the schools
were not familiar with police policies and legal constraints. Because of this mutual
ignorance, the role of the SROs has been a "work in progress" that has evolved over time.
However, the school district has asserted a leadership role throughout. The district paid for
the uniforms, equipment, and vehicles for the officers.

The evolving SRO role was reframed several times. Officers initially established their roles individually according to their experience and interests, and there was some tension in relationships with school administrators as working arrangements developed. The officers began by focusing on removing troublesome kids (essentially, a selective incapacitation and specific deterrence strategy) but are now much more oriented toward prevention and mentoring. Training provided by the COPS Office was extremely helpful to the police and the schools in defining the officers' roles.

The major implementation obstacle was financial–who was going to pay for the officers, their equipment, and vehicles–requiring a substantial amount of negotiation among the schools, police, and city hall.

The formal chain of command was initially somewhat unclear, but currently the police department, the school districts, and the individual schools amicably determine day-to-day priorities and assignments. The more senior SRO supervises the other SRO.

Another implementation concern, but one that did not result in any serious incidents, was the SROs' maintaining student confidentiality. An early concern of the chief was that there might be significant unanticipated consequences of having officers work solely for the schools *countywide*. Because the officers are his legal responsibility but work at the direction of the schools, he and the *city* are potentially liable for things that go wrong, and he has little direct control over how to prevent such potential liability. Nonetheless, he said that no legal problems had occurred.

The SRO program was coordinated with D.A.R.E., Crime Watch, and Tip Line programs. No conflicts with these preexisting programs were reported during implementation, although D.A.R.E. was cut by the end of the second year of the SRO program. The cut was reported to have been made for budgetary reasons, but one school staff member speculated that D.A.R.E. may have been seen as easier to part with now that there was an SRO program: one of the objectives of D.A.R.E. is positive exposure of children to police officers, and this goal is also accomplished by the SRO program.

The School Resource Officers

Two SRO positions were created, and two very different officers were selected to fill them.
Both were white males, but one was a middle-aged, retired State Trooper and the other was
a 28-year-old recent academy graduate with no prior law enforcement experience. They
appeared to work well together and both played to their respective strengths. The younger
officer made use of his relative similarity in age to the students to establish rapport. While
his youth was useful in establishing relationships and gaining trust (resulting in a flow of
useful information), he had to set and maintain clear boundaries since many students were
eager to become friends with him. The older officer was seen as more of a father figure,
which has the advantages and disadvantages of greater social distance–for example,
students were less likely to challenge his authority or to try to circumvent it by establishing
a social relationship, but they were also less likely to "let their guard down" and divulge
useful intelligence during casual conversation.

Program Activities

The SROs in Small New Site One spend about 75 percent of their time on law
enforcement, 5 percent teaching, and 20 percent mentoring. The SROs engage in a variety
safety and law enforcement activities including traffic control, parking enforcement,
reacting to criminal incidents, and making arrests and issuing citations. They also engage
in informal counseling with students and spend a considerable amount of their off-duty
time on field trips and attending athletic events. Because of the training the SROs received
at a COPS in Schools training conference run by the COPS Office, they have recently
increased their teaching and counseling. However, they could not estimate the proportion
of time they spend among these three activities.

The SROs, located primarily at the high school and frequently the middle school, react to
calls via pager for assistance at other schools in the county, where they have statewide
enforcement authority. However, there was conflict about their more general "roving"
function. The high school is thought to be the biggest problem location with bullying and
gang activity in addition to drug problems. Non-sworn security officers are also assigned
to the middle and high schools. The SROs tell the security officers where to patrol—e.g.,
"You watch this corridor; you check that bathroom."

The SROs collaborate with school psychologists who provide mental health services to students and can also serve adults through a clinic in one of the schools. The school district's use of money provided through Title I of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to supplement and improve regular education programs is also closely tied to SRO activities. Because local parent organizations are sparse and non-profit organizations are almost non-existent in the county, there are few chances for SROs to collaborate with community and parent groups.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

While each officer responds to four calls on average per day, the high school principal noted that there were too few serious incidents overall to be worth tabulating over time. Nonetheless, all opened cases are tracked through to disposition. Both the police and the schools recognized that reported incidents rose significantly with the introduction of the SROs. The consensus was that this was due to a surveillance effect and was a sign that the program was working. The school district is planning to implement a free software package called *School COP* developed for the National Institute of Justice and promoted by the COPS Office as an incident tracking tool.

Informal discussion with about 100 students in classrooms and small groups, 12 teachers in the lunchroom, and the school superintendent indicated there was a consensus in terms of their perceptions of fear of crime and trust of the SRO and police in general.

Student Perceptions

- Anecdotal evidence of trust included accounts of students gathering around officers when they came to work and a growing number of students who would "turn in" fellow students or "cough up the drug dealers."

- The vast majority of students reported feeling safer in their schools when the SRO was present.

- Widely divergent groups of students, ranging from alternative school students to advanced placement students, expressed trust in the SROs personally and the SRO program, in general.

Teacher Perceptions

- Male teachers did not report feeling any more or less safe with an SRO in the school, but female teachers reported feeling safer. Most felt comforted by the potential for a much quicker response to serious incidents than before, and several noted that SROs have helped to calm or contain irate parents.

- Teachers did not believe that the SROs have a significant preventive impact on reducing drug use or other crimes but that the response to these problems has improved significantly.

- A unanimous view among teachers was that the SRO program is worthwhile and should be continued.

Administrator Perceptions

- Several administrators indicated that they would retire rather than go back to a school environment without an SRO program. There is very strong support and active planning for sustaining the program beyond the grant funding period.

- Administrators reported feeling a sense of increased security knowing an officer was available quickly to respond to critical incidents.

- Administrators noted that, in addition to preventing and effectively responding to student crime and disorder, SROs were also helpful in calming angry parents, investigating allegations of misconduct by teachers, and serving as a legal resource for teachers and staff.

- Administrators believe that there is very good rapport between the SROs and students and that this will pay long-term dividends as students develop more positive attitudes toward law enforcement.

- Administrators reported that community support for the program is very strong and that some opposition has totally vanished.

The program planners' fundamental assumption about the role of the SROs is that their physical presence (just being seen) has a deterrent effect on drug problems, crime, and disorder. There as a strong consensus that this is true, although no empirical evidence could be cited.

Another assumption of the program planners was that the introduction of officers into the schools has led to students viewing officers in a much different way than before. The

expectation was that frequent, positive experience with officers would humanize police officers in general, creating less adversarial relationships with them and increasing intelligence gathering and crime reporting by making officers more approachable. School administrators also thought that this effect came from the introduction of D.A.R.E. instruction some years ago but was enhanced by the added presence of the SROs.

Small New Site Two

The Site

Site Two, located in a county with rural and suburban areas, occupies about 300 square miles in the northern part of the state. Nearly all of the roughly 24,000 residents are white (about 97 percent) and relatively affluent (the median household income is over $38,000, nearly $5,000 above the state average); the poverty rate is about 10 percent. Many of the residents commute to one of two large, nearby urban centers. The local economy revolves around recreation, tourism, and agriculture.

There are about 4,000 students enrolled in six schools in the county. The one high school enrolls nearly 1,000 students. Reflecting county demographics, nearly all of the students are white (99 percent), but 30 percent qualify for a lunch subsidy.

One SRO is assigned to the high school from a county sheriff's department with 18 sworn deputies. The SRO program, begun in December 1999 with COPS Office funding, targeted fighting, smoking, drugs, and disorder. The initial SRO was reassigned after several months, and a replacement was recruited from a small department in the eastern part of the state. Although assigned to the high school, the SRO responds to calls from all of the district's schools.

Program History

Planning for the program began in mid-1999. The program was the idea of the chief deputy sheriff, who had become aware of the availability of COPS Office funding and had previously considered a police presence in schools to be valuable. Other people involved in planning included the school district superintendent and director of pupil personnel. At later stages, the principals and assistant principals of the middle school and high school were brought into the planning process.

There was no formal needs assessment for the program, although school, police, and court records were reviewed superficially as one step in the planning process. No single or high profile incident led to the program's establishment, but there had been an ongoing series of small incidents, including fights, and drug use, for which police had been called to the schools. There was general community support for the concept of an SRO program. Initially, no one in the county knew what an SRO was supposed to do, and there was no plan developed for the SRO's role or activities. There were no pre-existing school safety programs to serve as starting points, nor was there evidence that planners reached out to learn what other SRO programs did.

The program began in December 1999. Initially, one SRO was hired with primary responsibility for the high school and secondary responsibility for the middle school, alternative school, and three elementary schools (representing all the schools in the school system). A written agreement between the sheriff's department and the school board addressed issues related to the hiring and deployment of the officer in the schools and stipulated that the chief deputy was responsible for program oversight.

The School Resource Officers

The original SRO served only in a law enforcement role, with almost no involvement in teaching or mentoring. He appears to have been very passive and reactive in his patrol and enforcement practices. In November 2001, school officials reported that they had not seen the SRO for a several weeks. Several people noted that the officer was frustrated by the

lack of structure or clear performance guidelines. "No one knew what he was supposed to be doing." Most people attributed the SRO's poor performance and temporary disappearance to the personality of the officer selected.

In December 2001, the original SRO was transferred and a new SRO was hired, the only female SRO among the five small new programs. The new SRO has a background as a state trooper and was a school D.A.R.E. officer at a smaller police department where she had been actively involved in community programs. She was recruited as an SRO.

Program Activities

The SRO in Small New Site Two spends about 90 percent of his time on law enforcement and 10 percent mentoring. What little time she spends on teaching and counseling she does on an informal basis. The heavy focus on law enforcement appears to be a result of poor discipline within the school. Overall student behavior seemed worse at this site than at the others. There were numerous reports of students being disrespectful to teachers, and several significant examples took place during the site visits. Although strapped for time, the SRO managed to introduce a youth crime watch program and a DUI program. While most stakeholders expressed a desire for a more well-rounded SRO program, they admitted that additional officers would be needed in order for regular teaching and more formal mentoring to occur.

As of May 2002, the SRO had not started any teaching duties or collaborated with any outside groups or organizations (other than the youth crime watch and DUI programs). While police and school administrators emphasize that they would like to see the SRO develop teaching and mentoring activities, she has been so busy with law enforcement activities, especially investigations and case preparation, that she has been unable to do so. During one two-day period, the SRO was working on 10 theft reports, an armed robbery report, a drug possession and trafficking case, a first degree criminal mischief investigation involving slashed tires, and cut phone lines.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Formal discussions with about 65 students in classrooms, 15 teachers in the lunchroom, and 3 school administrators indicated there was a consensus in terms of their perceptions of fear of crime and trust in the SRO and police in general.

Student Perceptions

- Students were very supportive of having an SRO, although most students doubted how effective one officer could be in dealing with all the problems known to occur at the school. They felt that additional SROs would be more effective in preventing crime.

- The SRO was perceived to have a very good relationship with students. Students felt they could trust the officer and believed that she was approachable and cared about them.

- In general, students felt safe at school, although they also said that the school had significant crime problems.

- Problems identified by students as needing attention by the SRO were fighting, disorder, smoking, and drugs.

Teacher Perceptions

- Teachers, particularly females, felt much safer with the SRO present.

- Teachers were very supportive of the program. Every teacher questioned preferred to work in a school with an SRO.

- Teachers felt that the school needed at least one more SRO because the current SRO is very busy.

- Teachers thought that the SRO had more of an impact on problems than the students indicated. Teachers tended to blame the principal for a lack of discipline, which was cited as helping to create some of the disorder that the SRO spent so much time addressing. They felt that discipline problems would be much worse without the presence of the SRO, who they considered to be the primary authority figure in the school.

- The SRO was thought to have a very good relationship with faculty and staff, and teachers felt the SRO had a good relationship with students.

Administrator Perceptions

- The three administrators interviewed all strongly supported the program and wished to see it expanded with additional officers.

- Additional SROs, the administrators felt, would enable the SRO to undertake formal mentoring and increased teaching responsibilities.

Small New Site Three

The Site

Site Three is in a county of about 500 square miles in a rural western part of the state. The population of about 25,000 is 97 percent white and slightly less affluent than the rest of the state, with a median income of $28,000 and a poverty rate of 20 percent. The economy has steadily relied on timber and mining industries, as well as cash crops and livestock.

The county school district enrolls approximately 4,000 students in seven schools, including one high school with over 1,000 students where the SRO program is housed. More than one-third of the students receive free or reduced lunches, and very few students are non-white.

The county sheriff, with fewer than 10 deputies, provides law enforcement services for the county. The SRO program was begun in February 2000 in order to address problems of disorderly conduct, smoking, truancy, and occasional instances of students bringing weapons to school. An overarching program goal was the presumed deterrent effect an SRO would produce on these activities. Also anticipated was the quick response capability that an on-site law enforcement officer could provide if there were a serious crime or other disaster.

Program History

The county sheriff wrote the grant application and was largely responsible for planning the program. The future SRO was brought into the process after the grant proposal was written to participate in the program's implementation. The high school principal, hired in late 1999, was told by the sheriff that he would have an SRO assigned to the school. The need for a program was determined by an informal assessment of police, court, and school records, informal surveys, a discussion with the judge, and a formal survey of teachers and other school staff. However, only 8 out of 50 staff members surveyed wanted an officer in the schools. Initially, the county school board, too, opposed the grant application ("Our schools are safe, so why do we need a cop?").

After the grant was awarded, the sheriff asked for volunteers from his department to be the SRO. No one volunteered. At the time, a retired local law enforcement officer with over 20 years of experience mentioned to the sheriff that, if no one volunteered, he would be glad to become the SRO. He started work at the high school in February 2000. At that time, no written agreement was in place between the sheriff's department and the school district.

The high school principal initially took "a very low key" approach to introducing the SRO to the school. He "didn't make a big deal about it" to the community, school, or students.

At the beginning of the program, there was some initial opposition to the program from administrative staff, teachers, and some vocal parents. A secretary reported that she and others thought "we aren't to that point yet" regarding the severity of the crime problem at the school.

The biggest early planning and implementation problem was figuring out what the SRO should do. He was given a very broad "game plan" and had to figure out the details as he went along; basically, he determined what would be done day by day and "played it by ear." The role of the SRO soon evolved into focusing on law enforcement and informal mentoring done while on patrol.

Other early obstacles to the SRO program were gaining the acceptance and cooperation of faculty and staff, as well as the school board, and the juvenile justice system's not wanting to address the problems the SRO referred to it.

The School Resource Officer

The SRO, a white male in his 40s, has a low-key demeanor: he keeps his language simple, moves slowly, and does not say more than he has to. However, behind this "laid-back" demeanor is an extremely shrewd observer who is able to recite a detailed personal history of any of the students in the school. The SRO also sought out NASRO training on his own and developed a youth crime watch program at the school, again on his own initiative. The SRO enjoys his job and hopes he can continue after the grant ends.

Program Activities

The SRO in Small New Site Three spends about 60 percent of the time on law enforcement, 5 percent teaching, and 35 percent mentoring. Initially, the SRO focused primarily on traditional law enforcement activities and did very little classroom teaching or formal mentoring. The SRO offered the following as a "typical" day:

1) Do traffic detail before school.
2) Patrol the hallways just before the start of first period.
3) After the start of first period, check all the exterior doors to make sure they are locked.
4) Do hallway patrol, checking hall passes of students, as necessary.
5) Do lunchroom duty.
6) Meet with students for individual counseling or to follow up on disciplinary issues.
7) Do traffic detail at the end of the day.

Trumping all of these routines was responding to incidents and calls for service.

Since the program began, the SRO's role has shifted significantly. By the second year of the program, he was spending 12–14 hours per week mentoring students and 2–3 hours per week teaching. Education activities included teaching students search and seizure law and providing a professional development course for teachers as well as a six-hour course on drug abuse prevention. The SRO was also actively involved in informal mentoring and

counseling with students and appeared to have a good rapport with both students and teachers. In addition, the SRO regularly attended after-school athletic events, which could be considered a patrol and enforcement responsibility but which also brought the SRO into contact with students in social and mentoring capacities.

Both the SRO and school administrators stated that the SRO is not the "disciplinarian." That is, the basic agreement is that school administrators handle discipline issues, while the SRO handles criminal acts. While there is some gray area between discipline and crime, the assistant principal and the SRO jointly work out who should handle what. Both the SRO and school administrators appear to have confidence in the good faith of the other and are comfortable working out cases in the gray area between disciplinary and criminal cases as they arise.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

There are no formal processes in place for systematically evaluating and monitoring the SRO program. However, the SRO makes continuous use of the *School COP* software to record, analyze, and report on incidents at his school. He uses the software to produce graphs presenting trends and other displays of aggregated crime data and other incidents at the school. This is done as needed, usually at the request of the sheriff or the district's school board. Alone among the five small new sites, this SRO systematically integrated software to record, analyze, and report on school incidents.

Informal discussions with about 65 students in classrooms, 11 teachers in the lunchroom, and the school superintendent indicated there was a consensus in terms of their perceptions of fear of crime and trust of the SRO and police in general.

Student Perceptions

- Students generally reported feeling safer with an SRO in the school.

- A small number of students voiced negative reactions concerning this particular SRO, apparently due to run-ins for past misbehavior. Nevertheless, these students did not oppose the concept of having an SRO program.

Teacher Perception

- Several teachers acknowledged initial skepticism about the program but were now enthusiastic about the program and felt it was having a positive effect on the school.

Administrator Perception

- The principal reported that he was very enthusiastic and supportive of the SRO program and felt it was having a positive effect on the school. He said he could not imagine having to work without an SRO after the experience of working with one.

As noted above, there appears to be an excellent working relationship between the SRO and school administrators. They see each other constantly (the SRO's office and the principal's office share a common wall). The principal and assistant principal (as well as a secretary and a counselor) appreciate the SRO and report they are extremely happy he is in the school. The principal commented that, when one of his assistant principals left, he did not bother hiring another one because he felt the SRO effectively fills that slot. The school administrators' main concern was trying to sustain the program after the initial COPS Office grant runs out.

The program's greatest achievement has been the relationship between the SRO and the entire school community. The attitude of staff and parents has changed 180 degrees. In addition, the sheriff reported that he was very satisfied with the program and felt it had widespread community support and was politically important for his re-election campaign.

Small New Site Four

The Site

Site Four is located in a rural county of less than 300 square miles in the eastern part of the state. It has a population of over 20,000 residents, 90 percent white. It is a relatively poor county with a median household income of $28,000 and a poverty rate of about 20 percent.

Economically, the county relies less on farming than the other four sites, in part because it has significant natural resources it markets and in part because the attractive terrain draws tourists and recreation dollars. There is a sizable professional population in the city, although most of the surrounding county consists primarily of rural farmers and blue-collar workers. This economic split manifests itself in the make-up of school groups and cliques in the high school.

There are over 3,000 students enrolled in the nine schools in the county, including one high school with under 1,000 students where the SRO is assigned. About one-third of the students receive a lunch subsidy, which is close to the state rate. Ninety-nine percent of the students are white.

Program History

The sheriff's department, with 20 sworn deputies, provides law enforcement services. The main impetus for implementation of the program was the chief deputy's concern about the number of violent incidents in schools across the country. The sheriff's department had also received complaints about intimidation, bullying, drug and alcohol use, and fear on the part of students. The chief deputy, the sheriff, and two school board members brought complaints to the superintendent and the principal, who said that they had been unaware of these problems. During the grant application process and in the early stages of program implementation, there was criticism of the program from the local media and teachers. As a result, the role of the SRO was initially to maintain a high profile but to remain "low key" in his approach to enforcement to avoid alienating the school and community. The program began in February 2000. Because of the lack of role clarity, the SRO's activities have evolved incrementally with a much heavier emphasis than initially on student counseling and teaching classes. The SRO is also actively involved in disciplinary cases with the assistant principal.

No formal planning process or thorough needs assessment took place prior to the implementation of the program. A survey conducted before the program was being seriously pursued had found that 96 percent of parents thought their children were safe in

the schools and saw no need for a police presence there. Indeed, having an armed officer working in the schools was reported to be "incomprehensible" five years prior to the planning of the SRO program. However, the chief deputy felt that this community resistance, though widespread, was not insurmountable. For example, some members of the community perceived that there were serious drug problems in the school, although drug dog searches came up empty handed on several occasions.

The main impetus for implementing program was the personal efforts of the chief deputy. He examined a number of high profile violent incidents occurring across the country (e.g., Columbine) and concluded that such incidents could potentially take place in his county as well. Furthermore, he had heard that some students were having increasing concerns about their safety. When he saw the availability of COPS Office funding for SROs, he approached the school district administrators and his own sheriff and reportedly sold them on the idea. His ideas were supported by an advisory committee he set up consisting of a parent, a teacher, a community group member, and a school board member. This committee remains very active and holds monthly meetings to share information about the program and develop new ideas.

The chief deputy persevered and gained the cooperation of the school administration and school board. They won and accepted a COPS Office grant despite criticism from the local and school newspapers about the lack of need for an officer in the high school. However, parental support for an SRO had reportedly increased since the time of the negative survey findings because of national media coverage of school shootings such as the Columbine tragedy. Teacher resistance, by contrast, was not diluted by episodes of distant violence, and, as a result, the faculty's resistance was voiced early in the implementation of the program.

The award of the COPS Office grant led to a formal MOU between the school and the sheriff's department. The SRO position was posted and the advisory committee screened applicants. The current SRO was hired and began work in February 2000. The initial role of the SRO was to be a visible presence in the schools from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The first year of the program was somewhat problematic. Just finding office space in the school for the officer was a problem for months. However, the first year was primarily consumed by trying to figure out what the role of the officer was to be. While the actual role has evolved, the underlying assumptions of his role are still unclear. A physical police presence was thought to be important (although why was not articulated), as were maintenance of school safety and working with students. The school wanted an SRO to be "high profile and low key."

School administrators felt that the personality of the SRO was critical to program success and made repeated references to the quality and skills of the SRO who was selected. Also important was including the SRO as a full member of the school staff. The SRO attended staff meetings and was considered a professional by the administration.

For the first several months, there were a number of obstacles during implementation, in addition to the previously mentioned initial resistance on the part of the faculty and students (some of whom called him "Barney Fife"—a bumbling police officer on a 1960s TV series) as well as criticism from the media. Probably most important was the lack of a clearly defined SRO role and scope of work. The sheriff's department felt that it could not get any outside assistance in how to implement the program. Because of lack of guidance, work responsibilities evolved incrementally and continued to change throughout the program. In the beginning, high visibility meant being at the buses, in the corridors during class, and outside in the parking lot during the course of the day. More recently, however, the SRO has visited classrooms, become involved in assemblies, and taught classes on character building, the criminal justice system, and DUI. The officer has also been much less involved in law enforcement activities and more active in crime prevention and counseling and mentoring students. Handling disciplinary cases grew to be seen as much more important than it was early in the program (to the chagrin of the officer, who feels he is called inappropriately for minor infractions). The SRO also helps at athletic events and field trips, although there is no overtime pay provided for this work. He has recently become the liaison between the school and community groups and the courts.

The School Resource Officer

The SRO in this program is a middle-aged white male with about 20 years of experience in law enforcement. Serving in the local sheriff's department, the deputy had occasionally worked as a substitute teacher in the high school in which the SRO program was based. He was also the parent of a student there and was active in school community. While there was opposition to the prospect of an armed officer in the school, the staff's and administration's familiarity with and appreciation of this person were great assets as the program sought acceptance in its early stages. The SRO's initiative in starting school safety programs and critical incident plans, and his willingness to work an average 10 to 20 hours per week in unpaid overtime, speak to his personal commitment to the program and to the school community. Within two years, the SRO had overcome widespread resistance to the point of receiving nearly universal and enthusiastic support.

However, during the program's second year, the SRO seemed frustrated with the growing reliance on him for minor disciplinary matters. His workload and the lack of overtime pay reduced his ability to supplement his income. These work frustrations may culminate in his leaving the job unless his workload can be reduced or his compensation can be increased.

Program Activities

The SRO in Small New Site Four spends about 35 percent of his time on law enforcement, 15 percent teaching, and 50 percent mentoring. Strong working relationships evolved between the SRO and the school, but there have also been significant tensions. The most important tension has been the changing nature of the SRO's role: the officer has had to assume a wide variety of tasks, with his workday often consumed pursuing minor incidents typically handled in the past by teachers or other school staff (such as finding students who have skipped class). However, the officer reported that he did engage in a variety of safety and law enforcement activities that he felt *were* appropriate for an SRO, including traffic control, parking enforcement, responding to criminal incidents and more serious student disorder, making arrests and issuing citations, and counseling students about the consequences of continued criminal or disruptive behavior. He also teaches several

classes, the most important of which is a character building introduction to all incoming freshmen. It is through this class that students get to know him and learn his expectations about their behavior and the consequences of breaking rules and laws.

Generally, the SRO is located at the high school throughout the school day, reacting to calls he receives via radio or initiating his own criminal investigations. Some of these calls are to investigate conflicting stories among students describing fights or other incidents. The school disciplinarian often relies on the SRO to determine who is telling the truth before making disciplinary decisions. Students are typically more reluctant to lie to the armed police officer with arrest powers than they are to lie to assistant principals or other staff without such powers. It is common for at least one of the conflicting stories to change when the SRO is brought in to help sort out what really happened.

Most of the SRO's time is spent counseling and "keeping kids out of trouble." His goal is to "work with the whole person" and not just to focus on misbehavior. By doing so, he feels that the kids will grow up to become better citizens who have good relationships with authority figures after they have been graduated.

The local police routinely refer criminal cases involving high school students to the SRO regardless of when or where the offense took place. This was taken as an indication of the SROs ability to use his considerable knowledge of individual students, their criminal and disciplinary histories at school, and the relationships among students to investigate crimes involving local high school students.

There appears to be a very good rapport between the officer and students. This was illustrated by numerous examples of students coming to his office to talk to him of their own volition about a variety of matters. Students spontaneously greet him as he moves about the school, and others join him when he has lunch in the school cafeteria. The SRO reported that these kinds of student-initiated interactions are common.

The sheriff's office maintains weekly communication with the officer but does not directly supervise the SRO. Independent decision making on the part of the SRO was evident, as

was direct oversight by the school administrative staff, who call on him for assistance regularly. The assistant principal uses the SRO to conduct home visits to truant students.

The most current collaborations include those between the SRO and the advisory committee, the courts, and social services. However, the SRO regularly communicates with parents through the parent newsletter, and he regularly contributes articles to the student newspaper. While parent-teacher organizations are reportedly very weak in the county, parents get involved in booster clubs and school events when these are of particular interest.

The SRO implemented a comprehensive critical incident plan that is regularly tested in the school. The officer has also organized an after-school recreation program including basketball and other activities that approximately 70 students have joined. The SRO spends 10–15 hours of his own time participating in after-school extracurricular activities.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Police and school district administrators monitor the program on an as-needed basis by reviewing expulsion records of cases in which the SRO was involved. When the school board asked whether the program was worthwhile, police and school administrators used these data to document the SRO's activities.

The SRO maintains criminal incident reports and disposition information on all of his arrests. His arrests for the second year are down somewhat from his first year, which he saw as evidence of his success. The school also maintains disciplinary records and information about expulsions in individual student files. There were no expulsions during the 2000–2001 school year compared with 3–5 in each of several previous years, another possible indicator of his effectiveness. Smoking in school has virtually ceased due in part to the SRO but probably more importantly due to security cameras installed outside restrooms and smoke detectors inside. Smoking was the most serious incident in the past, while skipping class now seems to be the most important problem. Calls to a countywide anonymous hot line dropped from six or seven per year to none during the 2000–2001

school year, and calls to a school safety hotline dropped from two or three calls per month to none. The SRO plans to start tracking incidents with the *School COP* software. Informal discussions with about 100 students in classrooms, 18 teachers in the lunchroom, and 4 school administrators indicated there was a consensus in terms of their perceptions of fear of crime and trust in the SRO and police in general.

Student Perceptions

- In general, students reported being very supportive of the SRO program and feeling somewhat safer than before the SRO arrived.

- Younger students had less appreciation for the program than the older students. Most students thought it was a good idea to have the officer present for law enforcement, public relations, and general school safety, but they did not believe the SRO could have much of an effect on preventing crime.

- Although students did not think the SRO prevented much crime, they felt reassured by the SRO's presence and ability to respond if something serious were to happen.

Teacher Perceptions

- Teachers spoke freely about their initial resistance to the SRO program, and spoke just as freely about how much their opinion had changed for the better.

- All the teachers said they preferred to have the SRO in the school, and none suggested that the money used to pay the SRO's salary be diverted to other purposes.

- Teachers felt somewhat safer with the SRO present than without him, and felt that his handling of more serious disciplinary matters, as well as his ability to threaten students with "bringing in the SRO" if they got "out of line," freed the teachers to do more teaching and less disciplining.

- Teachers felt that the school's emphasis on having the SRO so involved in student discipline was counterproductive and inappropriate. They reported that they would prefer to have the SRO focus more on investigating more serious incidents, mentoring, and teaching.

Administrator Perceptions

- While administrators initially reported a great deal of apprehension about the program, this has since given way to high levels of approval. They also expressed appreciation of and trust in this particular officer.

- Administrators would like to see a more well-rounded SRO program with
  increased emphasis on community relations, teaching, and mentoring, but they
  realized that the SRO is too busy with basic law enforcement and discipline to
  accomplish these tasks.

Small New Site Five

The Site

Small New Site Five is a county of over 500 square miles with urban, suburban, and rural
sections. The county abuts a small city in the western region of the state. The population
of fewer than 100,000 residents is slightly more racially diverse than the state as a whole
but is still largely white (85 percent), with African Americans constituting the bulk of the
minority population. The county is relatively affluent for Kentucky, with a median
household income of over $35,000 and a poverty rate of about 15 percent. Light industry,
agriculture, and a college anchor the economy.

Over 10,000 students are enrolled in the district's 25 schools, which include three high
schools and three middle schools. The one high school and one middle school examined
for this case study enrolled approximately 1,300 and 650 students, respectively. Reflecting
the relative affluence of the county, the 15 percent of students receiving lunch subsidies
was less than half that of the state.

The schools are served by one SRO from the local city police department, which has
approximately 85 sworn officers, and another SRO from the county sheriff's department,
which has 5 sworn deputies. One officer serves a high school and two middle schools, and
the other serves the third middle school and one elementary school. The information for
this case study focused on the SRO program in the high school and middle school.

Program History

The SRO program began in the fall of 1999 with the principal goal of helping youth
develop positive relationships with, and impressions of, the police. This long-term

objective of improving relations between police and young people in their crime-prone years was expected to reduce criminality in the long run. Although the schools are perceived to have little serious crime and fewer minor problems than most other middle and high schools, there were still problems that the program was intended to address, including drug and alcohol abuse, smoking, truancy, and general discipline. The school's proximity to an interchange on an interstate highway that is known to be a major drug trafficking route was a concern. The murder of a student that occurred off-campus also served as a reminder to administrators of the potential for their students to be involved in very serious crime. The SRO program was intended to ensure that the relatively safe schools stayed safe rather than waiting until serious problems developed.

The school district assistant superintendent was the driving force behind the SRO program and the COPS in Schools grant. The assistant superintendent introduced the community to the idea of having police officers in schools in the early 1990s when he was principal of a local elementary school. He had a number of friends who were law enforcement officers and, because he believed there were benefits that officers could bring to schools (especially, increased interactions between kids and the officers), he started inviting them to come to his school. He developed a curriculum for a program intended to teach elementary school students respect for officers, and he initiated a CrimeStoppers program at the school.

The other significant key pre-grant activity was a city police department School Liaison Program, which began in the mid-1990s. One of the city's most significant community policing activities, the program is a collaboration between the police department and both the city and the county school districts (four county schools are located within the city limits). Under this program, officers were instructed to visit schools within their beats each week to meet with administrators, faculty, and students. Their time at schools was limited, however, because they also had patrol responsibility. Nevertheless, the police department and the schools felt the program was a success.

When the assistant superintendent—an elementary school principal at the time—heard about the COPS Office grant from a regional school administrator, he asked the city's police department to partner with the county school district. Of course, he wanted his elementary school to be included. In the end, four schools—one high school, two middle schools, and his elementary school—were included in the program.

Once the grant was received, the police department issued a memo inviting all officers to apply for the SRO positions. Out of nearly 100 sworn officers, 6 applied. The key question on the application was, "What would you do as an SRO?" The applicants were all interviewed, and two were selected. The SRO selection process was one of the early areas of disagreement between the police department and the schools that had to be worked out—not surprisingly, the school wanted to play a major role in deciding who the SROs would be; at the same time, the police department wanted to control the process. In the end, both sides got their first choice of officers in the selection of the SRO.

School administrators spoke of the importance of their early "public relations" effort once awarded the grant. In the pre-grant years, they said, parents would become alarmed at the sight of a police car at a school. As a result, school officials held public meetings and sent letters to parents describing the SRO program and its anticipated benefits, and explaining why it was a "positive" program, not a response to a serious crime problem in the school.

The SRO described some minor disagreements with school administrators about what he should and should not do ("we bumped heads a couple times") in the planning and early implementation of the program. For example:

- School officials wanted him to "expedite traffic" before and after school. The SRO's supervisor said no to this.

- Administrators did not want the SRO to have a school radio; the police department disagreed, and the officer was issued a radio.

- Administrators wanted the SRO at the school year-round; the police department did not. The officer is assigned regular police duty when school is closed.

According to all parties interviewed, the high school and middle schools remain very safe. The assistant principal of the high school said, "we don't have a lot of discipline problems here" and very little serious crime. When asked what recent problems the school had experienced, he spoke about a pulled fire alarm, two students who skipped school, and a boy who pulled (but did not take) a girls purse. When asked what the most serious crime problems were, the SRO said drugs (mainly marijuana), alcohol, and truancy.

The School Resource Officer

The SRO serving the high school and middle school was one of the officers in the School Liaison Program when he was selected for the new SRO program. A white male in his early 40s, he was a veteran of the city police department and had military experience prior to that. Among the five small new programs, this one has by far the heaviest emphasis on teaching and mentoring, and the least emphasis on reactive law enforcement. While the school and the host police department influenced this orientation, the scheduling and range of SRO activities are largely due to the initiative of the individual officer. This SRO has an excellent rapport with students, evident in numerous ways. For example, he has a question box near his office door, and he answers the questions left there as part of a regular segment of a student-produced, weekly closed-circuit television program. Often these segments include humor and occasionally take the form of a skit or a sight gag to illustrate a point. As was seen in the other four sites but to a greater degree with this SRO, students freely initiate contact with the officer and seem very at ease and friendly with him.

Program Activities

The SRO spends about 40 percent of his time on law enforcement duties and about 30 percent of his time mentoring and 20 percent teaching. He has a small group of students who meet with him daily or by appointment in the most structured manner seen among the five small new programs. He teaches regularly in law-related education classes such topics as driver education and political science.

The SRO generally works Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at the high school, and Tuesday and Thursday at the middle school. From a crime prevention perspective, it is inadvisable to have a fixed schedule like this because troublemakers know when he will not be around, but the SRO's maintaining a regular routine may be seen as another indication that law enforcement is not the officer's primary function. For example, the officer participates in a variety of school activities that provide an opportunity to appear in a non-law enforcement role—he went on a field trip with the Future Farmers of America students, he attended a barbeque with special needs kids, he played a part in a school play, and he appears on the aforementioned weekly television show.

The SRO has a semi-structured daily schedule. He generally starts the day in the parking lot, issuing citations and watching for problems, but not directing traffic. He usually consults with the principal in the morning to review the upcoming day's needs, but school administrators clearly provide him with the flexibility to go where he thinks he needs to be. The SRO indicated that he has a good working relationship with his supervisor in the police department whom he meets with each day. There are also quarterly meetings among the SRO, police supervisors, and school administrators to discuss implementation issues. Administrators and SROs from several other schools not participating in the COPS in Schools program also attend the meetings. While he works closely with school administrators, the SRO's office is not, by design, in the same general area as the other administrative offices to impress on students that he is not part of the school administration.

Both the SRO and school administrators reported that the SRO is not the "disciplinarian"—the basic agreement is that school administrators handle discipline issues, while the SRO handles criminal acts. There is some gray area between discipline and crime, but the assistant principal and the SRO jointly work out who should handle what. As an example, in the case of first-time misbehavior by a student, the assistant principal would handle the incident (without the SRO); however, if the behavior continued and the student was repeatedly sent to the assistant principal's office, the SRO might be asked to visit the student's home to talk to his or her parents.

When students are on vacation or summer break, the SROs are reassigned to regular patrol. This happens over the objections of the school administrators, who would like the SROs to be at their school year round. For the police department, this reintegration of SROs into regular patrol assignments helps avoid the problem of having non-SRO officers view the SROs as "not real cops."

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Significant amounts of automated data exist that provide information about the program. The assistant principal has automated discipline records. The SRO completes monthly and annual reports that provide summary counts of various activities. The police department computer systems—especially computer-assisted dispatch (CAD)—have data that are reviewed periodically. Any time the SRO's activity changes—for example, when he is about to teach a class—he notifies dispatch, which compiles a complete record of each day's activity. When the SRO program started, the police department established a series of CAD codes for SRO activities—e.g., SRO Presentation, SRO Counseling. The SRO uses the CAD log at the end of each month when he is completing his monthly report. On the monthly reports, the most frequent activity is SRO Miscellaneous (this appears to be equivalent to "routine patrol of the schools").

Informal discussions with about 50 students in classrooms, 7 teachers in the lunchroom, and 3 school administrators indicated there was a consensus in terms of the perceptions of fear of crime and trust of the SRO and police in general.

Student Perceptions

- In general students reported feeling somewhat safer in their school when the SRO was present.

- Students voiced support for the SRO program and felt the program should be continued.

- Students were overwhelmingly favorable toward this particular SRO and felt he was approachable and trustworthy. Many students regard him as a friend.

Teacher Perceptions

- Teachers were overwhelmingly positive toward the program and the SRO.

- Some teachers viewed the SRO as an irreplaceable teaching resource since he possesses credibility in discussing law and safety issues.

- While both students and teachers reported feeling somewhat safer with the SRO present, this school was generally viewed as very safe before implementation of the SRO program.

Administrator Perceptions

- Administrator views toward the SRO program, and the SRO in particular, were overwhelmingly positive. Several administrators said they would never again work at a school without an SRO.

- One administrator, comparing having SROs in the schools with having regular patrol officers assigned to the schools, commented on the advantages of having an officer who knows the students, as opposed to having an officer off the street respond to incidents.

- One administrator commented on the value of the SRO in working out disputes with irate parents, noting that parents show a lot more respect for the SRO than they do for school administrators.

- The high school's assistant principal feels "schools are way safer now" because of the various measures taken to ensure safety, including security cameras, and the fact that "safety is on everybody's mind."

Comparisons Among the Five Small New Programs

The following section reviews significant similarities and differences among the five small new programs in three principal areas: (1) program history related to program planning and implementation, (2) program activities, and (3) monitoring and evaluation. While the case studies of the small established sites included an assessment of program funding, this was not a significant issue for the small new sites since all SROs were supported by newly received COPS Office grants. Grant funding was supplemented to various extents by the school district, the police department, or both in the form of training, equipment, and office space and other support. However, because many of the program costs beyond salaries were not precisely recorded as SRO program expenditures, they cannot be accounted for.

Program History

All of the small new SRO programs began in late 1999 or early 2000 after an initial planning phase of about six months. All were begun with the intention of reducing crime and disorder in the schools through deterrence (via a visible police presence as well as through prosecution and punishment), creating a culture of civility in the schools, and providing good role models for students. An additional goal emphasized to a varying extent across sites was improving the relationships between law enforcement and young people as these youth enter their most crime-prone years.

Needs Assessment

There was little reported formal needs assessment or planning associated with implementation of the SRO programs. While most of the planning phases involved some type of examination of data on school crime and disorder, the rigor of the assessments and the quality of the data varied across sites. Usually, the analysis consisted of looking at school disciplinary records and reports to local law enforcement agencies about crime occurring at the schools in recent years. At some point in each site's planning process, local law enforcement officials and school administrators were asked their opinions about the need and potential uses for an SRO.

One site conducted a survey of teachers and other school staff to assess the perceived seriousness of crime and disorder on campus and the perceived need and support for an SRO. The survey found that a majority of staff disapproved of having an armed officer in the school and did not see the need for an SRO. However, after two years school staff have become very enthusiastic about the program.

Problems Targeted

The most pressing problems in the schools before the programs began were illegal drug use and sales (primarily prescription drugs, marijuana, and, to a lesser extent, methamphetamines), fighting, bullying, truancy, and smoking. The severity of these concerns varied among and within the schools, but all these problems areas were mentioned somewhere in each site's list of reasons for implementing an SRO program. Other concerns that generated interest in establishing an SRO include bootlegged alcohol

(in a "dry" county), a non-custodial parental abduction from a high school that resulted in a strangulation murder of the student, and a "hit list" appearing in one of the schools soon after the Columbine tragedy. In one school (Site Five in this report), there was little evidence of substantial problems within the school, but serious off-campus incidents involving students, the physical location of the school near a major highway and a small city, and national media attention in 1999 focused on school shootings in other schools combined to create concern among school administrators and some parents about the potential for crime in their district. A single administrator initially pushed for the SRO program to prevent serious incidents occurring elsewhere from happening locally.

Program Planning and Implementation

Planning and implementation of the SRO program proceeded in a variety of ways among the sites. Sponsors initiating the program also varied by site. In one site, the county sheriff (the host law enforcement agency for the SRO) applied for grant funding and pushed for the school district, school leadership, and community to accept it. In the other sites, superintendents and principals initially advocated the programs. At some point in all five sites a small group of stakeholders coalesced to apply for the COPS Office grant, plan the program, and market the idea to the rest of the school community.

There were two primary barriers implementing the program: community resistance and failure to clarify the SRO's responsibilities.

Resistance to the SRO Program

The primary obstacle across all five sites was resistance to the program from at least one segment of the community. At some sites, it was parents who were most vocally opposed, while at other sites it was teachers. Site Two had perhaps the most widespread initial resistance: the school board, teachers, and parents were all reported to oppose posting an SRO in their schools, and initially only the local sheriff advocated the program. However, once the grant was awarded, the school district and high school administration went along with the idea.

The most common objections were that the school's problems were not serious enough to
merit devoting resources to an SRO and that a police officer in schools might alarm
students and parents and send a signal that the school was unsafe. In addition, many
teachers, administrators, and students had held negative attitudes toward the police, leading
them to expect that officers in the schools would overreact to common, minor disciplinary
problems and make arrests for the slightest violation of the law. School staff also thought
officers would have poor interpersonal skills and would be too rigid. Most staff admitted
that they never even considered the possibility that a police officer could teach or counsel
students.

At all five sites, the solution to the problem of initial opposition was to proceed with the
programs anyway with the expectation that their merits would become evident once people
could see the SROs in action. In fact, this occurred at all five sites. For example, since
implementation of the programs, negative stereotypes about police officers have given way
to the view that the SROs are articulate and caring, have strong interpersonal skills, and are
effective at mentoring and problem solving as well at as enforcing the law. Respondents at
all sites viewed their SRO as a "rare find." They believed they were lucky to have an SRO
who was socially skilled and caring, and not overly eager to solve problems through force
or arrest. However, these observations suggest that school staff and administrators believe
that most *other* police officers are less people-oriented, less articulate, and more eager to
solve problems with force or coercion then the SROs are. The only "negative" comment
offered about the SRO programs was that some schools felt they needed more officers.
Parental support for the programs was consistently reported to be very strong, even in sites
where there was initially forceful resistance from parents.

Lack of Specific SRO Roles and Expectations

Failure to specify SRO roles and responsibilities was a universal problem for the five small
new SRO programs—all five began without a detailed plan for exactly how the SROs were
to be used. Four of the five sites had MOUs describing the SROs' deployment in the
schools, but the agreements described the officers' activities in very general terms, such as
noting that the officers worked for the law enforcement agency and stipulating who paid
and supervised them. The MOUs did not elaborate on the SROs' day-to-day operations.

At all five sites, the programs were implemented with an unwritten expectation that the officers would spend part of their time on patrol and would respond to crime and serious incidents of disorder and disciplinary problems. Beyond that, there was a wide range of often conflicting expectations. The most serious disagreements arose about where to draw the line between (1) criminal violations and serious incidents meriting SRO attention, on the one hand, and (2) disciplinary activities more properly handled by teachers and staff, on the other hand. Other common areas of disagreement were whether the SROs would be available beyond normal school hours and during the summer, and whether they would direct traffic or routinely teach or give presentations.

Similar to the way that school and community opposition was addressed, the solution to poor articulation of SRO duties and expectations was simply to proceed with the hope that the officers, the schools, and the host law enforcement agencies "would work it out as we went along." Initially, SROs in these programs learned their responsibilities by trial and error on the job, while over time the schools developed unwritten standards for appropriate and inappropriate use of the SROs. While not an ideal approach, the extremely high level of "customer satisfaction" and lack of serious friction among each site's school and law enforcement communities suggest that some programs can evolve "on the fly" in ways that eventually serve local needs effectively.

Program Activities

As noted above, each SRO began the program with little initial direction, and the range of models evolved primarily from the interests and abilities of individual officers. The SROs in four of the five sites initially operated in a relatively traditional law enforcement mode—patrolling and responding to calls for service. However, by the end of the program's second year, all of the SROs had expanded their roles as mentors and teachers, and increased their community outreach and development of programs within the school. For example, by the end of the program's second year, SROs in three sites were spending almost one third or more of their time mentoring, and in two of these sites the SROs spent about 60 to 65 percent of their time teaching and mentoring combined. However, the SROs in three sites were still spending the majority of their time (60 to 90 percent) enforcing the law.

Law Enforcement

The SROs in four of the five sites operate in a relatively traditional law enforcement mode—patrolling, assisting, and responding to calls for service. However, most SROs make few arrests each year because of the relatively low crime rates in the schools. Enforcement activity usually addresses misdemeanors, and officers usually issue citations rather than make an arrest. Most calls for service involve disruptions, disorder, and suspicious behavior. In sites with high reported crime rates and levels of student disorder, the SROs' role focused on enforcement. In Site Two, law enforcement was emphasized to the point that the SRO had little time to do anything else, while at the other extreme the Site Five SRO spent less than one-fourth of his time on enforcement activities. The SROs' focus on law enforcement in the other three sites fell between these two extremes.

Teaching

Most of the SROs periodically teach or give presentations, although the frequency varies widely among sites and SROs. The most common classes in which SROs speak are driver education, health or biology (usually speaking about the effects of illicit drugs and alcohol on health, motor skills, and perception), and social studies or civics (usually speaking about criminal due process, search and seizure, or Miranda rights). SROs are also occasionally brought into nearly any type of class to offer "stand-alone" presentations and to answer questions about police work in general or their role as SROs in particular.

The most commonly mentioned impediment to expanding the SROs' teaching role is the need for officers to be available to respond to calls for service. In only one of the five small new programs did an SRO teach a regularly scheduled course—a blend of mentoring and instruction: a small group of students meets regularly with the SRO in his office or in the library to discuss reading assignments or projects he has previously assigned them.

Counseling

The SROs in all five programs are very available to students for informal conversations and serious discussions about problems. Most of this interaction is unstructured, occurring in hallways, over lunch, or during "walk-ins" at the SROs' offices. In addition to the obvious mentoring function, the significant time invested by SROs in informal interactions

with students serves to help law enforcement by establishing a trust and rapport that increases the likelihood students will report criminal behavior to the SROs as well as provide intelligence about potential trouble brewing among students.

One SRO has students do independent studies under his guidance and has "regular customers" who spend time in his office during regular office hours. Most of the SROs attract and spend considerable time talking with students who appear to have trouble fitting in socially. The SROs believe that these students benefit a great deal from this relationship. For example, a "friendship" with an SRO may serve to deter harassment of socially awkward and alienated students since most of them seem eager to be seen in congenial hallway conversations with a police officer. Other students who might otherwise harass these vulnerable students may have second thoughts, concerned that their potential victims would tell the SROs about the bullying.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Records of SRO officer and program activity vary widely among the five small new programs. While all officers are required to keep records of the relatively rare arrests, documentation of other SRO activities varies from virtually none to the complete and meticulously detailed. For example, in one program the SRO calls in his activities to the law enforcement dispatch center. The dispatcher records the precise starting time and activity category (e.g., "going on patrol now"; "responding to call to investigate possible drug use"; "going to teach driver ed now"). The dispatch system calculates time spent on each activity and can aggregate time spent on various activities on a weekly or any other basis.

In another site, the principal (the SRO's school administration supervisor), the county sheriff (the SRO's law enforcement supervisor), and the SRO monitor the officer's daily movements and patrol activities informally. While he keeps no logs, the SRO uses *School COP*—a computerized incident tracking system—to record all arrests, citations, and disciplinary incidents in which he is involved. He uses the software's reporting function to produce reports and graphs showing crime trends for the principal and school board.

While there is no systematic empirical evidence of the SRO programs' impact on school crime and disorder, there is promising anecdotal and qualitative evidence of their effectiveness among all five small new SRO programs.

Perceptions of Fear of Crime

Across all of the sites, administrators and faculty reported feeling safer since the SRO programs were implemented. Students believed that the schools were made safer by an SRO's presence and were less fearful as a result. A minority of students felt that the SRO's presence alone did not make them feel safer, but some reported this because they felt that a single officer alone could not make much of a difference in reducing crime or disorder. Students indicated small but positive changes in attitude toward the police.

Perceptions of Trust

Faculty and staff expressed near universal trust and confidence in the SRO. The vast majority of students across the sites reported that they felt comfortable enough to personally approach the SROs with concerns, questions, or confidential information.

Community Support

There was strong support for sustaining all five small new SRO programs after the original grants expire. School and school district administrators, host law enforcement agencies, and the SROs all expressed an interest in continuing the programs. At two schools, administrators (one assistant principal and one principal) threatened to quit if the SRO were not retained. However, in none of the sites were there specific plans for continuing the programs largely due to the lack of a perceived need for a formal plan. The assumption of the need for an SRO program coupled with the small size of the programs and the school administration enabled participants to feel that relatively informal procedures for ensuring the program's continuation would work.

The attitude of one high school principal represents the typical sentiments of all of the school and school district administrators: "We're definitely committed to keeping the program, and we're just trying to find the money." The funding sources explored in all the sites were the budgets of (1) school districts, (2) schools, and (3) host law enforcement agencies in descending order of likelihood of providing funding across the sites in the

opinion of school administrators and the SROs. While the host law enforcement agencies supported the programs, the agencies did not believe they could afford to support an officer dedicated only to schools out of the their normal budgets. In one of the programs in which an SRO is based primarily in one school, the school may try to pay for the SRO's salary if the law enforcement agency and the school district fail to secure finding. While the school administrators expressed willingness to provide the money, they said that the teachers would probably protest such a move in times of fiscal hardship. The administrators and officers said that the teachers would see it as "trading a teacher for a cop" if they used the school budget to retain the SRO. Proponents of the program countered such arguments by saying the SRO's activities more than justified the financial investment by freeing teachers and administrators to focus on teaching rather than school safety and disorder.

A few sites mentioned trying to secure additional grant money, acknowledging that it would probably have to come from Federal agencies other than the COPS Office or from the state. At none of the small new SRO programs were sales taxes or school levies mentioned as funding streams.

Appendixes

Appendix A

Principal Materials Examined for the Study

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Appendix B

Mail Survey of Law Enforcement Agencies

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAMS
SURVEY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES
Abt Associates Inc.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY

1. Who should complete the survey for the department?

• Most departments have only one sworn officer assigned as a School Resource Officer (SRO). If this applies to your department, that
officer should complete the survey.
• Some departments have several SROs. If this applies to your department, the most senior SRO or the supervisor of the SROs
should complete the survey.
• If there are many SROs in your department, then the immediate supervisor of the SROs should complete the survey.
• *Administrative or other staff not having direct familiarity with SROs should not complete the survey.*

2. What if my department does not assign officers as SROs?

Departments that were chosen for this survey either reported to the Bureau of Justice Statistics that they had SROs in 1997 or recently received a grant for hiring officers for placement in schools. It is possible that some departments may have stopped using SROs since 1997 and others that only recently received grant funding for new officers may not have begun their initiative. If either case applies to your department, please still complete the contact information on the first page and describe your situation in the blank section of the final question of the survey. *Please still return the survey however – it will help us in identifying potential sites for future further assessment activities.*

Some departments use a different term than SRO (school liaison officer, for example). *Please fill out and return the survey even if you use a different term than SRO.*

3. What if I do not know the answer to a question?

Simply leave the answer blank – do not check a response if you do not know the answer to the question.

4. What if I have questions about items on the questionnaire?

Please call Peter Finn at (617) 349-2739 or David Hayeslip at (202) 263-1721.

Person Completing Survey: _____ **Title:** _____ **Agency:** _____

Address: (street) _____ **(state)** _____ **(zip)** _____

Telephone Number: (   ) _____ **E-Mail Address:** _____

PART I – ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

1. **In what year did the sworn SRO(s) first begin to work in the schools?** Year: _____

2. **How many sworn officers in your law enforcement agency are SROs?** Full Time: _____
   Part Time: _____

3. **How many non-sworn (civilian) personnel in your law enforcement agency work in schools?** Full Time: _____
   (D.A.R.E. instructors, security, etc.) Part Time: _____

4. **What agency *oversees or manages* the SRO(s)?** (Please check one response)
   ☐ municipal or county police or sheriffs department
   ☐ special school or school district police agency
   ☐ school district
   ☐ other (please specify) _____

5. **Which agency or agencies *fund* the SRO(s)?** (Please check all that apply)
   ☐ police or sheriff's department
   ☐ school district
   ☐ State government
   ☐ Federal government
   ☐ community-based organizations
   ☐ other (please specify) _____

6. **Approximately how many primary/secondary schools are there in your jurisdiction?** Total schools: _____

7. How many schools does the SRO (do the SROs) serve?

SRO schools: _____

8. In what kinds of schools does the SRO (do the SROs) serve? (Please check all that apply)

☐ elementary
☐ middle school
☐ junior high
☐ high school
☐ other (please specify) _____

9. Does the SRO (do the SROs) serve in any specialized schools? (Please check all that apply)

☐ vocational
☐ alternative
☐ special needs
☐ charter
☐ parochial/private
☐ other (please specify) _____

10. With what school do your SRO(s) have the _most active_ involvement?

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

What kind of school is it? (Please check only one)

☐ elementary
☐ middle school
☐ junior high
☐ high school
☐ other (please specify) _____

Is it a specialized school? (Please check only one)

☐ vocational
☐ alternative
☐ special needs

☐ charter
☐ parochial/private
☐ other (please specify) _____

Approximately how many students are enrolled in this school?　　　Total Students: _____

Approximately how many teachers does this school employ?　　　Total Teachers: _____

Does this school have its own non-sworn security force?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Who is the contact or Liaison Person for SRO services employed by the school?

Name: _____
Address: _____
_____
Phone: _____

11. With what school do your SRO(s) have the _next most_ active involvement?
(Leave blank if active only in one school)

Name: _____
Address: _____
_____

What kind of school is it? (Please check only one)

☐ elementary
☐ middle school
☐ junior high
☐ high school
☐ other (please specify) _____

Is it a specialized school? (Please check only one)

☐ vocational
☐ alternative
☐ special needs
☐ charter
☐ parochial/private
☐ other (please specify) _____

Approximately how many students are enrolled in this school? Total Students: _____

Approximately how many teachers does this school employ? Total Teachers: _____

Does this school have its own non-sworn security force?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Contact or Liaison Person for SRO services employed by the school?

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____

12. **What is the nature of agreements your agency may have with the schools regarding SRO(s)?** (Please check all that apply)

☐ written contract
☐ written memorandum of agreement or understanding
☐ verbal agreement – at least some discussion
☐ other (please specify) _____

PART II – NATURE OF THE SCHOOL SAFETY PROBLEMS

13. **What school problem or problems led to the decision to place an SRO in the schools, and what problems are currently being addressed by the SRO(s)?**

(Please check all that apply in both columns)

	Led to SRO Placement	Currently a Problem Being Addressed
drug dealing	☐	☐
drug use	☐	☐
alcohol use	☐	☐
smoking	☐	☐
threats or intimidation	☐	☐
sexual harassment	☐	☐
vandalism	☐	☐
graffiti	☐	☐

☐   ☐ loitering
☐   ☐ bullying
☐   ☐ gangs
☐   ☐ racial, ethnic, cultural, religious conflict
☐   ☐ weapons
☐   ☐ assaults among students
☐   ☐ assaults against teachers
☐   ☐ assaults with weapons
☐   ☐ assaults without weapons
☐   ☐ property crime (please specify) _____
☐   ☐ violent crime (please specify) _____
☐   ☐ to prevent crimes before they occur
☐   ☐ other (please specify) _____
☐   ☐ other (please specify) _____

14. If the goal of the SRO(s) is not to address any school safety problems, please describe their primary goal.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

PART III – SRO ACTIVITIES

15. What law enforcement activities does the SRO (do the SROs) perform?
   (Please check all that apply)

☐ patrol school facilities
☐ patrol school grounds
☐ patrol drug-free zones beyond school boundaries
☐ patrol student travel routes
☐ patrol other areas (please specify) _____
☐ operate metal detectors
☐ conduct safety and security inspections
☐ respond to crime/disorder reports from school staff
☐ respond to crime/disorder reports from students
☐ investigate staff leads about crime/disorder
☐ investigate student leads about crime/disorder
☐ make arrests
☐ issue citations
☐ write disciplinary reports
☐ write police reports
☐ enforce truancy laws or policies
☐ solve crime-related problems
☐ maintain safety and security in other ways
         (please specify) _____
         _____
☐ law enforcement activities not performed by SRO(s)

16. What activities involving providing advice or mentoring does the SRO (do the SROs) perform? (Please check all that apply)

Advice or mentoring with staff**:**
☐ advise staff on school policy changes
☐ advise staff on school procedure changes
☐ advise staff on physical environment changes
☐ advise staff on problem solving
☐ mediate disputes among staff

☐ advise staff on avoiding violence/victimization
☐ advise staff on student behavior modification
☐ advise staff on student rule and sanction enforcement
☐ advise staff on law-related issues
☐ provide staff training (please specify type)_____
_____
☐ other (please specify) _____

Advice or mentoring with groups:
☐ advise school clubs
☐ advise parent-teacher organizations (PTOs, PTAs)
☐ advise police athletic/activities league (PALs)
☐ advise school athletic teams
☐ chaperone school field trips
☐ advise community outreach programs
☐ other (please specify) _____
☐ other (please specify) _____

Advice or mentoring with students or families:
☐ mentor/provide guidance to individual students
☐ help students with court involvement or intervention
☐ work with parents to help their children
☐ refer students to other sources of help
☐ refer parents to other sources of help
☐ other (please specify) _____
☐ other (please specify) _____

Advising and mentoring activities are not performed by SROs

17. What topics does the SRO (do the SROs) teach? (Please check all that apply)

☐ anti-drug classes
☐ anti-gang classes
☐ law-related classes
☐ safety education
☐ crime awareness
☐ conflict resolution
☐ problem solving
☐ other (please specify) _____
☐ other (please specify) _____

Teaching activities are not performed by SROs

18. Does the SRO (do the SROs) engage in any other activities?

☐ No
☐ Yes (please specify) _____
_____
_____
_____

19. Approximately how many hours in a typical school week does the average SRO devote to school-related activities? (Please specify)

Hours per week: _____

20. Approximately how many hours in a typical school week does the average SRO devote to each of the following school-related activities? (Please specify)

Law Enforcement: _____
Advising: _____
Teaching: _____
Other activities: _____

21. Does the SRO (do the SROs) work in school in uniform?

☐ yes, generally in uniform
☐ no, generally in plain clothes
☐ sometimes in uniform, sometimes plain clothes

22. Does the SRO (do the SROs) carry a service weapon while working in school?

☐ yes
☐ no

☐ sometimes armed, sometimes not armed

23. Has the SRO (have the SROs) received training specifically designed to help prepare them for their school-related duties?

☐ no
☐ yes, all SROs have received training
☐ some SROs have received training and others have not

If some or all SROs have received training, what kind? (Please check all that apply)

☐ conflict resolution
☐ child or adolescent development
☐ collaborating with schools
☐ problem solving
☐ crime prevention through environmental design
☐ classroom teaching
☐ mentoring or providing guidance to students
☐ working with parents
☐ other (please specify) _____
☐ other (please specify) _____
☐ other (please specify) _____

Who provided the SRO training? (Please check all that apply)

☐ local police academy
☐ regional or state police academy
☐ university based training facility
☐ Regional Community Policing Institute
☐ National Association of School Resource Officers
☐ Center for Prevention of School Violence
☐ other (please specify) _____
☐ other (please specify) _____

PART IV – COMMUNITY POLICING

24. With what groups and organizations does the SRO (do the SROs) regularly collaborate as a routine part of their activities? (Please check all that apply)

☐ students
☐ individual parents
☐ parent groups (PTA, PTO, etc.)
☐ faculty
☐ administrators
☐ department of social services
☐ other social service agencies
☐ juvenile courts
☐ probation department
☐ community-based organizations
☐ other (please specify) _____
☐ other (please specify) _____

25. What is the nature of the collaboration? (Please check all that apply)

☐ joint planning of school activities
☐ joint implementation of school activities
☐ joint membership on committees, task forces, etc.
☐ problem solving related to school safety
☐ case work or management, identifying needs/resources
☐ other (please specify) _____
☐ other (please specify) _____

PART V – EVALUATION

26. Which of the following types of data are routinely collected and maintained about SRO activities, outcomes and impacts? (Please
check all that apply)

SRO Activities	SRO Outcomes	SRO Impacts
☐ meeting agendas, notes	☐ calls for service	☐ crime incidents in school
☐ collaboration agreements	☐ arrests	☐ crime incidents in vicinity of school
☐ SRO planning activities	☐ citations	☐ non-crime disorder incidents in school
☐ documentation about SRO recruitment	☐ weapons seized	☐ non-crime disorder incidents around school
☐ SRO goal/mission statements	☐ drugs seized	☐ victimization in school
☐ training/technical assistance provided	☐ number of students taught	☐ victimization in vicinity of school
☐ funding	☐ number of students advised	☐ truancy
☐ law enforcement activities of SRO(s)	☐ number of students under juvenile court supervision	☐ suspensions/expulsions
☐ advising or guidance activities of SRO(s)	☐ number of student on probation	☐ student grades
☐ teaching activities of SRO(s)	☐ types of safety problems solved	☐ student test scores
☐ other SRO activities		☐ student tardiness
☐ hours SRO engaged in each activity		☐ student surveys (fear, safety)
		☐ parent surveys (fear, safety)
		☐ school staff surveys (fear, safety)
☐ other activities (please specify)	☐ other outcomes (please specify)	☐ other impacts (please specify)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**27. Has your SRO (have your SROs) been evaluated? This means having
a scientific assessment of how well your approach works** (Please check
all that apply)

☐ yes, we have conducted an in-house evaluation
☐ yes, we have had an external independent evaluation
☐ no, but we plan to conduct an evaluation in the future
☐ no, but we would like to be evaluated

**28. In a separate mailing, would you please send us any materials related to SRO activities that you feel would be of interest to us? These
might include descriptions of your SRO approach, written policies, final evaluation reports, newspaper articles and promotional
materials.** These materials will help us decide which law enforcement agencies with SROs to visit for more in-depth study. *In addition, the
materials will enable us to better inform other law enforcement agencies about the work your SROs do so theses other agencies can benefit from
your experience in setting up or improving their own SRO initiatives.* We have provided a return address label for you to use in sending these
materials to

Peter Finn
Abt Associates Inc.
55 Wheeler Street
Cambridge, MA 02138-1168

29. *In the space below, please provide any additional comments you may have about your SRO initiative, officer activities, outcomes or impacts. Feel free to use additional pages, if necessary.*

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

Please mail the completed questionnaire in the preaddressed envelope provided. If you have misplaced the envelope, please mail the completed questionnaire to Peter Finn at the address above or telephone him at (617) 349-2739

Appendix C

Mail Survey of School Principals

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAMS
SURVEY OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
Abt Associates Inc.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY

1. Who should complete the survey for the department?

- Preferably, the Principal of your school should complete the survey.
- If there is an Assistant Principal who has responsibility for school security, they may complete the survey.
- *Administrative or other staff from your school should not complete the survey.*
- *Administrative or staff from your school district should not complete the survey.*
- *School Resource officers or other school safety personnel should not complete the survey.*

2. What if my school does not have police officers as SROs?

Schools that were chosen for this survey were identified by police departments that either reported to the Bureau of Justice Statistics that they had SROs in 1997 or recently received a federal grant for hiring officers for placement in schools. It is possible that some departments may have stopped using SROs since 1997 and others that only recently received grant funding for new officers may not have begun their initiative with their local schools. If either case applies to your school, please still complete the contact information on the first page and describe your situation in the blank section of the final question of the survey. *Please still return the survey however – it will help us in identifying potential sites for future further assessment activities.*

Some schools use a different term than SRO (school liaison officer, for example). *Please fill out and return the survey even if you use a different term than SRO.*

3. What if I do not know the answer to a question?

Simply leave the answer blank – do not check a response if you do not know the answer to the question.

4. What if I have questions about items on the questionnaire?

Please call Peter Finn at (617) 349-2739 or David Hayeslip at (202) 263-1721.

Person Completing Survey: _____ **Title:** _____ **Agency:** _____

Address: (street) _____ **(state)** _____ **(zip)** _____

Telephone Number: (   ) _____ **E-Mail Address:** _____

Fax: (   ) _____

PART I – ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

1. **In what year did the sworn SRO(s) first begin to work in the schools?** Year: _____

2. **How many sworn officers are assigned to your school as SROs?**

   Full Time: _____
   Part Time: _____

3. **How many non-sworn (civilian) personnel are assigned to work in your school?**
   (D.A.R.E. instructors, security, etc.)

   Full Time: _____
   Part Time: _____

4. **What agency *oversees or manages* the SRO(s)?** (Please check one response)

   ☐ municipal or county police or sheriffs department
   ☐ special school or school district police agency
   ☐ school district
   ☐ other (please specify) _____

5. **Which agency or agencies *fund* the SRO(s)?** (Please check all that apply)

   ☐ police or sheriff's department
   ☐ school district
   ☐ State government
   ☐ Federal government
   ☐ community-based organizations
   ☐ other (please specify) _____

6. **What kind of school is your school?** (Please check only one)

   ☐ elementary
   ☐ middle school
   ☐ junior high
   ☐ high school
   ☐ other (please specify) _____

7. **Which of the following best describes your school?** (Please check only one)

   ☐ pubic school serving general population
   ☐ vocational
   ☐ alternative

☐ special needs
☐ charter
☐ parochial/private
☐ other (please specify) _____

8. Approximately how many students are enrolled in your school? Total Students: _____

9. Approximately how many teachers does this school employ? Total Full Time Teachers: _____

Total Part Time Teachers: _____

10. Does your school have its own non-sworn security force? ☐ Yes
☐ No

11. Who is the contact or Liaison Person for SRO services employed Name: _____
by the school? (school staff member having day-to-day Address: _____
responsibility for SROs) _____
Phone: _____

12. What is the nature of agreements your agency may have with the schools ☐ written contract
regarding SRO(s)? (Please check all that apply) ☐ written memorandum of agreement or understanding
☐ verbal agreement – at least some discussion
☐ other (please specify) _____

13. Does your school regularly engage in formal school safety strategic planning with the police? ☐ Yes
☐ No

14. In what year did your school begin school safety planning? Year _____

15. What was the primary impetus for engaging in school safety planning? ☐ An event in or near the school (crime, disturbance)
(please check only one) ☐ An event in or near another school
☐ School District Policy
☐ Legislation mandating planning

☐ External pressure (parents, parent-teacher groups)
☐ Other reasons (please specify) _____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

PART II – NATURE OF THE SCHOOL SAFETY PROBLEMS

16. What school problem or problems led to the decision to place an SRO in the schools, and what problems are currently being addressed by the SRO(s)?

(Please check all that apply in both columns)

Led to SRO Placement	Currently a Problem Being Addressed
☐	☐ drug dealing
☐	☐ drug use
☐	☐ alcohol use
☐	☐ smoking
☐	☐ threats or intimidation
☐	☐ sexual harassment
☐	☐ vandalism
☐	☐ graffiti
☐	☐ loitering
☐	☐ bullying
☐	☐ gangs
☐	☐ racial, ethnic, cultural, religious conflict
☐	☐ weapons
☐	☐ assaults among students
☐	☐ assaults against teachers
☐	☐ assaults with weapons
☐	☐ assaults without weapons
☐	☐ property crime (please specify) _____
☐	☐ violent crime (please specify) _____
☐	☐ to prevent crimes before they occur
☐	☐ other (please specify) _____
☐	☐ other (please specify) _____

17. If the goal of the SRO(s) is not to address any school safety problems, please describe their primary goal.

_____
_____
_____

18. In general, how serious do you consider your *current* school safety problems to be?

☐ Very serious
☐ Moderately serious
☐ Somewhat serious
☐ Not very serious
☐ Not serious

PART III – SRO ACTIVITIES

19. What law enforcement activities does the SRO (do the SROs) perform?
(Please check all that apply)

☐ patrol school facilities
☐ patrol school grounds
☐ patrol drug-free zones beyond school boundaries
☐ patrol student travel routes
☐ patrol other areas (please specify) _____
☐ operate metal detectors
☐ conduct safety and security inspections
☐ respond to crime/disorder reports from school staff
☐ respond to crime/disorder reports from students
☐ investigate staff leads about crime/disorder
☐ investigate student leads about crime/disorder
☐ make arrests
☐ issue citations
☐ write disciplinary reports
☐ write police reports
☐ enforce truancy laws or policies
☐ solve crime-related problems
☐ maintain safety and security in other ways
        (please specify) _____
        _____
☐ law enforcement activities not performed by SRO(s)

**20. What activities involving providing advice or mentoring does the
SRO (do the SROs) perform?** (Please check all that apply)

Advice or mentoring with staff**:**
☐ advise staff on school policy changes
☐ advise staff on school procedure changes
☐ advise staff on physical environment changes
☐ advise staff on problem solving
☐ mediate disputes among staff
☐ advise staff on avoiding violence/victimization
☐ advise staff on student behavior modification

☐ advise staff on student rule and sanction enforcement
☐ advise staff on law-related issues
☐ provide staff training (please specify type)_____
_____
☐ other (please specify) _____

Advice or mentoring with groups:
☐ advise school clubs
☐ advise parent-teacher organizations (PTOs, PTAs)
☐ advise police athletic/activities league (PALs)
☐ advise school athletic teams
☐ chaperone school field trips
☐ advise community outreach programs
☐ other (please specify) _____
☐ other (please specify) _____

Advice or mentoring with students or families:
☐ mentor/provide guidance to individual students
☐ help students with court involvement or intervention
☐ work with parents to help their children
☐ refer students to other sources of help
☐ refer parents to other sources of help
☐ other (please specify) _____
☐ other (please specify) _____

Advising and mentoring activities are not performed by SROs

21. What topics does the SRO (do the SROs) teach? (Please check all that apply)　☐ anti-drug classes
☐ anti-gang classes
☐ law-related classes
☐ safety education
☐ crime awareness

☐ conflict resolution
☐ problem solving
☐ other (please specify) _____
☐ other (please specify) _____

☐ Teaching activities are not performed by SROs

22. Does the SRO (do the SROs) engage in any other activities?

☐ No
☐ Yes (please specify) _____
_____
_____
_____

23. Approximately how many hours in a typical school week does the average SRO devote to school-related activities? (Please specify)

Hours per week: _____

24. Approximately how many hours in a typical school week does the average SRO devote to each of the following school-related activities? (Please specify)

Law Enforcement: _____
Advising: _____
Teaching: _____
Other activities: _____

25. Does the SRO (do the SROs) work in school in uniform?

☐ yes, generally in uniform
☐ no, generally in plain clothes
☐ sometimes in uniform, sometimes plain clothes

26. Does the SRO (do the SROs) carry a service weapon while working in school?

☐ yes
☐ no
☐ sometimes armed, sometimes not armed

27. Please rank what you feel are the three most important SRO activities in your school (1 for the activity that is most important; 2 for the next most important; 3 for the next most important after that)

___ Law Enforcement
___ Advising
___ Teaching

___ Other (please specify)
_____
_____

28. How satisfied are you with the following activities conducted you your SRO(s)?

Activity	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not applicable
Law Enforcement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Advising	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teaching	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

_____
_____

PART IV – COMMUNITY POLICING

29. With what groups and organizations does the SRO (do the SROs) regularly collaborate as a routine part of their activities? (Please check all that apply)

☐ students
☐ individual parents
☐ parent groups (PTA, PTO, etc.)
☐ faculty
☐ administrators
☐ department of social services
☐ other social service agencies
☐ juvenile courts
☐ probation department
☐ community-based organizations
☐ other (please specify) _____
☐ other (please specify) _____

30. What is the nature of the collaboration? (Please check all that apply)

☐ joint planning of school activities
☐ joint implementation of school activities
☐ joint membership on committees, task forces, etc.
☐ problem solving related to school safety
☐ case work or management, identifying needs/resources
☐ other (please specify) _____
☐ other (please specify) _____

31. How would you rate the quality of the collaboration between your school and the <u>SRO(s)</u> with whom you work?

☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Fair
☐ Poor

32. How would you rate the quality of the collaboration between your school and the <u>Police Department</u> serving your school?

☐ Excellent
☐ Good
☐ Fair
☐ Poor

PART V – EVALUATION

33. Which of the following types of data are routinely collected and maintained about SRO activities, outcomes and impacts? (Please
check all that apply)

SRO Activities	**SRO Outcomes**	**SRO Impacts**
☐ meeting agendas, notes	☐ calls for service	☐ crime incidents in school
☐ collaboration agreements	☐ arrests	☐ crime incidents in vicinity of school
☐ SRO planning activities	☐ citations	☐ non-crime disorder incidents in school
☐ documentation about SRO recruitment	☐ weapons seized	☐ non-crime disorder incidents around school
☐ SRO goal/mission statements	☐ drugs seized	☐ victimization in school
☐ training/technical assistance provided	☐ number of students taught	☐ victimization in vicinity of school
☐ funding	☐ number of students advised	☐ truancy
☐ law enforcement activities of SRO(s)	☐ number of students under juvenile court supervision	☐ suspensions/expulsions
☐ advising or guidance activities of SRO(s)	☐ number of student on probation	☐ student grades
☐ teaching activities of SRO(s)	☐ types of safety problems solved	☐ student test scores
☐ other SRO activities		☐ student tardiness
☐ hours SRO engaged in each activity		☐ student surveys (fear, safety)
		☐ parent surveys (fear, safety)
		☐ school staff surveys (fear, safety)
☐ other activities (please specify)	☐ other outcomes (please specify)	☐ other impacts (please specify)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

34. Has your SRO (have your SROs) been evaluated? This means having a scientific assessment of how well your approach works (Please check all that apply)

☐ yes, we have conducted an in-house evaluation
☐ yes, we have had an external independent evaluation
☐ no, but we plan to conduct an evaluation in the future
☐ no, but we would like to be evaluated

35. In a separate mailing, would you please send us any materials related to SRO activities that you feel would be of interest to us? These might include descriptions of your SRO approach, written policies, final evaluation reports, newspaper articles and promotional materials. These materials will help us decide which schools and law enforcement agencies with SROs to visit for more in-depth study. *In addition, the materials will enable us to better inform other law enforcement agencies about the work your SROs do so theses other agencies can benefit from your experience in setting up or improving their own SRO initiatives.* We have provided a return address label for you to use in sending these materials to

Peter Finn
Abt Associates Inc.
55 Wheeler Street
Cambridge, MA 02138-1168

36. In the space below, please provide any additional comments you may have about your SRO initiative, officer activities, outcomes or impacts. Feel free to use additional pages, if necessary.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

Please mail the completed questionnaire in the preaddressed envelope provided. If you have misplaced the envelope, please mail the completed questionnaire to Peter Finn at the address above or telephone him at (617) 349-2739

Appendix D

Site Visit Preparation Protocol

Setting up Visits with Sites
(1)   Explain what we hope to accomplish during the visit (see II below)
(2)   Ask about
        (a) availability of process and impact data (see II.9 below),
        (b) how we can obtain them, and
        (c) whether they can be sent to us now
(3)   Ask site to identify comparison schools—more than one in case first choice
        doesn't work out.
(4)   Explore procedure for conducting student survey
        (a)   logistics of parental consent
        (b)   the sample—probably all students within randomly chosen classrooms
                (home rooms?)
        (c)   sample size
        (d)   methods of interviewing the same students the following year (e.g., using
                homerooms if students are assigned to them alphabetically)
(5)   Secure names, titles, and telephone numbers and e-mails of all key program
        participants
(6)   Secure names, titles, and telephone numbers and e-mails of other important
        program participants (e.g., faculty, student council president, PTO president)
(7)   Identify special activities involving SROs that will be taking place during the
        period of the site visit (or schedule the dates of the visit to coincide with these
        activities) so we can observe them (e.g., SRO giving presentation to school
        committee or school administrators)
(8)   Set tentative—and later set definitive--dates for visit
(9)   Schedule the visit components—let site contact do it, if possible, otherwise we do
        it—that is, the specific dates and times for the focus group, individual interviews,
        observations, etc.
(10)   Send draft survey instrument for review and comment

Planning the Visits
(1)   Develop observation check list for shadowing SROs (see V below)
(2)   Develop interview guides for participants (see IV below)
(3)   Develop Survey Instruments for students, parents, and teachers (see III below)
(4)   Get IRB approval for student survey and interviews
(5)   Review site responses to mail survey and any materials submitted

Scheduling Site Activities
(1)   ½-day initial "focus group" with key program participants

        (a)   describe the project
        (b)   answer questions
        (c)   ask them to recreate the program's planning and history
        (d)   review draft survey instrument
        (e)   identify recent events that may influence outcomes (see VII below)

(2)   Shadow SRO (at least ½ day)
(3)   Interview key program participants one-on-one
(4)   Interview other program participants one-on-one
(5)   Observe any events involving SROs (e.g., presentation to school committee)
(6)   Make sure student survey arrangements are proceeding satisfactorily—troubleshoot as needed
(7)   Collect hard copy or disk copy of available data
(8)   Identify similar schools where we can track the same outcome data
(9)   confirm (i) which data are available and (ii) how we can gain access to them

Appendix E

Program Participation Interview Guide

Program Participant Interview Guides

I.   Program Planning

(1)   When did you begin planning the implementation of your SRO program?
(2)   What were the reasons for considering an SRO program (critical incident, media, legal, etc.)?
(3)   Who was involved in program planning?
(4)   How were the needs for the SRO program determined?
(5)   Who was asked about needs?
(6)   What needs data were collected (still available)?
(7)   What problems were initially targeted?
(8)   How were these problems identified?
(9)   How was integration of your program with other school safety and delinquency programs planned?
(10)   What program elements were selected and why were they selected?
(11)   Were there any obstacles encountered in the planning process?
(12)   What were the major successes and failures in your program planning?

II.   Program Implementation

(1)   When was the SRO program implemented (or when will it be)?
(2)   How was your program initially integrated with other school safety and delinquency programs?
(3)   How many officers were initially assigned to the program?
(4)   What schools were they assigned to and why?
(5)   What were the unique characteristics of those schools (staff, students unique problems, etc.)?
(6)   Who had program oversight?
(7)   How was the program initially funded?
(8)   What was the nature of agreement between the police and schools (MOU, contract, etc.)?
(9)   What law enforcement activities did SROs initially perform? How many hours per week did they engage in these activities?
(10)   What activities involving providing advice or mentoring with staff did SROs initially perform? How many hours per week did they engage in the activities?
(11)   What activities involving providing advice or mentoring with groups (PTA for example) did SROs initially perform? How many hours per week did they engage in these activities?
(12)   What activities involving advice or mentoring with students or families did SROs initially perform? How many hours per week did they engage in these activities?
(13)   What kinds of topics did SROs initially teach? How many hours per week did they engage in these activities?
(14)   Did the SROs regularly collaborate with any groups or organizations as a routine part of their activities? Who were these groups and what was the nature of that collaboration?

(15) Did the SROs initially engage in problem-solving activities (identifying underlying causes of crime or disorder problems in schools)? If not, why not?

(16) What other activities associated with community policing did SROs initially engage in?

(17) What were the obstacles and problems associated with initial implementation? How were they resolved?

(18) What were the successes of initial implementation?

III. Current Program

(1) How many officers are assigned to the program? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why?

(2) How is your program currently integrated with other school safety and delinquency programs? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why?

(3) What schools are they assigned to and why? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why?

(4) What are the unique characteristics of these schools (staff, students unique problems, etc.)? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why?

(6) Who has program oversight? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why?

(7) How is the program funded? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why?

(8) What is the nature of the agreements between the police and schools (MOU contract, etc.)? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why?

(9) What law enforcement activities do SROs perform? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why? How many hours per week do they engage in these activities? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why?

(10) What activities involving providing advice or mentoring with staff do SROs perform? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why? How many hours per week do they engage in these activities? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why?

(11) What activities involving providing advice or mentoring with groups (PTA for example) do SROs perform? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why? How many hours per week do they engage in these activities? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why?

(12) What activities involving advice or mentoring with students or families do SROs perform? Has this changed over time and if so how and why? How many hours per week do they engage in these activities? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why?

(13) What kinds of topics do SROs teach? Has this changed over time and if so how and why? How many hours per week do they engage in these activities? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why?

(14) Do the SROs regularly collaborate with any groups or organizations as a routine part of their activities? What are these groups and what is the nature of the collaboration? Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why?

(15) Do the SROs engage in problem solving activities (identifying underlying causes
       of crime or disorder problems in schools)? Has this changed over time and, if so,
       how and why? If not, why not?
(16) What other activities associated with community policing do SROs engage in?
       Has this changed over time and, if so, how and why?
(17) What were the obstacles and problems associated with the development of the
       program over time and how were they overcome?
(18) What were the successes and failures associated with the development of the
       program over time and how did these come about?
(19) How many hours per week did they engage in these activities?

IV. Meetings with Students and Teachers (final site visit only)

The format and locations of these group discussions will vary from site to site, based
upon local constraints. Ideally, we should meet with one or more homeroom classes, or
during another class (such as social studies) during the day. Teachers might be talked
with at different times during the day in the faculty lounge, or over lunch. These are
convenience samples, of course, but the conversations are just designed to give a
qualitative snapshot of some of the perceptions of these two groups.

No personal identifiers are to be collected from anyone. *The questions are just general
discussion points. These meetings should be informal conversations, not structured data
collection interviews*.

The following general topics should be discussed:

- How safe do you feel in school? Are there any places in or around
  the school that you feel less safe than others?
- Does having an SRO in the school make you feel safer?
- What do you think about the SRO? Do you trust the SRO enough
  to go to him (her) to talk about problems in school? Talk to him
  (her) about personal or school problems?
- What would you say is the most serious problem in this school?
  (probe, if necessary – drugs, gangs, alcohol, bullying, assaults, thefts
  etc.)? What's the SRO doing about this problem?
- What do you like most about having an SRO in the school?
- What do you like least about having an SRO in the school?
- How effective do you think having an SRO in school is on crime in the
  school? Other incidents?
- What personal qualities make an SRO effective?
- Any other comments about the SRO program?

For teachers only;

- Do you feel safer in school now that there is an SRO here than you
  did before an SRO program was started/

- What was the most serious problem in school before the SRO program began?
- Would you prefer working in a school with an SRO or without an SRO?

V. Observation Checklist for Shadowing SROs

(1) With whom did the SRO have contact?

(2) What was the nature of the contact—what did it involve, where did it take place, and how long did it last? How many contacts were in person and how many by phone?

(3) Did any of the contacts involve problem solving? If so, what problem was addressed and how was it addressed?

(4) What did the attitude appear to be of the people with whom the SRO came in contact—e.g., cooperative, hostile, fawning, collegial, helpful, nervous?

(5) How did people address the SRO—e.g., by his or her first name? title (officer, sergeant)? no address?

(6) Was the SRO in uniform? armed?

(7) Did the SRO proactively look for ways to be involved, wait for issues to come to him or her, or some of both?

(8) Where by each half hour did the SRO spend his or her time?

(9) Was the SRO supervised at any time? If so, what was the nature of the supervision?

VI. Changes in Policies and Procedures that May Influence Outcomes

As part of our interviews with law enforcement and school officials, we need to find out whether there have been any changes in the school environment, policies and procedures, and other areas of school life that might account for changes in our outcome measures *independently* of the SRO program. The following are some of the changes we should ask about.

- requiring visitors to sign in
- not allowing students to leave campus during lunch
- increasing control over access to school buildings or school grounds
- conducting drug sweep(s)
- instituting random or regular metal detector checks
- using dogs sniffs to check for drugs
- performing sweep(s) for contraband
- requiring student uniforms
- changing dress code
- changing the discipline options (e.g., adding corporal punishment)
- providing printed code of conduct to students
- providing printed code of conduct to parents
- requiring clear book bags or banning book bags on school grounds
- requiring student badges or picture IDs

- requiring teacher badges or picture IDs
- using (additional) security cameras
- implementing architectural or environmental modifications to reduce opportunities for crime and violence
- revising or monitoring schoolwide discipline practices and procedures
- reorganizing school, grade levels, or schedule (e.g., creation of "houses," going on double shifts)
- changing any non-SRO security programs (e.g., private school security force)
- implementing formal program not involving SROs for students, teachers, counselors, or parents to
  - prevent or reduce violence—e.g.,
    - prevention curriculum, instruction, or training
    - mentoring, tutoring, coaching
    - recreation or enrichment activities
    - conflict resolution or mediation program
- change in school administration
- change in teacher responsibilities (e.g., corridor duty)
- significant change in school funding
- change in the collective bargaining agreement

VII. Implementation and Process Outcome Data

Are any of the following implementation process data routinely collected and maintained about SRO activities and outcomes? If so, how can we gain access to these data for evaluation purposes?

- ☐ Meeting agendas, notes
- ☐ Collaboration agreements
- ☐ SRO planning activities
- ☐ Documentation about SRO recruitment
- ☐ SRO goal/mission statements
- ☐ Training or technical assistance provided
- ☐ Funding
- ☐ Law enforcement SRO activities
- ☐ Advising or guidance SRO activities
- ☐ Teaching SRO activities
- ☐ SRO hours per week
- ☐ Police calls for service
- ☐ Arrests
- ☐ Citations
- ☐ Weapons seized
- ☐ Drugs seized
- ☐ Number of students advised
- ☐ Number of students taught
- ☐ Number of students under juvenile court supervision

□   Number of students on probation
□   Types of safety or disorder problems solved

What are your perceptions about the impacts that your SRO program has had on crime and disorder in and around the targeted schools? What do you base these perceptions on?

What is your perception of whether trust in the police department has increased as a result of the SRO program?   What do you base your perception on?

Large sites only - Are any of the following impact data routinely collected and maintained about SRO activities and outcomes? If so, are they maintained electronically? How can we gain access to these data for evaluation purposes?

□   Crime incidents in school
□   Crime incidents in vicinity of school
□   Non-crime disorder incidents in school
□   Non-crime disorder incidents in vicinity of school
□   Victimization in school
□   Victimization in vicinity of school
□   Truancy
□   Suspensions/expulsions
□   Student grades
□   Student test scores
□   Student tardiness
□   Student surveys (fear, safety)
□   Parent surveys (fear, safety)

VIII. Demographics

Finally, for the case studies we will need detailed descriptions of both the police or sheriff's department and the schools being served by the SRO. Time may not permit securing all of this information on site. If not, make plans while on site for follow up calls with the appropriate local contacts.   For the police, this descriptive information should include jurisdiction, size and makeup of the department, calls for service per year, reported crimes per year, number of officers assigned as SROs etc. For the schools, this should include descriptive information about the school district as a whole (number of students, faculty, staff, number of schools, etc.) and the same descriptive information about the specific school(s) being served by the SRO. We will also need information about the city or county (demographics, poverty, employment, etc. and how these may have changed over the past few years). Some of this may be available through the county or city government planning office, or we may have to rely on census data. If they are available, try to secure the latest annual reports from the police and the school district (of course, some sites will not publish such reports).

Appendix F

Survey of Students: Large New Programs

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAMS: SURVEY OF STUDENTS
Abt Associates Inc.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY

1. Why are you being asked to complete this survey?

- The U.S. Department of Justice recently provided grant funding to the police or sheriffs department serving your school to deploy sworn officers or deputies as *School Resource Officers* in your school.
- As part of the National Assessment of School Resource Officer Programs, Abt Associates and Northeastern University are asking administrators, teachers and students about their perceptions of quality of life, strengths and weaknesses of the School Resource Officer Program and school safety problems.
- The results of these surveys will help inform the U.S. Department of Justice, as well as educators and police officials nationwide, about your experiences with School Resource Officers and possible effects of this approach to school safety.

2. How should I complete the survey?

The survey is made up of multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions. Check the box, or circle the number, to answer multiple-choice items. Write your answer in the space provided for fill-in-the-blank items. A blank sheet of paper is attached to the survey if you need more space or you want to add comments about the survey.

Do not place your name or any other personal information anywhere on the survey.

3. What if I do not know the answer to a question?

Simply leave the answer blank – do not check a response if you do not know the answer to the question.

4. What do I do with the survey when I complete it?

Place the completed survey in attached envelope, seal the envelope and put the sealed envelope in the container at the front of the room. Please do not write on the envelope.

5. What if I have questions about items on the questionnaire?

Questions may be asked of the individual administering the survey at any time.

Do you have any questions before we proceed?

SECTION A   INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF

1. What is your sex? (please check one)

☐ Female
☐ Male

2. What grade are you in? (Please circle one)

3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

3. What is your race? (please check one)

☐ White
☐ African American
☐ Hispanic
☐ Asian
☐ Multiethnic
☐ Other

SECTION B   QUALITY OF LIFE

4. In general, when you are at school do you feel:

☐ Very safe
☐ Somewhat safe
☐ Somewhat unsafe
☐ Very unsafe

5. How safe do you feel at school when you are in the following places:

	Very Safe	Somewhat Safe	Somewhat Unsafe	Very Unsafe	Do Not Know	I Never Go There
Any entrance to school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bathrooms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stairwells and hallways	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Library	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parts of the cafeteria	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gym	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Locker rooms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Auditorium	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other places inside school (list)						
_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parking lots	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fields	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Athletic events	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social events (dances etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At the bus stop	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On the bus	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Walking to or from school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other places outside school (list)						
_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. How fearful are you of being *picked on at school* by a member of the following groups?

	Not at All Fearful	A Little Fearful	Somewhat Fearful	Very Fearful
By students	☐	☐	☐	☐
By intruders	☐	☐	☐	☐
By parents	☐	☐	☐	☐
By gangs	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. How fearful are you of being *harmed at school* by a member of the following groups?

	Not at All Fearful	A Little Fearful	Somewhat Fearful	Very Fearful
By students	☐	☐	☐	☐
By intruders	☐	☐	☐	☐
By parents	☐	☐	☐	☐
By gangs	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. How fearful are you of being *picked on on the way to and from school* by a member of the following groups?

	Not at All Fearful	A Little Fearful	Somewhat Fearful	Very Fearful
By students	☐	☐	☐	☐
By intruders	☐	☐	☐	☐
By parents	☐	☐	☐	☐
By gangs	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. How fearful are you of being *harmed on the way to or from school* by a member of the following groups?

	Not at All Fearful	A Little Fearful	Somewhat Fearful	Very Fearful
By students	☐	☐	☐	☐
By intruders	☐	☐	☐	☐
By parents	☐	☐	☐	☐
By gangs	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Do you ever avoid the following places in school because you are afraid of being harmed there?

	Never Avoid	Avoided Once	Avoided a Few Times	Avoided Many Times	Always Avoid	Never Need to Go There
Any entrance to school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bathrooms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stairwells and hallways	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Library	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parts of the cafeteria	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gym	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Locker rooms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Auditorium	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other places inside school (list)						
_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parking lots	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fields	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Athletic events	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social events (dances etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At the bus stop	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On the bus	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Walking to or from school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other places outside school (list)						
_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. During this academic year, how may times do you think you will avoid going to school because you will be afraid of being _harmed_?

☐ Never
☐ Once
☐ 2-3 times
☐ 4-5 times
☐ More than 5 times

12. During this academic year, how may times do you think you will avoid going to school because you will be afraid of being _picked on_?

☐ Never
☐ Once
☐ 2-3 times
☐ 4-5 times
☐ More than 5 times

13. Has feeling unsafe in school made it difficult for you to learn and concentrate on your schoolwork during class?

☐ Not at all
☐ Sometimes
☐ Often
☐ All the time

14. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoy school	☐	☐	☐	☐
My teachers maintain good discipline in my school	☐	☐	☐	☐
Most students respect each other in school	☐	☐	☐	☐
The principal and assistant principal maintain good discipline at my school	☐	☐	☐	☐
The school rules are fair	☐	☐	☐	☐
The school rules are enforced strictly	☐	☐	☐	☐
The punishment for breaking the school rules is the same no matter who you are	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. Last year, how often did the following things happen to you in school?

	Almost Every day	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Other students have made jokes about you because of a personal characteristic	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other students have threatened or intimidated you because of a personal characteristic	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other students have physically harmed you because of a personal characteristic	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. If any of the above happened to you, please answer the following question. If none of the above happened to you, please skip to Question 17.

	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Did you tell your parents about it?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Did you tell any teachers about it?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Did you tell the School Resource Officer (SRO) about it?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Did you tell your friends about it?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Did you tell your counselor/nurse?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Did you tell your principal or assistant principal?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Did the school find out about it in any other way?	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. Last year, how often have did you do the following in school?

	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Stood up to a bully who was picking on another student?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Made jokes about another student because of his or her personal characteristics?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Threatened or intimidated another student because of his of her personal characteristics?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Physically harmed another student because of his or her personal characteristics?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Targeted another student for repeated harassment?	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. If you see another student getting picked on this year, how often will you do one of the following?

	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Mind my own business	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tell a teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tell the bully or bullies to stop	☐	☐	☐	☐
Join in because of peer pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐
Join in because the student probably deserved it	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. How many times will your teachers have to interrupt your class(es) to deal with student misbehavior or disruption during the next month of school? _____ times

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SECTION C   STRENGTHS AND WEAKENSSES OF SRO PROGRAM

20. Do your know the name(s) of the School Resource Officer(s) in your school?
☐ Yes (please specify)
_____
☐ No

21. How comfortable do you think you will be in approaching the School Resource Officer to report a crime this year?
☐ Very comfortable
☐ Comfortable
☐ Not comfortable

22. How comfortable do you think you will be in approaching the School Resource Officer to report a problem a student is having this year?
☐ Very comfortable
☐ Comfortable
☐ Not comfortable

23. Do you think that you and the SRO will usually say hello when you
☐ Yes

pass in the corridor or on school grounds this year?   ☐ No

24. **How many times in the next month will you have a conversation with the SRO that will last more than 5 minutes?**

☐ Once
☐ Twice
☐ Three or more times

25. **How many times in the next month will you *report* an incident or problem to the SRO?**

☐ No times
☐ Once
☐ Twice
☐ Three to five times
☐ Six or more times

26. **How many times in the next month will you *work* *with* the SRO to *solve* a problem?**

☐ No times
☐ Once
☐ Twice
☐ Three to five times
☐ Six or more times

27. **What is your opinion of the SRO? (check all that apply)**

☐ Thoughtful
☐ Fair
☐ Smart
☐ Someone who solves problems
☐ Disciplinarian
☐ Useless
☐ Unapproachable
☐ Unavailable
☐ Hostile or mistrustful of kids
☐ Other (please specify)
_____
_____

28. **To whom would you go first for help in your school if you were a victim of a crime? (check only one answer)**

☐ Teacher
☐ Guidance counselor
☐ SRO
☐ Administor (for example a principal)
☐ I would go to my mother or father first and let them talk to someone in the school
☐ Other (please specify)
_____
_____

29. **Please write below what you feel are the SRO program's 3 greatest *strengths*, if any.**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

30. Please write below what you feel are the SRO program's 3 greatest *weaknesses*, if any.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

_____

These questions have been taken or adapted from the following reports and survey instruments:

Bureau of Justice Statistics, *School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey.* U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., 2001.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *1999 Youth Risk Behavior Survey.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Atlanta, Georgia, 1999.

Crime Prevention Center, *Evaluation of Grant Funded School Resource Officer Programs.* Commonwealth of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, March 2000.

Dennis Kenney, *Crime in the Schools: A Problem-Solving Approach.* U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, August 1998.

National Center for Education Statistics, Working Paper No.96-21: *1993 National Household Education Survey (NHES: 93) Questionnaires: Screener, School Readiness, and School Safety and Discipline.* U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., October 1996.

National Center for Education Statistics, *Public School Teacher Questionnaire, Schools and Staffing Survey, 1999-200 School Year.* U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., 2001.

SECTION D   COMMENTS

Please use the space below for any comments or clarifications that you wish to add.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!