



STATE OF DELAWARE
STATE COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
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The Honorable John Carney
Governor

John McNeal
SCPD Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 16, 2017

TO: All Members of the Delaware State Senate
and House of Representatives

FROM: Ms. Jamie Wolfe, Chairperson
State Council for Persons with Disabilities

RE: H.B. 142 (School Resource Officer Training)

This legislation was introduced on April 25, 2017. As of May 8, 2017, it awaited action by the House Education Committee.

As background, the role of school resource officers (SROs) in schools has generated considerable debate in recent years. See attachments. Student advocates posit that the routine presence of law enforcement officers in schools contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline, escalates minor behaviors into crimes, and perpetuates discriminatory patterns of punishment. SRO-proponents counter that the presence of SROs fosters safer environments and develops personal trust between students and law enforcement representatives.

To mitigate objections to the presence of SROs in schools, some states require specific training which includes evaluation of risk of harm, de-escalation techniques, and debriefing strategies. See, e.g., attached article, "Texas HB 2684, Requiring School Resource Officers to Complete De-escalation and Restraint Training" (August 6 2015); and "Armed But Untrained: Why So Many School Cops Are Unprepared for the Classroom" (November 1, 2015) [noting that "twelve states have laws that specify additional training required to become a school resource officer"].

H.B. No. 142 is intended to promote the training of SROs active in Delaware public schools. It would require participation of SROs in annual training with emphasis on interventions with students with disabilities (lines 10-25 and 35-36). It would also require the SRO to meet with building staff at the outset of the school year to become familiar with expected disability-related behaviors and responses (lines 26-28). Each district or charter school would be expected to have a memorandum of agreement (MOA), based on a DOE template, with each agency providing the SROs (lines 32-34). The legislation would be effective on July 1, 2018 (line 50). The bill contemplates implementation through existing funds (line 44) but the bill is earmarked with an incomplete fiscal note.

Since the training should reduce prospects for uneven or inappropriate responses to student behavior, the SCPD is endorsing the proposed legislation subject to addressing some technical concerns.

First, the scope of individuals subject to the training standards is not clear. On the one hand, it would cover anyone defined in §4112F(a)(4). See lines 4-6). However, that section includes not only an SRO but also “an employee or contractor providing educational services within a Department of Correction or Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services facility”. There are many YRS employees who would be expected to “assist with or independently intervene with students with disabilities” (lines 6-7). Moreover, while the bill imposes obligations on districts and charter schools (lines 10-11, 19-22, 23-25, 32-36), DOC and YRS personnel are not employees and contractors of districts and charter schools.

Second, there is some “tension” between characterizing the education as “awareness training” (lines 11, 13, and 17) and the expectation that the education include some meaningful, hands-on training which is not merely “fluff”. Consistent with the attached descriptions of training offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers and the N.J. Safe Schools Resource Officer/School Liaison Training, there are readily available, robust curricula for SRO training. The references to “awareness” training implies that the education will be diluted and anemic.

Thank you for your consideration and please contact SCPD if you have any questions regarding our position or technical concerns on the proposed legislation.

cc: The Honorable Matthew Denn, Attorney General’s Office
Ms. Kathleen MacRae, ACLU
Mr. Brian Hartman, Esq.
Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens
Developmental Disabilities Council

HB 142 school resource officer training 5-16-17

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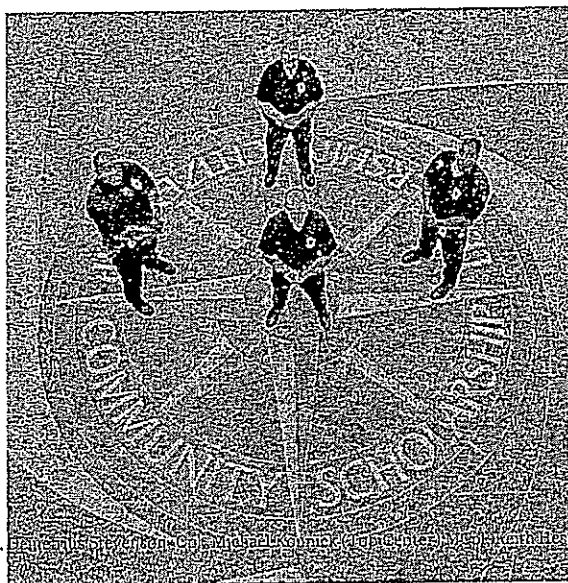
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School resource officers emphasize empathy

School resource officers say they're more than just enforcers.



COMMENT 0



Left: Cpl. Benjamin Spivey, Cpl. Michael Kinnick, Cpl. Robert Smith, Cpl. Michael Kinnick. (+)

By David Paulk
David.paulk@doverpost.com
@PaulkatDover
Posted Nov. 4, 2015 @ 3:00 am

The position of school resource officer has come under fire in recent weeks. In the wake of an officer's treatment of a student in South Carolina, organizations such as the Delaware American Civil Liberties Union have expressed their disapproval of police presence in public schools.

"Generally, we don't feel that armed police officers are necessary in schools to keep the children safe and to create a positive climate in the school," said Kathleen MacRae, executive director of ACLU of Delaware.



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But Dover High School's Demetrius Stevenson sees being a school resource officer as a calling, and a way for him to give back to his community.

Stevenson has been an SRO at Dover High for the past four years. He said the key to being effective is communicating with students and developing relationships with them.

"I can relate to a lot of these students," Stevenson said. "Coming up not having it so good, I understand the nature of these students and why they act out the way they way do."

More than just enforcers

Across the country, school resource officers have been assigned to schools since 1997 amid a series of high profile shootings, including the 1999 Columbine High School shooting in Littleton, Colo. where two teens killed 13 students and wounded another 20.

According to a 2013 congressional report, policymakers expressed renewed interest in SROs after the 2012 mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Cpl. Mark Hoffman, spokesman for the Dover Police Department, said the officers are assigned to schools by the department. Police interested in being an SRO must apply for the position.

Around Dover the number of SROs varies -- Caesar Rodney and Polytech have them only at their high schools -- but all districts have at least one.

Capital has total of four: James Piazza at Central Middle School, Cpl. Michael Konnick at William Henry Middle School, Patrolman First Class Terrance Knight at Parkway and Stevenson at Dover High School.

Their position is about more than being an enforcer.

"We wear a lot of different hats," Stevenson said. "We're not just police officers in the school; we're more like a counselor, a teacher or an administrator."

James Piazza, who watches over students at Central Middle School, said his goal is to make sure parents understand their kids are being taken care of while he's on the job.

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"From Monday to Friday the students and staff experience a positive interaction with a police officer so they know that not all cops are bad," Piazza said.

But he said the position does become challenging when trying to understand different personalities.

"Every student comes from a different background, so you don't know what's on their plate," he said.

Criticisms: 'School to prison pipeline'

The ACLU does not take the same view of community benefits. It asserts their presence is only needed in violent neighborhoods.

"We don't accept SROs in schools except in extreme circumstances, such as an inner city school that has a history of weapons in the building or gang activity in the building," MacRae said. "And even then we feel they should have a limited role in terms of interacting with the students."

MacRae said the ACLU opposes school resource officers otherwise because they feel it contributes to what they call the "school to prison pipeline."

"The presence of a police officer in the schools criminalizes common adolescent misbehavior and we don't feel that's the way to go," she said. "African American boys are arrested for behavior in school and then put into juvenile detention, prisons or get involved with the criminal justice system and we feel that pipeline needs to be cut off."

Focus on de-escalation

Stevenson said he is no stranger to interacting with unruly students, but said the goal is to always try and de-escalate the problem before it grows out of control.

"The SRO that was in South Carolina — I've been in that situation about a half dozen times," Stevenson said. Whenever he encounters a disruptive student, the first thing he does is empty the classroom.

"You take the audience away," he said.

Stevenson is referencing a South Carolina Senior Deputy, who flipped a student backward in her desk and then tossed her across the room. He was fired for his actions.

By emptying the classroom, Stevenson said, it's easier to speak with the student. He then tries to reach the root of the student's problem.

"I usually pull up a chair and ask what's going on," he said "Nine times out of 10 they tell me what's going on and we get up and walk out of the class."

If the student refuses to cooperate Stevenson said he or she has to be restrained.

"If a situation ever arises where that student becomes a combatant, at the end of the day, we're police officers and we have to do what we gotta do."

Capital School District Superintendent Dan Shelton said the relationship with Dover police has been productive.

Rather than a source of friction, he sees it as a potential bridge with the community.

"One of the issues that we're having is this whole chasm of trust between the police and the community, and I think by having them in the schools they can help shape that positive relationship."

Shelton said increasing trust with law enforcement could potentially prevent future crimes.

"If you're a student that knows about something you'll be comfortable to report it, which will put everybody's safety in a better situation, that's what community policing is all about.

"The more trust our community has with our police the safer we're all going to be."

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COMMENT

More police in our schools is not the answer

DELAWARE VOICE

KIRSTIN CORNNELL,
LISA MINUTOLA
AND KATHLEEN MACRAE

The Delaware Center for Justice, along with our partners at the Office of Defense Services and the ACLU of Delaware, were incredibly disheartened by the recent article that highlighted Sen. Bob Marshall's called for more police in schools.

There is no evidence that placing police officers in schools improves public safety, but we do know from research that the presence of more police in schools has caused a national surge in arrests and misdemeanor charges for behavior that would have previously been considered a school discipline matter and handled by a principal, a teacher or a guidance counselor.

A study published by the Washington University Law Review found that the presence of school resource officers increases the likelihood of students being involved in the justice system for virtually every offense that occurs in schools, including lower-level offenses like fighting and theft. Further, countless studies have shown that high schoolers who have early run-ins with the law are more likely to drop out or potentially be rearrested.

During the 2014-2015 school year, 111 students arrested in school were referred to DCJ's School Offense Diversion Program by the Attorney General's Office. SoDP is a resource for students who have been arrested on school property to learn to skillfully and mindfully resolve problems so that what may have been their first experience with the juvenile justice system is their last.

Since the program's original implementation in 2004, we have frequently taken pause to examine the underlying issues that contribute to behaviors that may lead students as young as 11 to have criminal records. Though there are School Resource Officers who work hard to build relationships with students, their power to arrest can inherently become a crutch for schools that lack the capacity to adequately address the issues that lead to conflict.

Of the students referred to SoDP, the most common charges are inherently subjective in nature: one student who disrupts their classroom may be escorted to a guidance counselor, while another may be reported to an SRO.

The same behavior can result in drastically different outcomes, dependent solely on how a school is staffed. This ambiguity leads to inconsistent applica-

tions of policies and disproportionate levels of arrest in schools with fewer resources.

Police in schools raise concerns about the criminalization of typical teenage misbehavior, about the discriminatory enforcement of vague laws and about the excessive use of physical force against children in school spaces where they should be able to feel safe.

We absolutely agree that our students need more support. But they need school-based social workers. They need guidance counselors. They need mentors. They need tutors. They do not need an increased presence of police.

Kirstin Cornnell is the director of operations at the Delaware Center for Justice. Lisa Minutola is the chief of legal services at the Office of Defense Services. Kathleen MacRae is the executive director of the ACLU of Delaware.

OPINION

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EDITORIAL

CALL FOR POLICE IN SCHOOLS SHORT-SIGHTED

There are certainly merits to the notion that more Delaware public schools could benefit from having police officers assigned to their buildings.

Sen. Bob Marshall, a Democratic candidate in Wilmington mayor's race, intends to propose legislation and seek funding for so-called school resource officers in elementary and middle schools. Such officers already work in Delaware high schools.

We wholeheartedly support the safety and well-being of every single Delaware school student.

But, in a time when districts have to use referendum to beg voters for more resources (or to maintain the status quo) and plans to overhaul our schools are consistently buried beneath a landslide of political apathy, we find the call for more police in schools to be yet another short-sighted "easy way out."

In reality, research shows that the jury is out on the overall effectiveness of school resource officers. Success stories are told not on a state-by-state basis, but school by school.

For example, the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, points to a successful effort at what was

once a violence-plagued Boston High School. Police and teachers worked together and brought discipline and safety by implementing an additional rule each week.

There is no doubt some Delaware schools have experienced similar success.

Proponents say having resource officers in schools helps develop lifelong trust between students and law enforcement.

Again, research and real-world experience do not support that theory. Distrust of law enforcement is a complex, multigenerational issue that goes far beyond the capabilities of a singular school resource officer, no matter how skilled they might be.

Research does show that the presence of school resource officers can lead to more disciplinary action against students, and, as a result, more suspensions or other punishments.

Some officers say district rules can make it very difficult for them to respond to a situation but not document it. So infractions that once would have been considered minor are now made part of the student's disciplinary record.

Some believe the presence of police in schools has formed what groups like the American Civil Liberties Union call a school-to-prison pipeline. We, on the other hand, believe condemning the concept as a whole is simplistic.

Our schoolchildren need all of the help they can get. They need it academically. They need it socially — especially online. In too many cases, they rely on schools for food, shelter and love.

You can't deny the causes of these problems all you want, but if we as a state and as a society are going to break this cycle of struggle — and make our schools safer — we need to invest primarily in the teachers and support staff that can make a difference for generations to come.



'DISTURBING' TEST OF COPS PATROLLING HALLWAYS

1 in 4 schools have at least part-time security, which riles civil rights groups

Greg Toppe
USA TODAY

A viral video of a South Carolina school resource officer slamming a student to the floor of a classroom is focusing attention on the increasing presence of police officers in schools. But cops in classrooms have long been a source of



tension. Richland County, S.C., Sheriff Leon Lott said an investigation found that the force Senior Deputy Ben Fields used to arrest a student who was disrupting a class Monday at Spring Valley High School on Monday was "not based on training or acceptable."

Fields was terminated from his job Wednesday, Lott said.

Communities nationwide have spent the past several years increasing the presence of police on school campuses, even as crime rates have dropped precipitously in the USA's schools.

The National Center for Edu-

cation Statistics reported this year that the number of crimes against students has plummeted more than 80% since 1992, with the rate of victimization for students in the USA's middle schools and high schools dropping from about 182 incidents per 1,000 students to 30 in 2013.

Yet in its most recent report on school safety nationwide, the Justice Department in 2014 said 43% of public schools reported the presence of one or more security guards, security personnel, school resource officers (SROs) or sworn law enforcement officers during the 2009-10 school year.

Civil rights groups have long said that cops in schools actually make safety worse for many children, increasing the likelihood that students will end up severely disciplined for minor infractions.

In early 2013, shortly after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings in Newtown, Conn., and amid calls for more armed police in schools, Advancement Project, a Washington, D.C.-based civil rights group, proposed that schools "use the money they would spend on more police to develop long-term safety plans and invest in conflict resolution, as well as better access to mental health services for students.



Senior Deputy Ben Fields tries to forcibly remove a student who refused to leave class at her Columbia, S.C., high school, in an image recorded by a fellow student.

"This thing went from a school discipline issue to a criminal matter in two minutes."

Curt Lavarello, expert on school law enforcement

As part of its proposal, the group tracked school referrals to Florida's juvenile justice system in 2010-11 and found that of 16,400 referrals, 69% were for misdemeanors.

On Tuesday, Advancement Project co-director Judith Browne Dianis said the video from South Carolina "underscores the problem with police in

Des Moines school resource officer Deb Van Velzen counsels students at Lincoln High.

schools." Instead of de-escalating the situation, she said, the officer "dehumanized and criminalized a black teenage girl."

Curt Lavarello, a school law enforcement expert, said that if administered properly, an SRO program "can have incredible value to schools." Its most important effect is to help young people develop a trusting relationship with law enforcement. That pays dividends if they're bullied or are crime victims, he said.

But the video that surfaced on Monday was "disturbing," Lavarello said. "This thing went from a school discipline issue to a criminal matter in two minutes," he said. Lavarello, who founded the National Association of School Resource Officers in 1991, said a well-trained SRO would have tried to "verbally de-escalate" the situation.

Civil rights groups say more police officers in schools often mean more suspensions, which disproportionately affect minority students. A study issued in February by the Civil Rights Project at UCLA found that since 1972, suspension rates for white students have risen 2 percentage points, from 3% to 5%. Meanwhile, suspension rates for African-American students nearly tripled, rising from 6% to 16%.

Armed But Untrained: Why So Many School Cops Are Unprepared for the Classroom

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November 1, 2015

by MARK KEIERLEBER

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Why advocates say school police officers need more youth-specific training

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Civil rights advocates say inadequate school police training contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline

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Updated Nov. 9

A high school girl who refuses to follow school rules is body-slammed to the ground, pulled out of her chair, and flung past rows of desks. The school resource officer's use of force, caught on video, unleashes national outrage and costs him his job.

A 9-year-old girl with ADHD who screams and disrupts class finds herself confined to the back of a police cruiser for more than an hour until her mom gets home.

An 8-year-old boy is cuffed above the elbows as a cell phone captures the scuffle. "You can do what we ask you to or you can suffer the consequences," the school resource officer says to the boy in a video that prompted a lawsuit over his use of restraint.

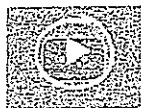
In Irving, Texas, a boy who shows a clock to his science teacher, proud of his ingenuity, finds himself in handcuffs — accused of building a "hoax bomb." In Round Rock, Texas, an SRO called to stop a gym fight chokes a 14-year-old boy to the floor.

There are about 19,000 sworn police officers stationed in schools nationwide, according to U.S. Department of Justice estimates, and stories about their school discipline disasters cross Mo Canady's desk all the time.

"The first thing I do is search our database to see 'Did this person come through our training?'" said Canady, executive director of the National Association of School Resource Officers, which offers specialized training to SROs — primarily on a voluntary basis. "And the answer is consistently 'no.'"

These incidents, youth rights activists and federal officials argue, show that the school resource officers lacked the proper training needed to interact effectively with children, especially when they are black, Hispanic, or disabled. Police officers' encounters with students in the hallways are being increasingly scrutinized in the same way that their exchanges with adult civilians in the larger community are, for bias and alleged brutality.

Sometimes what happens in the streets is mirrored in the schools. A U.S. Department of Justice report found "police action that is unreasonable for a school environment" among SROs in Ferguson, Missouri. The probe followed the fatal police shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown, whose death sparked months of protests and the Black Lives Matter movement. Overall, the Ferguson Police Department's disproportionate number of arrests and its use of force stemmed from "unlawful bias" against black residents, according to the DOJ report.



Attempts to crack down on school violence have come at the expense of students of color and those with disabilities, who are disproportionately punished — including through restraint and arrest, U.S. Department of Education data show.

Too often, they're being funneled into the school-to-prison pipeline, say advocates concerned that disadvantaged students are systematically pushed from classrooms to courtrooms.

For example, black students were 16 percent of the total student enrollment in the 2011-12 school year but 27 percent of students referred to law enforcement and 31 percent of students involved in a school-related arrest, according to U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights data (<http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-School-Discipline-Snapshot.pdf>).

Students with disabilities represented about 12 percent of the total student population but accounted for a quarter of those arrested and referred to law enforcement, 75 percent of those who were physically restrained at school and 58 percent of those placed in seclusion or involuntary confinement.

A range of factors may cause variations in student discipline rates, but research suggests (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.html#note7>) racial disparities are not caused by more misbehavior, but because "racial discrimination in school discipline is a real problem."

High-profile cases elicit outrage

Last year, residents in Columbia, South Carolina, came to Lisa Thureau, founder and executive director of Strategies for Youth, a school resource officer training program, with their concerns about the Richland County Sheriff's Department, the same department whose deputy was caught on video last week violently handling the teenage girl who refused to leave her classroom at Spring Valley High School or put away her cell phone.

Community members had heard horror stories about officers' use of force, arrests, and suspensions in their schools, Thureau said. They asked for her help.

Strategies for Youth gave the residents a set of training recommendations, which they delivered to the sheriff's department. Recommendations included the nonprofit organization's five-day train-the-trainer program, which uses a police training coach and a psychologist to teach officers how to train their co-workers. They also recommended a second, three-day session.

The training would have cost the department \$75,000, according to the proposal. Thureau said she provided a list of organizations that could help pay for the program but communication between the community members and the sheriff's department fell flat.

"We encounter this in a lot of places. There is no money," she said. "We're increasing the demands on police and doing nothing to support or equip them to be first responders to youth and families' needs."

The conduct of Deputy Ben Fields, the Spring Valley High School SRO, has sparked national outrage and prompted a criminal civil rights probe by the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Justice Department.

Fields "did not follow proper training, did not follow proper procedure when he threw the student across the room," Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott said at a news conference on Wednesday to announce Fields had been fired.

In this incident, school officials made the first mistake when they called on a police officer to address a school discipline incident, said Dennis Parker, director of the ACLU Racial Justice Program. But once the officer was there, he should have known how to de-escalate the situation without the use of force.

"It would be good to have clear training requirements for all schools and a clear understanding of what the role of school resource officers in schools should be," Parker said. "I think that should be part of an agreement that is entered into between the school resource officers and the school district."

(In a column for The Seventy Four, Cynthia Tucker Haynes explains why police officers' presence in schools is often problematic.) (<https://www.the74million.org/article/tucker-when-the-schoolhouse-becomes-the-station-house-confronting-too-many-cops-in-the-classroom>)

Under South Carolina law, police officers must complete basic training as provided or recognized by the National Association of School Resource Officers or the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy before they're placed in schools.

But Canady, the NASRO executive director, said SROs in South Carolina, including Fields, don't take his training because his program wasn't approved by a state regulatory commission that certifies SRO training programs in the state.

According to the Strategies for Youth survey, the state police academy gives recruits 3.5 hours of training on juvenile justice issues. This does not include training on youth development and psychology, demographic issues, or cultural influences.

Blurred lines

On Oct. 8, two school resource officers were called to a central Texas high school when a school administrator was unable to de-escalate a fight between two boys in the cafeteria. Two Round Rock Police Department SROs responded to break up the fight at Round Rock High School, separating the students, according to a news release from the police department.

One of the boys, identified as 14-year-old Gyasi Hughes, refused to calm down and attempted to get past the officers to continue fighting, according to the department.

"After repeated attempts to calm the non-compliant student, and stop him from going after the other student," according to the release, "officers were forced to detain him for his safety and the safety of others."

Video footage from the incident appears to show the officer choking the boy and slamming him to the ground.



The officer has since been suspended.

The boy's father, Kashka Hughes, told local television station KXAN (<http://kxan.com/2015/10/09/round-rock-high-police-incident-caught-on-camera/>) that he plans to press charges against the officer, whose name has not been released, for excessive force. The police officer "should have been trained well enough to know that this is a 130-pound child," Hughes said. "The action that was taken was totally unnecessary."

The ACLU filed a federal lawsuit this summer against the Kentucky sheriff's deputy and his department for handcuffing the two disabled children who were acting out at school, including the 8-year-old boy with attention deficit hyperactive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.

In August 2014, Kenton County Sheriff's Deputy Kevin Sumner placed a plaintiff, a 9-year-old girl identified as L.G., also with ADHD, in the back of his cruiser because she was screaming and disrupting class, according to the ACLU complaint. Sumner and the girl waited in the cruiser outside the girl's house for more than an hour until her mother got home from work. In October 2014, the girl had a second run-in with Sumner. The officer handcuffed her around the biceps because she "was attempting to injure the school staff," Sumner wrote in an incident report.

The boy, a third-grader also enrolled in the third grade at Latonia Elementary School and identified only as S.R., was sent to the vice principal's office in November 2014, because he refused to listen to his teacher. While there, S.R. tried to leave the room, claiming he needed to use the restroom; the principal and a special education teacher restrained him and restricted him from leaving, according to the ACLU complaint.

When Sumner was called to the scene, a school official captured a cellphone video of his interactions with the child. The video soon went viral online.



In it, the boy is seen crying and squirming in the chair as the officer demands compliance — handcuffing him above the elbows because the cuffs were too large for his wrists. "It's your decision to behave this way," the officer is heard saying as the boy complains of pain. "If you want the handcuffs off, you're going to have to behave and ask me nicely."

Despite a Kentucky Board of Education policy (<http://www.krc.ky.gov/kar/704/007/160.htm>) restricting the use of restraint and seclusion in schools, the sheriff's office failed to create or maintain policies, practices, or training on the use of physical restraints on elementary schoolchildren, the ACLU complaint alleges.

The complaint argues that Sumner's desire for compliance motivated his use of the handcuffs, not any imminent danger of physical harm as spelled out in the policy.

"That cuffing technique alone, we would never teach that," said Andre Hill, a California police lieutenant who specializes in training cops in schools. "I've never heard of that."

On Oct. 9, the Justice Department issued a Statement of Interest (<http://www.justice.gov/opa/file/780346/download>) in the case, highlighting the need for SROs to be properly trained "to recognize and respond appropriately to youth behavior that may be a manifestation of disability."

"Appropriate training can help law enforcement agencies avoid interactions that violate children's rights under federal civil rights laws, including the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)," according to the statement.

A motion to dismiss the case, which was filed with the court on Sept. 9, argued Sumner couldn't have known about the students' disabilities because such information is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the federal student privacy law. Assistant Kenton County Attorney Chris Nordloh, who represents the police department and the SRO, declined to comment on the pending litigation.

Three levels of training could have helped prevent the problem from the start, Susan Mizner, disability counsel for the ACLU, argued. First, she said, school staff and officers should know the SRO's job is to keep schools safe from a threat, not to engage in routine discipline.

"We can't have that line blurred," she said. "Just because they're there doesn't mean we use them. That's the first level of training, and that's probably the hardest piece of training for both school staff and school resource officers."

But when an officer does become involved, Mizner said, training in de-escalation techniques is the second step. That includes diversion, not direct commands for compliance. And third: training to help recognize students with disabilities.

"School resource officers should understand and expect that they will be called in, primarily, to interact with kids with disabilities because our school systems really haven't learned how to accommodate those disabilities and to work productively with most of these kids," she said, adding that in order to hold authorities accountable for this level of training, it should be required.

"There should be laws that they have, at a minimum, those three types of trainings and policies that go with them," she said. "Many more kids are hurt and traumatized by this than caught in fires in schools each year, so I see it as essential."

Growth of school cops

Since at least the 1950s, educators across the country have relied on sworn police officers to help keep kids safe in school, but their prevalence really kicked off in the 1990s when "zero-tolerance," tough-on-crime policies became mainstream.

Hundreds of millions of federal dollars have been spent to ramp up that police presence, particularly after a rash of school shootings. At the same time, cops in schools were also supposed to establish personal relationships with students, showing younger ones that police officers were their friends and older ones that they could be trusted with sensitive information about trouble at home or crime in school.

In the '90s, Kristen Amundson served as chairwoman of the Fairfax County, Va., school board, where she supported the growth of resource officers in her schools. Now as executive director of the National Association of State Boards of Education, she still does.

If school police are properly trained and employ community-based policing techniques, Amundson said their presence can be a "gamechanger" in maintaining a positive school culture. The officers' presence helped steer her schools away from criminal activity.

"We never had metal detectors at the doors, we never had to move football games from night to afternoon because it was just a culture of safety, and the SRO was there to be part of it," she said.

Discipline problems have preoccupied educators for decades. The public policy research agency Public Agenda released a [report \(http://www.publicagenda.org/press-releases/discipline-problems-unruly-behavior-seriously-threatening-student-achievement\)](http://www.publicagenda.org/press-releases/discipline-problems-unruly-behavior-seriously-threatening-student-achievement) in 2004 on the "tyranny ... a handful of trouble makers" can inflict on their schools, affecting other students' learning and teacher turnover. About 75 percent of teachers surveyed said school officials often treated students with special needs too lightly, "even when their misbehavior has nothing to do with their disability." About half said they had been accused of unfairly disciplining a student.

Public interest in school-based police surged following the 1999 shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado, and again in 2012 after the death of 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut. Then, President Obama reacted with an executive order that paid to put a new batch of resource officers and counselors in schools.

As the use of police in schools has increased, so has the number of students arrested in school, according to an August [report \(http://www.nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/ELR_Advancing-School-Discipline-Reform.pdf\)](http://www.nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/ELR_Advancing-School-Discipline-Reform.pdf) for the National Association of State Boards of Education. And those arrests are not necessarily resulting from the cops responding to violent criminal activity but in-house disciplinary incidents.

"Where there is muddier ground that people are concerned with, and part of it involves training, is when SROs get involved in internal school discipline matters," said David Osher, an American Institutes for Research vice president who co-authored the NASBE report on ways state lawmakers can work to advance school discipline reform.

Federal justice and education officials have recommended school-based officers receive specialized training (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf>), including on implicit bias and cultural competence, and offer grants to current and future SROs. On several occasions, Congress has heard testimony over the need for consistent SRO training guidelines.

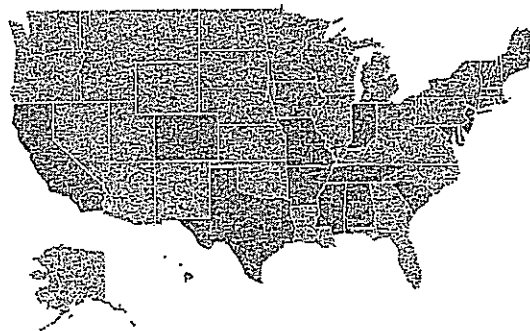
A hodgepodge of SRO training

Little data has been collected on the level of training officers receive. Only 12 states have laws that specify training requirements for officers deployed to classrooms. Those laws are inconsistent: Some states mandate training on how to respond to an active shooter. Fewer focus on dealing with children differently than adults.

"All officers are getting a certain level of training that they're required to get as police officers," said Nina Salomon, a senior policy analyst at the Council of State Governments Justice Center. "The additional training that we're talking about — on youth development, on working with youth, on prevention and de-escalation — hasn't typically been received by the majority of law enforcement that work with youth inside a school building, or that are called to campus."

State laws address school resource officer training requirements

Twelve states have laws that specify additional training required to become a school resource officer. These laws vary in complexity state-by-state. The U.S. Department of Education has released training recommendations, but national training requirements do not exist for officers working in classrooms.



State Law on SRO Training No State Requirements

Source: [American Institutes for Research](#)

New policies in Colorado are often touted as a progressive approach. A 2012 revision in the state's education statute set minimum requirements for SROs, so the Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training Board developed an SRO curriculum. Before then, some departments offered extensive specialized training, others relied on a 90-minute video describing some of the problems they could encounter on the job. Some departments didn't even do that.

Survey results from a 2012 study show most police academies do not teach recruits about research on adolescent psychology and behavior.

In 37 states, police academies spent 1 percent or less of total training hours on juvenile justice issues, according to the study (http://strategiesforyouth.org/sfysite/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/SFYReport_Q2-2013_rev.pdf) by Strategies for Youth, a nonprofit that provides training to law enforcement officers. And while most academies do not teach recruits how to respond to children with mental health, trauma-related and special education-related disorders, only one state — Tennessee — provides specific training for officers deployed to schools. In five states, police academies do not require any training focused specifically on juvenile justice issues.

Once on the job, about 80 percent of police officers said they receive department-level training in juvenile justice issues, according to an International Association of Chiefs of Police survey, and almost 75 percent said they receive training through state-level agencies. However, most officers said they receive fewer than 10 hours of juvenile justice interview and interrogation training over their entire careers.

Although California law does set SRO training requirements, Hill, the lieutenant who offers school-specific SRO training through Strategies for Youth, said his boss at the Richmond, California police department is progressive about training.

Before he was asked to lead the department's youth services division, Hill said he didn't realize the effect officers can have on kids' lives. He does now.

"Especially in urban schools, kids are hard to reach," he said. "If they're not getting structure at home, they are going to continue to act out, even when confronted by an authority figure."

Hill is in the process of developing a training model to present to other officers in his Richmond department. For him, training is important, he said, because "we don't want to find ourselves in front of a judge being asked what kind of training is necessary."

A Texas town listens

A high-profile case not connected to school discipline still prompted action by an advocacy group worried about student vulnerability.

In August, Texas Appleseed sent a letter to the McKinney Independent School District superintendent, calling for changes in its memorandum of understanding with the city's police department, noting that the agreement does not require student-focused training or

prior experience with students as a prerequisite for employment as a school resource officer.

The letter was prompted by a viral cellphone video from this summer, showing a McKinney police officer pointing his gun at teenagers and shoving a young black girl to the ground. Texas Appleseed argued inadequate training policies leave students at risk of similar situations.

"In terms of dealing with students of color, one thing that is super important and one thing we asked McKinney to do is to have training that allows people to understand the unconscious biases for their behavior," said Morgan Craven, director of the School-to-Prison Pipeline Project at Texas Appleseed. "It can be uncomfortable for people to say 'I am biased against people with color,' but a majority of people in this country, and a majority of teachers, have those biases."



African-American students in the McKinney schools, while making up only 13 percent of enrollment, accounted for 39 percent of arrests by school resource officers and 36 percent of misdemeanor tickets, according to data compiled by the advocacy group from January 2012 to June 2015,

In June, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed a law requiring school resource officers working for school districts with more than 30,000 students to receive youth-specific training, including de-escalation techniques and child development instruction. Although the McKinney district didn't meet the requirements, with an enrollment of about 24,500 students, Texas Appleseed asked them to comply voluntarily.

It appears the McKinney Police Department took Texas Appleseed's concern to heart.

The department previously required SRO applicants to complete the National Association of School Resource Officers' basic SRO certification program, to have two years of experience on the force, and to possess an intermediate Texas Commission on Law

Enforcement Certification, department spokeswoman Sabrina Boston said. Maintaining consistency with the new state law, Boston said all school-based officers at the department will attend NASRO's advance SRO certification school, coursework that exceeds the law's requirements.

Training a matter of 'common sense'

The Justice Center doesn't see police stepping away from schools any time soon, Salomon said. So in 2014, the center released more than 60 policy recommendations to help ensure students are in productive classrooms, not courtrooms.

Several training requirements were recommended, starting with knowledge of the school's code of conduct so school officials and police are on the same page. The Justice Center administered the report in coordination with the Supportive School Discipline Initiative launched in 2011 by the U.S. Attorney General and the U.S. Secretary of Education. More than 100 advisers including policymakers, school administrators, teachers, behavioral health experts, and police collaborated on the recommendations.

"We don't take a position on whether law enforcement should be in school or not," Salomon said. "But if they are going to be in school, as is the case in a lot of jurisdictions around the country, then they need to have the right training, resources and support to be able to do their job well."

Most members of the National Association of School Resource Officers, which does not cover every cop who works in a school, receive at least some training beyond what is required by police academies or school orientation, according to a Justice Center survey. Training covers a variety of scenarios, including investigation protocols, active shooters, conflict resolution, addressing trauma, and working with school administrators. Some said they were trained on bullying and suicide prevention.

Canady, the NASRO executive director, gets frustrated when people say there isn't any training available for school-based police officers. His organization has trained school resource officers for more than two decades — but "we only train the ones that come to us."

NASRO, the largest provider of school-based training, instructs about 1,500 officers each year, Canady said.

His program teaches officers concepts in law enforcement, and in teaching and informal counseling.

"The SROs should become as if they're a member of the school team, and certainly another trusted adult in the building that certainly is there to protect students, but certainly also to be aware of any criminal issues going on in the schools," Canady said. "They serve a lot of different roles, especially if they're doing the job the proper way."

However, since school-based police are usually recruited from law enforcement, according to [a Justice Policy Institute report](#)

(http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/educationunderarrest_fullreport.pdf), even officers trained by NASRO typically have years of law enforcement training and only three days of training in counseling and education.

With Strategies for Youth, officers are taught about the brain structure and capacity of youth during their adolescence and young adulthood — information that promotes positive interactions and lessens conflict.

Thureau, the organization's executive director, said some officers do resist specific training about child behavior, but others take an active approach to their training. Her program teaches officers in their techniques, who then teach their peers.

Los Angeles Police Department Detective Richard Askew said his time as an educator and as an SRO influenced his understanding of the way children behave and interact with authority.

Before joining the LAPD, Askew worked for two years at a charter school serving at-risk students aged 16-24 who were unable to stay engaged with traditional or alternative methods. Joining LAPD's juvenile narcotics division, Askew was planted in L.A. schools as an undercover investigator.

In 2009, Askew joined LAPD's mental evaluation unit, a partnership with the department of mental health to interact with people who struggle from mental health issues. He also became a Strategies for Youth trainer.

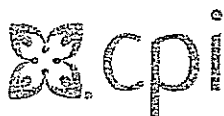
"SROs generally have a pretty big impact on campuses for students because of their authority positions and how they're perceived," Askew said.

Once an officer is selected as an SRO, they receive in-house training on school district policies and procedures and 40 hours of SRO training from the state police academy, he said. Just a few months ago, all of the department's officers were taught how to avoid implicit bias.

California does have a law setting training requirements for SROs. But until standardized training is required, most of the officers who do seek additional coursework are acting out of common sense, Canady said. Police departments would ensure officers in investigations units are properly trained. So why not those who work in schools?

"Officers working in schools, just out of the nature of the assignment, are going to become the most well-known police officers or sheriff's deputies in your community, and you'd better have some additional training for them, and you'd better make sure it's the right person," Canady said, "or you're going to wind up potentially giving your department a black eye."

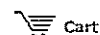
Correction: An earlier version of this story said that Virginia was among the states with laws requiring special training for officers deployed to classrooms. However, while district-hired school security officers in Virginia are required to receive student-specific training, the state does not require any such training for school resource officers, who are sworn police officers.



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Texas HB 2684, Requiring School Resource Officers to Complete De-Escalation and Restraint Training

By Terry Vittone | August 06, 2015 | Texas | In Effect

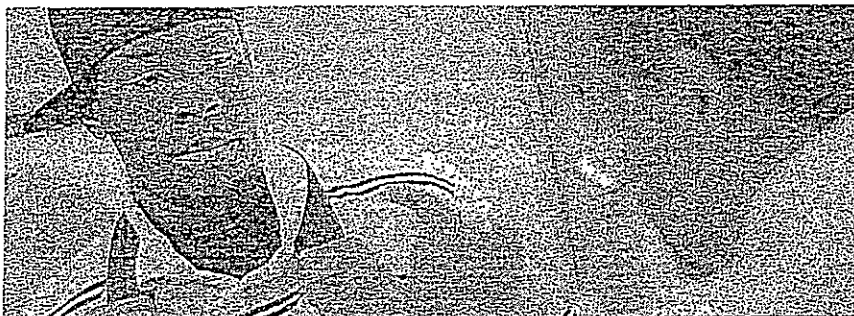


Photo: moodboard / moodboard / ThinkStock

Texas HB 2684, effective June 20, 2015, requires school resource officers in districts with over 30,000 pupils to complete an education and training program that includes child development, positive behavioral interventions, conflict resolution techniques, de-escalation techniques, and techniques for limiting the use of force, including the use of physical, mechanical, and chemical restraints.

Key points of the bill include:

- It requires the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement to create a model training curriculum for district peace and resource officers for use in training and certification of officers' completion.
- The officers must go through at least 16 hours of training, unless they have completed a similar course.
- It requires the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement to make available the curriculum to the school district by February 1, 2016.
- The education and training program cannot require a peace officer to pass an examination.
- The bill requires the commission to administer an examination to qualify officers to provide the education and training to other officers.

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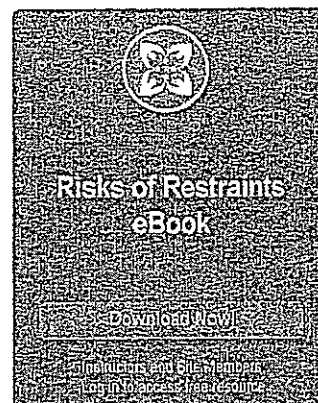
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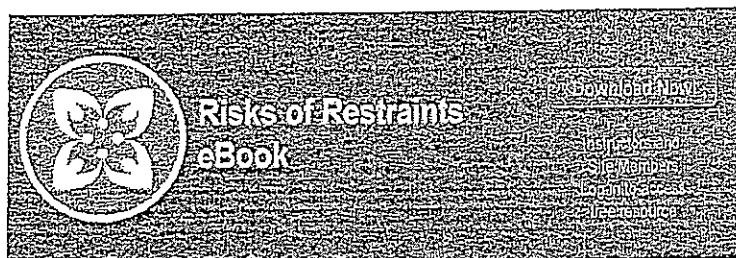
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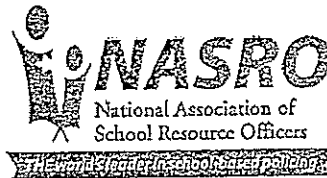
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Training Courses

BASIC SRO COURSE

The NASRO Basic School Resource Officer Course is a forty-hour (40) block of instruction designed for law enforcement officers and school safety professionals working in an educational environment and with school administrators. The course provides tools for officers to build positive relationships with both students and staff.

The course is also beneficial for educational professionals dedicated to providing a safe learning environment and provides a more in-depth understanding of the role and functions of an SRO.

The course emphasizes three main areas of instructions:

Law Enforcement Function – Instruction on the differences between law enforcement when conducted inside a school environment including understanding the teen brain and de-escalation techniques.

Mentoring Students – Instruction designed to provide tools to be a positive role model for youth including informal counseling techniques.

Guest Speaking – Instruction on a variety of instructional techniques as well as classroom management tools to provide law-related education to students.

Attendees will gain a solid working knowledge of the School Resource Officer concept and how to establish a lasting partnership with their schools.

Duration: 5 days (40 hours)

Cost: \$495 per person for non-NASRO members and includes one year NASRO membership/ \$445 per person for NASRO members

ADVANCED SRO COURSE

The Advanced School Resource Officer Course is a twenty-four (24) hour block of instruction designed for any law enforcement officer working in an educational environment. This course, following the SRO Triad model, advances the SRO's knowledge and skills as a law enforcement officer, informal counselor, and educator.

Duration: 3 days (24 hours)

Cost: \$345 per person for NASRO members/ \$395 per person for non-NASRO members

School CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design)

CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) uses design, management, and activity strategies to reduce opportunities for crime to occur, to reduce fear and to improve overall safety of schools. The CPTED concept emphasizes the relationship of the physical environment, the productive use of space, and the behavior of people. Upon completion of this 24-hour course, successful completion of a written test is required to obtain a course certificate. The course will include a hands-on CPTED evaluation of a school, and attendees will be provided with tools to use on their school campus or in their associated activities with school safety.

Duration: 3 days (24 hours)

Cost: \$345 per person for NASRO members/ \$395 per person for non-NASRO members

School Security Officer Course

The School Safety Officer Course is a 3 day/ 24 hour training course for non – sworn safety and security officers working in schools with an SRO or solo. The course will emphasize three main areas of instruction:

- Functioning as a security officer in the school setting
- Working effectively with students
- School Safety and Emergency Planning

Attendees will gain a working knowledge of the School Safety Officer concept and how to establish a lasting partnership with their schools.

Duration: 3 days (24 hours)

Cost: \$345 per person for NASRO members/ \$395 per person for non-NASRO members

SRO Supervisors and Management

NASRO has developed this three day (24 hr.) SRO Supervisors and Management course for police supervisors and school administrators who have the responsibility of implementing, supervising, managing, and evaluating school-based police officers and/or programs. The goal is to provide managers with information, skills and strategies to develop, coordinate, and maintain a successful SRO program in their school community.

Duration: 3 days (24 hours)

Cost: \$345 per person for NASRO members/ \$395 per person for non-NASRO members

Effective Internet Safety Presentations

This 24-hour course is designed to provide SROs with the tools needed to stay current with ever-changing technology, investigate Internet crimes, and learn how to prepare and conduct Internet safety presentations for students, parents, and staff.

Duration: 3 days (24 hours)

Cost: \$345 per person for NASRO members/ \$395 per person for non-NASRO members

School Law Update

This one-day, specialized National School Law Update has been designed at the urging of School Administrators and School Resource Officers from across the country. By addressing such timely subjects as search and seizure, student interviews, custody issues, sexual harassment, and civil liability. It is taught by Dr. Bernard James, J.D., Professor of Constitutional Law at Pepperdine University.

Duration: 1 day (8 hours)

Cost: \$149 per person for NASRO members/ \$199 per person for non-NASRO members

Risk Management for Interscholastic Athletics and After-School Activities

NCS4 Risk Management for Interscholastic Athletics and After-School Activities course focuses on developing prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery techniques at interscholastic athletic events and for after-school activities. Participants will learn and discuss concepts relative to vulnerability and risk assessment, planning and preparedness, hazard mitigation, crisis communication, sustaining efficient safety and security programs and organizational teamwork. The modules and activities in this course are intended to complement existing school emergency operations plans and programs. The course is designed to help prepare school districts for developing and coordinating after-school safety and security management programs. Group activities, facilitated discussions, exercises, examples and templates serve as the foundation to the course delivery and provide participants with the resources needed to begin implementing or improving their after-school safety and security programs. *This course is offered by the National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security (NCS4). NCS4 partnered with NASRO, the National Federation of State High School Associations, and the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association to develop this course. For more information or to register, visit: <http://www.ncs4.com/train/high-schools>*



National Association of School Resource Officers
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Safe Schools Resource Officer/School Liaison Training

This Police Training Commission Certification course shall be made available to (1) any law enforcement officer or public school employee referred by the board of education of the public school to which assignment as; a safe schools resource officer or school liaison to law enforcement is sought; and (2) any safe schools resource officer or school liaison to law enforcement assigned to a public school prior to the effective date of P.L.2005, c.276 (C.52:17B-71.8 et al.), effective January 6, 2006.

For more information on this training, please call the New Jersey Association of School Resource officers at 973.486.9453.

Upcoming Dates

- May 3, 2017, to May 5, 2017: Community Safety Institute 3-Day De-escalation Train-the-Trainer

3-Day De-escalation Train-the-Trainer

Location: Bergen County Law & Public Safety Institute

Presented by: Community Safety Institute

Description: Designed for medium and large agencies wishing to train their own in-house cadre of instructors for the 16-hour Advanced De-escalation course. This course provides in-depth instruction that will enable attendees to properly facilitate the 4-hour Basic, 8-hour Intermediate or 16-hour Advanced De-escalation course. Upon successful completion of the course, all instructors will receive their certification and receive complimentary access to the CSI De-escalation Train-the-Trainer portal where they can download all course documents, videos and instructional materials.

Hours: 24 hours

Cost: \$ 475 per person

Attendees: Certified law enforcement trainers ONLY

[Click here to register for this course.](#)

Questions? Call CSI at 972.576.8662 or email info@csil.org

- July 31, 2017, 8:30am to 4:30pm: Safe Schools Resource Officer Training - Union County NJ

Presented by the New Jersey Association of School Resource Officers

Course Dates: July 31-August 4, 2017

Location: John H. Stamler Police Academy

Attire: Uniform/business Casual

Tuition: \$350.

[Click here to register online](#) or call (973) 486-9453

- August 21, 2017, 8:30am to 4:30pm: Safe Schools Resource Officer Training - Ocean County NJ

Presented by the New Jersey Association of School Resource Officers

Course Dates: August 21-25, 2017

Location: Ocean County Police Academy

Attire: Uniform/business Casual

Tuition: \$350.

[Click here to register online](#) or call (973) 486-9453

December 4-8, 2017

Safe Schools Resource Officer/School Liaison Training

Presented by the New Jersey Association of School Resource Officers

Location: Morris County Police Academy

Attire: Uniform/business casual

Tuition: \$350

[Click here to register online](#) or call 973.486.9453