Utah Board of Juvenile Justice
Disproportionate Minority Contact Subcommittee

DMC Evidence-Based Practices
Intervention Report

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Salt Lake County Assessment
SRO Policies & Practices
Spring 2014

Overview of SLCo Assessment

- Participating organizations (5 Police Departments & 4 School Districts):
  - Unified Police Department (UPD), West Jordan Police Department (WJPD), West Valley City Police Department (WVCPD), Salt Lake City Police Department (SLCPD), Granite School District (GPD)
  - Granite School District (GSD), Canyons School District (CSD), Jordan School District (JSD), Salt Lake City School District (SLCSD)

- All policy documentation was identified and reviewed regarding:
  - Guiding practices for professionals when interacting with youth
  - Job descriptions, selection criteria and training for School Resource Officers (SRO)

- Focus groups were conducted with each participating organization (1.5 - 2 hours):
  - Surveys (quantitative data) and focus group (qualitative data)
  - Experiences of SROs & school administrators
  - Roles of SROs
  - How learned role of SRO (via the police department, school district, both, or neither)
  - Written agreements, such as Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), present
  - SRO-specific training
  - Recommendations for best policies and practices for SROs and school administrators

- Recommendations based on:
  - Analysis of organizational documentation and individual data
  - Compare with "best policies and practices" recommended by Department of Education (DOE) and (DOJ)

Documentation Review of Five Police Departments & Four School Districts

	MOU Present	Youth Discipline Policy	SRO Job Description	SRO Selection Protocol	SRO Training Required
UPD (12)	No	No	No	Yes	No
WJPD (2)	No	No	No	Yes	No
WVCPD (6)	No	No	No	Yes	No
SLCPD (7)	Yes*	No	No	Yes	No
GSD (18)	No	Yes	No	No	No
CSD (9)	Yes**	Yes	No	No	No
JSD (8)	No	Yes	No	No	No
SLCSD (4)	No	Yes	No	No	No
GPD (7)	No	Yes	No	No	No

The general practice is to NOT have written agreements (MOUs) between law enforcement agencies and school districts.
- The first exception is SLCPD and SLCSD. Although there is an MOU between these two organizations, the written agreement is basically a financial contract that provides information on the agreement of school district funding for police department SROs. The MOU does NOT have guiding practices for SROs and school administrators as to the roles, training, and expectations of SROs and administrators.
- The second exception is the Inter-Local Agreement (ILA) between CSD and Draper Police This ILA does provide guiding practices for SROs and school administrators as to the roles and expectations of SROs and administrators. However, this ILA is in the process of negotiation and still has not been officially accepted by either organization.

All school districts have policies guiding professionals on interactions with youth and discipline, generally based on Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS). No guiding policies were found in any of the police departments.

*None of the police departments and school districts had SRO job descriptions. UPD has recently created a job description for SROs based on feedback from SROs and school administrators and will be using it for SRO selection and performance review.

All police departments had a protocol for selecting SROs (e.g., position posting, application, interview). No school district administrators were involved in this selection process.

Although many of the SRO's had attended SRO-specific training (national NARSO & local "Chapman" SRO Training), no school administrators has attended this type of specific training.

*None of the police departments or school districts required SROs to attend SRO-specific training.

Percentage of Agreement with Statements by SROs and School Administrators

	SRO (N=34)	ADMIN (N=39)
SRO Role is Law Enforcement	77%	77%
PD explain SRO duties	62%	62%
School explain SRO duties	46%	46%
Have MOU in place	23%	23%
Attended SRO training	54%	46%
School train SRO on student disciplinary policies	46%	23%

In general, both SROs and school administrators reported on the surveys that the most important role of the SRO is enforcing the law. However, the focus groups revealed that overwhelmingly both SROs and school administrators believed the **most important skill was relationship building with the students** in order to prevent problematic behavior. Additionally, SRO presence throughout the school was also seen as a preventative practice.

Although the surveys reported some explanation of SRO roles and duties, focus groups revealed that neither the police department or school districts formally informed neither the SROs or school administrators the expectations for SROs.

Generally, SROs or administrators did not know if there was a written agreement but believed there was document in place. None of the SROs or school administrators had seen a written agreement.

SROs reported in the surveys that approximately half of them attended SRO-specific training but in the focus group, the percentage was lower. This was attributed to the lack of definition of an "SRO-specific training." School administrators generally reported in focus groups that they did not know if SROs attended any SRO-specific training.

School districts do NOT provide SROs formal training on school discipline policies. Rather, "training" occurs in non-formal settings through conversations between school administrators and SROs. On rare occasions, a school may invite SROs to faculty development training.

Percentage of Agreement with Statements by SROs from 5 Police Departments & Administrators from 4 School Districts

	Role - Law Enforcer	PD Explain SRO Role	Admin Explain SRO Role	MOU Present	SRO Received Training
UPD (12)	67%	75%	25%	42%	92%
WJPD (2)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
WVCPD (6)	100%	83%	17%	33%	100%
SLCPD (7)	100%	100%	100%	14%	57%
GSD (18)	89%	78%	56%	17%	39%
CSD (9)	33%	78%	56%	11%	78%
JSD (8)	88%	25%	13%	13%	25%
SLCSD (4)	100%	25%	50%	100%	50%
GPD (7)	86%	100%	72%	43%	43%

Most school administrators and SROs believed that law enforcement has the primary role of SROs. The exception was CSD administrators where nearly 70% of the administrators believed that the roles of SROs include law enforcement, informal counselor and educator.

JSD administrators reported in the surveys that they did not know if SROs were provided information regarding their duties by either school districts or police departments. However, the focus groups revealed that nearly all participants believed that SROs are not provided formal guidance on their roles by either school districts or police departments.

Other Focus Group Findings:

- Focus group participants from both police departments and school districts were enthusiastic about this topic. Both SROs and school administrators wanted more guidance on the SRO roles and expectations and **SRO-specific training for BOTH school administrators and SROs**.

- Focus group participants reported that the **relationship between SROs and school administrators was vital** in creating a safe and learning environment in school. However, many described the frustration with the inconsistency of the working relationship between those two positions, many stating "It depends on the specific SRO (or school administrator)… some of them are great to work with but others just want to do it their way." Inconsistency in those positions was the complaint most often heard.

- Focus group participants reported that SROs should not be involved in daily administrative duties (e.g., enforce dress code) but rather **focus on relationship building with youth for prevention and on legal interventions for criminal activity**.

- Nearly all **school administrators value SROs** in schools and believe their presence and relationship building skills prevent conduct problems and criminal behaviors.

- Focus group participants express frustration **not knowing expectations for SROs**, such as time in schools, when SROs should be involved, tasks that are appropriate to assigned to SROs, etc.

- Focus groups in GSD and law enforcement agencies reported **confusion regarding the roles between GPD and partnering law enforcement agencies** (UPD, WVCPD). GPD focus group stated that GPD SROs role is to support **the educational goals** of the school district. Therefore, GPD may concentrate on more "minor" delinquency issues that affect student learning, such as truancy, which allows partnering laws enforcement agencies to focus on more serious crimes, such as gang violence.

- All school administrators would like to be **involved in the SRO selection process** to increase proper placement in school. There was disagreement among SROs whether they wanted school administrators involved in the selection process, mostly worried that an administrator may want to inappropriately use SROs to criminalize student behavior.

- ALL focus group participants agreed that **SRO Training should involve SROs and school administrators**. Recommended times were at at least one 4 hour training that would include both SROs and school administrators, with potential 2 hour follow-up trainings.

- Two quotations:
  - "Would you call the police for the present situation if SROs were not placed in the school? If not, then perhaps you should not ask the SRO to be involved to ticket the students." (by school administrator)
  - "Let kids be kids" (by SRO)
  - **Interpretation: Do not overuse SRO to criminalize normal child and adolescent behavior.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Written Agreement between Police Departments & School Districts
- SRO duties, training, and expectations between SROs and school administrators
- Responsibilities for school districts and police departments regarding SRO placement
- Follow recommendations by DOE & DOJ

Recommendation 2: Create SRO Job Descriptions
- Include roles and expectations of SROs
- Emphasize role of building relationships as prevention & school presence as a deterrence to conduct problems and criminal behavior
- Emphasize separation of school administrative duties and law enforcement
- Base SRO performance evaluation on job description

Recommendation 3: Include school administrators in SRO selection process
- Input on job descriptions
- Included in application review & interview process
- Full understanding that the police department has ultimate authority in selecting the SRO

Recommendation 4: Require SRO Training for SROs and school administrators
- Includes both school administrators and SROs in same training
- Includes topics recommended by DOE & DOJ
- Includes issues regarding DMC
- Includes cultural competency/diversity management training
- Includes protocol for student disciplinary practice
- For combined section of SRO training, begin with 4-hour training, then at least two more follow-up 2-hour trainings throughout the year
- **NOTE:** SRO Training would need to be developed because a curriculum that contains the required content does NOT exist

Recommendation 5: Seek Alternatives to Juvenile Justice System
- Peer courts
- Partnerships that provide access to enrichment activities
- Mental health and substance abuse interventions
- Cognitive behavioral approaches in delinquency prevention/reduction
- Adult/peer mentorship
- Academic/employment opportunities

Recommendation 6: Target Three Sites
- Site 1: West High School & feeder middle schools (Salt Lake City)
  - Rationale: High level of student offenses
  - West HS Principal offered is school to be a test site
- Site 2: Cyprus High School & feeder middle schools (Magna Township)
  - Rationale: High level of student offenses
  - Magna Kearns Chief of Police offered his precinct to be a test site
- Site 3: Copper Hills High School & feeder middle schools (West Jordan City)
  - Rationale: High level of student offenses
  - Jordan School District & West Jordan Police Department both offered to be a test site

Recommendation 7: Create "Policy-Making" Workgroup
- Develop organizational & partnership policies for the three test sites
  - SLCDS/SLCPD, JSD/WJPD, GSD/UPD
- Workgroup will address Recommendations 1-3.
  - Written Agreement between Police Departments & School Districts
  - Create SRO Job Descriptions
  - Include school administrators in SRO selection process

Recommendation 8: Create "SRO Curriculum" Workgroup
- Develop SRO curriculum
- Follow DOE DOJ recommendations (See Appendix SRO Training)
- Include input from local law enforcement agency SROs & school district administrators (from SLCo SRO Assessment focus groups)
- Request feedback of draft curriculum from participating test site organizations
- Dr. Próspero will bring together content from SRO Curriculum Workgroup & will lead implementation & assessment of curriculum

APPENDICES

- SRO training content

- SRO job description

- Written agreements (ILA)

SRO TRAINING

I. SRO Training
  A. Schools should ensure that SROs receive rigorous training before the officers begin working on school campus and should continue throughout their work at the school
  B. SRO training should include proper role and responsibilities of officers consistent with the school's written policies or MOUs
  C. SROs should be trained to distinguish between disciplinary infractions appropriately handled by school officials and major threats to safely or serious criminal conduct requiring SRO involvement. SRO should be trained how to appropriately respond the latter issues. SRO training topics should also include:
    1. Childhood and adolescent development
    2. Age-appropriate responses
    3. Disability issues
    4. Conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques
    5. Cultural competence
    6. Restorative justice practices
    7. Identifying and referring students exposed to trauma and violence
    8. Student privacy rights
    9. Working with specific groups of students, such as those at risk for dropping out of school, trauma, social exclusion, or behavior incidents
    10. Negative collateral consequences associated with youth involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice systems (Disproportionate Minority Contact)
    11. Learn alternative strategies to reduce juvenile justice involvement, such as referral to community-based programs and mental health services.
    12. Finally, training should be conducted JOINTLY with SROs. school administrators and other staff, and mental health professionals

Example of School Resource Officer Job Description

School Resource Officer's Duties

- Abide by school board policies and shall consult with and coordinate activities through the school principal but shall remain fully responsive to the chain of command of the law enforcement agency in all matters relating to employment and supervision.
- Develop expertise in presenting various subjects; particularly in juvenile delinquency prevention education and shall provide these presentations at the request of the school personnel in accordance with the established curriculum.
- Refrain completely from functioning as a school disciplinarian. The School Resource Officer is NOT to be involved in the enforcement of disciplinary infractions that do not constitute violations of the law.
- Encourage and attend individual or group meetings with youth, parents and faculty to solicit their support and understanding of the School Resource Officer program, to promote awareness of law enforcement functions and build longterm, trusting relationships.
- Become familiar with all community agencies that offer assistance to youth and their families, such as mental health clinics, drug treatment centers, etc.
- Identify and work with specific groups of students, such as those at risk of dropping out of school, trauma, social exclusion, or behavioral concerns, and refer students and families when appropriate.
- Confer with the principal to develop plans and strategies to prevent and/or minimize dangerous situations on or near the campus or involving students at school-related activities.
- Perform duties as determined by the principal other than those regularly assigned to school personnel such as lunchroom or hall duty, especially if intended to increase student-SRO interactions.
- Abide by school board policy and applicable law concerning interviews should it be necessary to conduct formal law enforcement interviews with students or staff on property or at school functions under the jurisdiction of the school board.
- Take law enforcement action as necessary and notify the principal of the school as soon as possible; whenever practicable advise the principal before requesting additional enforcement assistance on campus and undertake all additional law enforcement responsibilities at the principal's direction.
- Give assistance to other community law enforcement officers in matters regarding the safety of the community.
- In order to assure the peaceful operation of school-related programs, SROs will, whenever possible, participate in or attend school functions.
- Reaffirm their roles as law enforcement officers by wearing their uniforms, unless doing so would be inappropriate for scheduled school activities. (The uniform will also be worn at events where it will enhance the image of the officers and their ability to perform their duties.)

- Coordinate with the principal and be responsible for law enforcement and security activity at extracurricular events as determined by the principal.
- Become familiar with Disproportionate Minority Contact and will actively support policies and practices that reduce the disproportionality of ethnic/racial minorities and students with disabilities within the juvenile justice system.
- Learn and practice culturally competent, developmentally-appropriate, conflict resolution skills meant to prevent or de-escalate youth aggression, such as physical violence and bullying.
- When safety is not a concern and when appropriate, SROs will refer, or assist in the referral process, youth to alternates to justice system, such as peer court, community-based programming, or enrichment activities (e.g., arts, music, sports, etc).