Beyond the Badge:

Profile of a School Resource Officer

A guide for school communities

by Fran Sterling

Officer Ron Cockrell of the St. Louis County Police Department meets with a distressed student at Central Middle School, Riverview Gardens School District, St. Louis, Missouri.

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Contents

Acknowledgments

A Note from the Filmmakers

In September 2014, when events in Ferguson, Missouri, focused the country's attention on racial injustice and relationships between law enforcement and communities, the Not In Our Town team was looking for a story to film about a school resource officer (SRO) who was serving as a positive role model to students and the community. In the midst of tragedy and turmoil in North St. Louis County, we asked ourselves if we could find an exemplary officer who had found a way to keep and build trust with young people during this tension-filled time. We also needed to find a school district in the area that would be open to bringing cameras into the school.

After speaking with several districts in the area, we finally met Melanie Powell-Robinson from the Riverview Gardens School District, who helped facilitate discussions with school leaders and the St. Louis County Police Department, the agency in charge of SROs in the region. When we spoke with School Resource Officer Ronald Cockrell and Principal Chaketa Riddle at Central Middle School, we knew we had found an entry point to show what is possible when an SRO and school leaders work together to build trusting and compassionate relationships with young people.

We are especially grateful to Officer Cockrell and Principal Riddle for generously sharing their expertise and insights about the challenges and importance of developing relationships between students and law enforcement in school communities. The urgency and commitment they expressed to vigorously build trust not only served as the driving force in the film, but also, helps guide our work with law enforcement agencies and community partners.

A special thank you is reserved for the students at Central Middle School and Danforth Elementary School who are featured in the film. Omar Britt Jr. and his family agreed to share their story and thoughts at a time of deep tragedy. By courageously opening up about their experiences, these students provided a powerful point of view about how law enforcement can positively interact with youth and contribute to building a safe school community. The film *Beyond the Badge: Profile of a School Resource Officer* provides a powerful new addition to the stories NIOT has gathered for almost two decades from students, community members, law enforcement representatives, and educators that illustrate the need for police and communities to work together for safety and inclusion.

Beyond the Badge was directed and produced by Patrice O'Neill and Charene Zalis, with camera by Donovan Lloyd and sound by Matt Gettemeier. The film was edited by David Cohen with Assistant Editor Jeremy Jue. Production support was by Associate Producer Diana Wendel and Production Assistant Britt Hart.

Dr. Becki Cohn-Vargas, Paul Di Lella, and Libby McInerney also contributed to this guide.

Officer Ron Cockrell looks on as students create art projects to express sympathy for a classmate who lost his father.

Introduction

Beyond the Badge: Profile of a School Resource Officer is a 17-minute film examining the role and promising practices of a school resource officer (SRO) at Central Middle School in St. Louis County, Missouri. The school is directly adjacent to the city of Ferguson, which received national and international attention in August 2014 for the shooting death of Michael Brown the weekend before school started and the subsequent mass demonstrations. Given the context, emotions were high, and the role and perception of law enforcement was scrutinized. This tension added to the ongoing debate of the role of law enforcement, especially SROs and school safety personnel in schools.

Schools and communities want students to be safe and protected so that young people can learn and thrive in their learning environment. However, traumatic events that occur outside of school filter into students' lives and classrooms and impact their ability to learn. As such, schools' leadership teams, including SROs, must increasingly balance students' growth and development as contributing community members with navigating the reality of trauma and violence in their lives.

The community's perception of law enforcement can change from one incident to another. Sometimes community members view law enforcement negatively, while other times officers are an integral part of the solution in community-related issues. Given this reality, SROs have an opportunity to shift perceptions of law enforcement by building trust with students and developing authentic relationships with all students, both inside and outside of school. It is important not only for SROs to build relationships inside school communities but also for law enforcement in general to build relationships and trust with youth in the community.

Maintaining safe and inclusive school communities requires diligence and dedication from all stakeholders, including leadership, educators, parents, students, community members, and law enforcement. While this essential work cannot happen overnight or with one meeting, we can learn from leaders like those highlighted in the film *Beyond the Badge* that our schools can continue to be the seedbeds of our democracy through effective collaboration. This guide focuses on the power of effective partnerships between school staff, law enforcement, and the community to create safe and inclusive schools.

The *Beyond the Badge: Profile of a School Resource Officer* film and guide were produced as part of the Not In Our Town: Working Together for Safe, Inclusive Communities collaboration between Not In Our Town (NIOT) and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office).[1]

School communities and law enforcement agencies are invited to host screenings of *Beyond the Badge* to

- initiate conversations in schools to clarify the role of an SRO;

- model SRO promising practices;

- inspire creative and constructive relationship-building methods within schools;

- develop or enhance community partnerships with local law enforcement agencies and other community organizations supporting youth development;

- promote safe and inclusive communities for everyone.

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1. To access all project resources and tools that are available for free through the online project hub, visit "Not In Our Town + COPS," http://www.niot.org/COPS.

How to Host a Screening and Discussion

Creating dialogue among the diverse organizations, agencies, and community members in your community is an important tool in fostering and maintaining safe schools. Event organizers should allot at least 30 to 60 minutes for discussion after the film screening. This brief guide is designed as a tool to help address key issues in the film and to facilitate meaningful dialogue in the community. It contains sample discussion questions for event leaders and background information about hate crimes.

For any audience, consider organizing attendees into smaller groups for part of the discussion. Especially in a large group, difficult or open-ended questions might make some people feel uncomfortable or shy about speaking out; these individuals might share more openly in a smaller group. One person from each group can be responsible for reporting to the larger audience the experiences, perceived challenges, proposed strategies, or other issues raised in the breakout sessions.

In a theater setting where breakout sessions are logistically difficult, pose a discussion question and encourage attendees to hold a five-minute conversation with the person in the next seat. The event facilitator could conclude the segment by asking three or four pairs to share their findings with the larger audience. Taking about 10–15 minutes on this exercise may serve as a useful warm up for those who are reluctant to speak in groups.

In public discussions, questions should focus on the experience of the community members as much as possible. Honest criticism can be an important and constructive part of the discussion; however, verbal attacks should be discouraged. An experienced facilitator, particularly someone who has credibility with the community at large, can be a great benefit, especially with larger groups or in groups with known tensions. Keep in mind that the goal is participatory conversation, and the opportunity for people to engage can be as important as anything in particular that might be said.

The film and this accompanying guide are provided free of charge for local screenings. Not In Our Town requests only that you provide data on the location of your screening and the number of attendees.

Screening and workshop steps

- Familiarize yourself with the five modules of learning included in this guide.

- Host the discussion in a neutral location where all attendees feel comfortable.

- Break the audience into small groups at tables or other convenient areas before the screening.

- After the screening, facilitate groups through the five learning modules followed by discussion questions. Be clear about the time allotted for discussions and answering questions.

Officer Ron Cockrell speaks to students at an assembly at Central Middle School.

Learning Modules to Help Understand School Resource Officers

"*It's beyond just the school doors that we can help them. They know that if something's happening in the community, they can come to the school resource officer, and we'll work to make sure that we're supporting them as well."*

— *Kelli J. McCrary*
Director of Safety and Security, Riverview Gardens School District, St. Louis, Missouri

Overview

The following five modules can be used either sequentially or separately as the screening organizers see fit. Small groups should read each module individually and discuss the prompts that follow. The facilitator should select the modules based on the audience and the objective of the screening or training.

Module I. What are the responsibilities of a school resource officer?

Objective: The position of SRO continues to be one of the fastest growing areas in public law enforcement. However, a nationally recognized job description or definition does not exist for this important and visible role in the school community. Given the varied range of understanding, it is critical for SROs and stakeholders supporting this role to continue discussing the role and spectrum of responsibilities it can include. Module I provides overviews of SRO responsibilities from three different perspectives. Participants can discuss the similarities and differences between these perspectives.

Example 1. Congressional Research Service Report

According to the Congressional Research Service Report created for members of Congress, SROs are trained law enforcement officers who engage in community-oriented policing activities and are assigned to work in collaboration with schools and community-based organizations. In some localities, SROs—also called school safety officers, school police officers, or school liaison officers—are employees of the local police department. In others, they are employees of the school district's independent police department. The three main roles and responsibilities are law enforcement officer, law-related counselor, and law-related educator.[2]

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2. Nathan James and Gail McCallion, *School Resource Officers: Law Enforcement Officers in Schools* (Congressional Research Service, 2013), https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43126.pdf.

Example 2. A school director of safety and security

In the Riverview Gardens School District in St. Louis, Missouri, Kelli J. McCrary, director of safety and security, believes the main goals of the SRO include the following:

- Establishing a positive relationship with the students and children in our school district

- Being a security presence and law enforcement officer

- Acting as an advisor to students, especially at the middle and high school levels

- Serving as a mentor and positive adult role model

- Mediating issues that arise, which may include a home visit

- Being responsible to students and families 24 hours a day

Example 3. National Association of School Resource Officers

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) defines the role as follows:

> NASRO was founded on the "triad" concept of school-based policing which is the true and tested strength of the school resource officer (SRO) program. The triad concept divides the SRO's responsibilities into three areas: teacher, counselor, and law enforcement officer. by training law enforcement to educate, counsel, and protect our school communities, the men and women of NASRO continue to lead by example and promote a positive image of law enforcement to our nation's youth.

> SRO programs across the nation are founded as collaborative efforts by police agencies, law enforcement officers, educators, students, parents, and communities. The goal of NASRO and SRO programs is to provide safe learning environments in our nation's schools, provide valuable resources to school staff, foster a positive relationship with our nation's youth, and develop strategies to resolve problems affecting our youth with the objective of protecting every child so they can reach their fullest potential.[3]

Discussion prompt

- What is similar or different between the three descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of an SRO?

- What might be missing in these descriptions?

- Which description do you or your school endorse?

Module II. What is the current context and status of SROs?

Objective: Schools, community leaders, and stakeholders may have a range of familiarity with how, when, and under what context current SROs serve. Module II offers participants an opportunity to learn about and reflect upon the history of SROs by using two examples: one offered as part of a Congressional Research Service Report submitted to Congress and

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3. Maurice Canady, Bernard James, and Janet Nease, *To Protect and Educate: The School Resource Officer and the Prevention of Violence in Schools* (Hoover, AL: National Association of School Resource Officers, 2012), https://nasro.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/NASRO-To-Protect-and-Educate-nosecurity.pdf.

the other adapted by NASRO. These examples are not meant to be comprehensive but rather offer two distinct perspectives that have prompted a national conversation, national funding, and a refinement of SROs' scope of enforcement.

Example 1. Congressional Research Service Report

The following excerpt is from the Congressional Research Service Report created for members of Congress:

> Congress first provided funding for the COPS in Schools program in 1999 after the Columbine school shooting.[4] . . . [In addition,] some policymakers have expressed renewed interest in [SROs] as a result of the December 2012 mass shooting that occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT. [After Sandy Hook, Congress requested renewed funding for a Comprehensive Schools Safety Program under the COPS Office that would] provide funding for hiring school safety personnel, including SROs, civilian public safety personnel, school psychologists, social workers, and counselors. Funding would also be available for purchasing school safety equipment, developing and updating public safety plans, conducting threat assessments, and training crisis intervention teams.[5]

Example 2. National Association of School Resource Officers

According to its position statement, the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) recommends the following important steps for a successful SRO program:

- A clear and concise memorandum of understanding (MOU) is essential.
- SROs must receive training regarding children with special needs.
- Use of physical restraint devices is rarely necessary.[6]

Regarding the first step, NASRO recommends that all law enforcement agencies with SROs sign an MOU between their leaders and that of the educational institutions. First, the MOU should require that the SROs be carefully selected and should have received "specialized SRO training in the use of police powers and authority in a school environment." Next, the MOU should define the SROs' roles as an officer, a teacher, and an informal counselor. Last, the MOU should "prohibit SROs from becoming involved in formal discipline situations that are the responsibility of school administrators."[7]

In terms of the second step, NASRO offers law enforcement agencies nationwide SRO courses that cover the education of children with special needs. Experts also host sessions discussing this topic at NASRO's annual national conferences. NASRO's training teaches SROs how children with special needs have different behaviors than children without such needs. Importantly, the training focuses on "proactive school policing," which highlights building relationships with children to help prevent the need for SRO interventions.[8]

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4. See also Chongmin Na and Denise C. Gottfredson, "Police Officers in Schools: Effects on School Crime and the Processing of Offender Behaviors," *Justice Quarterly* (2011): 2–3, doi:10.1080/07418825.2011.615754.

5. James and McCallion, *School Resource Officers*, i, 7, 12 (see note 2).

6. "NASRO Position Statement on Police Involvement in Student Discipline," NASRO, October 6, 2015, https://nasro.org/news/nasro-updates/nasro-position-statement-police-involvement-student-discipline/.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

As for the third step, NASRO agrees with the U.S. Department of Education's position that "restraint and seclusion should be avoided to the greatest extent possible without endangering the safety of students and staff."[9] In addition, when an SRO is not used as an agent of discipline in the school setting, an SRO should use a physical restraint device such as handcuffs upon a student only when that student is being placed under arrest for referral to the criminal justice system.[10]

Discussion prompt

School safety continues to be the highest priority across the nation. However, conflicting interests and conclusions remain as to the effectiveness of SROs in deterring certain crimes. Using these two examples for further discussion, take a moment to reflect upon the current policies and practices your school has in place to ensure its safety and discuss the following questions:

- Are your school's policies and practices sufficient? What would you improve? What would you keep?

- Some people think metal detectors and other technology make a school safer. Others think a positive school climate and relationships within a school make it safer. What do you think?

Module III. Discussing statements Officer Cockrell made in the film

Objective: Officer Ronald Cockrell grew up in the community he now serves. A 25-year law enforcement veteran in St. Louis County, Missouri, he is currently working as the SRO at Central Middle School, which is in Riverview Gardens School District in the city of St. Louis. In module III, participants have the opportunity to discuss, question, challenge, and reflect upon how Officer Cockrell understands his role within Central Middle School. Using a variety of statements he made in the film *Beyond the Badge: Profile of a School Resource Officer,* participants can discuss, either individually or in small groups, their thoughts, feelings, and reactions to his statements.

In Officer Cockrell's own words

- "To be the school resource officer, you have to have a passion for children. It's got be inside your heart that you want to make a difference in your community."

- "It is heartbreaking to see our young people have to deal with violence the way they do."

- "I grew up in the neighborhood. I understand some of their struggles. I went through that too, so I reach out to them and let them understand that just because I wear this badge, I am still compassionate about them."

- "We [are] going to have to learn to live together. . . . What can we do as police officers to make the community better?"

- "When I first arrived, . . . the conversation stopped. And all I can hear was 'why is the police here?' For about two weeks, I was just making small conversation with everyone. The students become relaxed. I got relaxed with them. And that's when the relationship started developing."

9. *Restraint and Seclusion: Resource Document* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2012), https://www2.ed.gov/policy/seclusion/restraints-and-seclusion-resources.pdf.

10. "NASRO Position Statement" (see note 6).

- "You got to love the children, and you got to have patience. That's the biggest thing, patience. You have to understand that we were once like them."

- "We are human, and . . . we have feelings too. And when they're going through things, we understand."

Discussion prompt

- Which quotes stand out? Why?

- Which sentiments do you share with Officer Cockrell?

- Which statements do you disagree with?

Module IV. Discussing statements from school leadership and the SRO's role in empowering school communities

Objective: Students' school lives are deeply affected by what occurs during the hours before and after school. Module IV allows participants to reflect upon this reality using voices from the film, Principal Chaketa Riddle and her students and Director Kelli J. McCrary, as entry points for discussion. Take a moment to read the two examples and then discuss the questions provided.

Example 1. Principle Riddle and students of Central Middle School

At the start of the 2014–2015 school year, Principle Riddle convened a town hall meeting with the 8th grade students to discuss Mike Brown's death and the students' thoughts about law enforcement. Afterward, she described the meeting as follows:

> You have students here who may have known Mike Brown or may have been family members. And we knew that we couldn't come to it [talking about his death] in any type of biased way. We wanted to hear everyone's voice, and we wanted everybody to be comfortable.

Two students who spoke at the meeting expressed the following to law enforcement:

> Before you act or react [to] a situation, make sure you know everything that's going on so you don't hurt an innocent person.

> All young black men are not a threat, so you . . . got no reason to be scared of us.

Example 2. Director McCrary, Safety and Security, Riverview Gardens School District

Director McCrary offered the following perspective about schools, the community, and law enforcement working together:

> Community-oriented policing is important, not just in the schools but in the community itself. We don't just work with the students. We also work with our school resource officers to say, "You're hearing what the students are saying . . . is their problem every day. Please go and tell your fellow officers what's going on. Tell them the concerns that the students have and so that maybe when [the officers] approach that student or another person on the streets as part of their duties, they will engage in a different manner." So we're trying to work to make sure that everyone understands the others' concerns, and hopefully it'll come together in a better way.

Discussion prompt

- What promising practices for SROs can we infer from what the school leaders stated?

- What priorities and considerations are these leaders taking into account?

- What recommendations would you imagine students would suggest if asked how to improve the relationship between students and law enforcement?

- How can school officials open paths of communication with their students? What are the obstacles?

Module V. Promising practices and prevention activities

Objective: Nationwide awareness and implementation of school-based law enforcement practices continue to increase and yield positive results. Open discussions related to the school-to-prison pipeline and mental health are all critical steps in the right direction.

Module V provides several examples of proactive strategies and interventions that school administration and SROs can partner together to implement. These examples, which can be read individually or in small groups, are not comprehensive but spotlight a range of successful policies and practices used in Riverview Gardens School District and in other school districts around the nation.

Participants may want to take a moment to reflect on and consider these examples in relation to their own school, role, or priority. After reviewing, discuss the effectiveness, pitfalls, and reality of implementing these in the community and add other examples the community implements into the discussion group.

Holding mediations to avoid gang violence

When SROs and students build positive relationships, direct mediation can be the first and more effective means of intervention than traditional disciplinary methods such as suspension or expulsion. According to the National Crime Prevention Council, "school-based programs instructing youth in mediating peer conflicts give youth participants the communication, anger management, leadership, and decision-making skills that help them to remain resilient against crime, violence, and substance abuse."[11] When learning of gang activity outside of school, SROs and school leaders can intervene and help students to resolve their differences before the violence escalates.

Addressing threats made via social media

Students and groups within schools are increasingly using social media to bully and threaten each other. SROs, who are familiar with student culture, can play an essential role in navigating these platforms for conflict prevention.[12] Schools looking to address threats made through social media should first consider how knowledgeable its school leaders and SROs are with social media. Schools and SROs can offer staff lessons on how to use social media

11. "Strategy: Peer Mediation in High Schools," National Crime Prevention Council, accessed August 4, 2016, http://www.ncpc.org/topics/bullying/strategies/strategy-peer-mediation-in-high-schools.

12. Becki Cohn-Vargas, *Preventing and Addressing Bullying and Intolerance: A Guide for Law Enforcement* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015).

to reach out students or identify online problems. Likewise, school leaders and SROs can teach students about cybersafety and reporting online harassment, which can still qualify as criminal harassment.[13]

Improving interactions outside of school between students and law enforcement

Students often first learn about the extent of the law—what it permits officers to do and what personal rights it grants students in particular situations—from their SROs. Such knowledge can help students to feel less intimidated and more cooperative when interacting with law enforcement. In addition, students and community members who have a relationship with an SRO feel more comfortable sharing information about events that may be occurring in the community. The SRO can then share that information with fellow officers, which could prevent an incident from occurring. However, should an incident occur outside of school that involves law enforcement and a student, the department can call the SRO to the scene to help advert any misunderstandings.

Helping peer leaders to grow

In the film, Officer Cockrell convenes student leaders, asking them to support another student who recently suffered a great loss. Officer Cockrell encourages compassion and models empathy and positive leadership attributes. In response, the student leaders exhibit the same traits and suggest ways the student body can work together to help their classmate. To be effective peer leaders, youth need not only mentors to guide them but also opportunities to develop and practice these skills within a context that has personal meaning and relevance to them. Schools can helps students improve these skills by suggesting opportunities for students and SROs to work together and promote leadership qualities throughout the community. For example, peer leaders in Orange County, California, have begun reading to children in the primary schools, referring sports, raising funds for school programs, and providing bullying lessons to their peers.[14]

Using restorative justice

Restorative justice empowers students to address conflicts and violations on their own and with their peers in small groups. This method, which enables students to voice their grievances, ask questions, and discuss solutions, has strengthened school communities, prevented bullying, and reduced conflicts.[15] The Oakland Unified School District adopted restorative justice as a different approach to school discipline. The district continues to see promising results with a decrease in suspensions and an increase in school attendance.

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13. "As Social Media Changes, So Do Schools' Approach to Identifying and Resolving Conflicts," *Grand Forks Herold*, May 27, 2016, http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/education/4042744-social-media-changes-so-do-schools-approach-identifying-and-resolving.

14. "Leaders in Action," Orange County Department of Education, accessed August 4, 2016, http://www.ocde.us/PAL/Pages/Peer-Leaders-In-Action.aspx.

15. "Restorative Justice: Resources for Schools," Edutopia, last updated October 29, 2015, http://www.edutopia.org/blog/restorative-justice-resources-matt-davis.

Creating community partnerships between school districts and city police departments

Creating a formal partnership between school districts and law enforcement agencies ensures that expectations are clear and that all practices are consistent. In Colorado, the superintendent of Denver Public Schools (DPS) and the chief of the Denver Police Department (DPD) signed an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) in 2013 following negotiations with youth leaders from Padres y Jóvenes Unidos, a Denver-based parent and youth group, who have worked to end the school-to-prison pipeline in Colorado for over a decade. The following lists summarize their agreement:

The IGA contains policy language that clarifies and limits the role of SROs:

- SROs must differentiate between disciplinary issues and crime problems and respond appropriately.

- SROs must de-escalate school-based incidents whenever possible.

- SROs must understand that DPS has adopted a discipline policy that emphasizes the use of restorative approaches to address behaviors and is designed to minimize the use of law enforcement intervention.[16]

The IGA contains due process protections for parents and students:

- Parents must be notified as soon as possible when students are ticketed or arrested.

- Principals must be notified within a reasonable time period when a student is ticketed or arrested.

- When necessary, students must be questioned in a manner and time that have the least impact on students' schooling.

- SROs must be notified if a student involved in a school-based infraction possesses disabilities or an individualized education plan (IEP) and may require special treatment or accommodations.[17]

The IGA requires meetings between SROs and community stakeholders:

- SROs will meet with community stakeholders at least once per semester.

- SROs will participate in meetings with school administration when requested.[18]

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16. Julie Poppen, "Role of Police Redefined in Denver Schools," Chalkbeat, February 19, 2013, http://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/co/2013/02/19/role-of-police-redefined-in-denver-schools.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

Beyond the Badge: Profile of a School Resource Officer

The IGA requires training of SROs and school administrators on how best to deal with youth in schools:

- School principals and SROs will attend three two-hour citywide trainings per year, once at the beginning of the school year and once during each semester.

- DPD officers will receive training on their role at DPS and on the rights afforded to students.

- Training topics may include child and adolescent development and psychology, age-appropriate responses, cultural competence, restorative justice techniques, special accommodations for students with disabilities, practices proven to improve school climate, and the creation of safe spaces for LGBT students.[19]

Discussion prompt

- How knowledgeable is your school staff about these methods?

- Has your school tried using any of these methods?

- Do your school and school district currently have any of these models in place?

- What is realistic in your school community to implement?

- What further support systems would you need to promote a more positive and effective SRO relationship within your school?

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19. Ibid.

Officer Ron Cockrell with Principal Chaketa Riddle of Central Middle School.

Conclusion

Law enforcement has an obligation to increase trust and build relationships in the communities it serves. SROs are an effective way for a law enforcement agency to fulfill that obligation. If used properly and uniquely trained for the position, an SRO can be a communication bridge between students, the community, and law enforcement. The SRO is often the first person to inform students about what the officer can and cannot do according to the law and what a student's personal rights may be given a particular incident. The SRO can also communicate directly with fellow law enforcement officers regarding specific students and incidents that occur at school. Thus, an open communication network among law enforcement, schools, and the community can help avert future conflicts, as SROs can both be informed of and inform others of particular events occurring in the community. In addition, SROs can assist in incidents involving students and law enforcement to help prevent misunderstanding between them.

Officer Ron Cockrell participates in a student assembly at Central Middle School.

Appendix A. Film Evaluation Survey

Note: To download a printer-friendly version of this two-age survey, please visit http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-W0785.

Surveys should be returned to:
The Working Group / Not In Our Town
PO Box 70232
Oakland, CA 94612

Partners in stopping hate | NOT IN OUR TOWN — STOP HATE. TOGETHER. | COPS — Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice

Film Evaluation of *Beyond the Badge: Profile of a School Resource Officer*

Instructions: Please answer the following questions based on your recent viewing of *Beyond the Badge: Profile of a School Resource Officer*. Surveys should be returned to **The Working Group / Not In Our Town, PO Box 70232, Oakland, CA 94612**. Thank you for your participation.

1. **Screening location:** _____

2. **How would you rate the following in reference to this film?**

Item	Excellent	Good	Okay	Fair	Poor
a. Handling of topic presented	○	○	○	○	○
b. Overall impact of film	○	○	○	○	○
c. Effectiveness of group discussion (if applicable)	○	○	○	○	○

3. **Please check the response that is most accurate for you.**

Results of viewing this film	Yes, very much	Yes, somewhat	No, didn't make a difference	Not applicable
a. I have more information or tools I can use in my work.	○	○	○	○
b. I better understand the need to support hate crime victims.	○	○	○	○
c. I better understand why hate crimes need to be reported, investigated, and prosecuted.	○	○	○	○
d. I will seek ways to improve relationships with at-risk communities and organizations that serve them.	○	○	○	○
e. I am more likely to take action to address hate and intolerance in my community.	○	○	○	○

4. **What opportunities or challenges do you anticipate in showing this film to your community or law enforcement agency?**

Appendix B. How to Create a Memorandum of Understanding for School-Based Partnerships

School resource officer (SRO) programs can play an important role in maintaining and increasing safety at schools and in neighboring communities. In order to effectively implement such programs, law enforcement agencies and schools should develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to clearly document the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the individuals and partners involved, including SROs, school officials, law enforcement, education departments, students, and parents. At a minimum, a successful MOU documents the program's purpose, partner roles and responsibilities, requirements for information sharing, and supervision of the SRO.[20]

Developing an MOU

An MOU, also referred to as an "interagency agreement" or memorandum of agreement (MOA), is an instrument used to build mutual respect and trust between partners while delineating specific roles and responsibilities of the partnering agencies. Every jurisdiction with a school and law enforcement partnership should have an MOU that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the individual partners involved, including school districts, boards or departments of education, school administration officials, law enforcement agencies (including SROs), and students and parents.

As a policy instrument, all parties should sign and abide by the MOU, and it should be considered a living document that operates within the context created by applicable federal and state laws, including federal civil rights laws and privacy laws.

Developing your school-based partnership

School and law enforcement partnerships are also built on a foundation of shared goals and objectives that are approached in a constructive and positive manner and achieved through open communication. When schools, communities, and law enforcement agencies work together to creatively tackle problems, they may be able to achieve a number of positive outcomes, including the following:

■ An increased ability of law enforcement agencies, schools, and community groups to gather and analyze useful and timely information about crime and fear of crime in schools in accordance with applicable privacy laws

■ An increased ability of law enforcement agencies, schools, and community groups to work together in developing innovative, systemic, long-term approaches to reducing and preventing different kinds of crime in and around their schools and preventing unnecessary law enforcement involvement in non-criminal student misbehavior—

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20. See Anne J. Atkinson, *Fostering School-Law Enforcement Partnerships, guide 5*. Safe and Secure: Guides to Creating Safer Schools (Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2002), https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/book5.pdf; Canady, James, and Nease, *To Protect and Educate* (see note 3).

- improving the quality of life for students, teachers, school personnel, and parents and promoting a safer environment that is conducive for learning by implementing strategies focused on targeted crimes

- An increased understanding of how to effectively interact with youth through coordinated training on topics such as basic childhood and adolescent development and age-appropriate responses, disability and special education issues, conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques, bias-free policing including implicit bias and cultural competence, restorative justice techniques, and working with specific student groups such as students with disabilities or limited English proficiency and LGBT students

- An increased understanding of an SRO's roles and responsibilities, including an understanding that school code of conduct violations and routine discipline of students remain the responsibility of school administrators and that law enforcement actions (such as arrest, citations, ticketing, or court referrals) are to be used only as a last resort for incidents that involve criminal behavior or when it becomes necessary to protect the safety of students, faculty, and staff from the threat of immediate harm

- An increased ability through coordinated training for schools and law enforcement agencies to properly train and respond to school safety threats

- An increased ability to plan for and respond appropriately to emergencies[21]

MOU guidance

The COPS Office strongly encourages law enforcement agencies to work collaboratively with school partners to formulate additional information that will help successfully implement the overall school safety plans. The following information should be included within an MOU:

Statement of purpose

The statement of purpose should describe the agencies that are entering into the partnership, the purpose of the partnership, and the effective date of the agreement. This statement may already exist within your on-going partnership, or it may need to be developed jointly to assist in defining the primary purpose of your agreement.

Description of partner roles and responsibilities

This description should include the roles and responsibilities of the school, school district, and the law enforcement agency, and each partner should be specifically listed within the document. This section should clearly indicate that SROs will not respond to or be responsible for requests to resolve routine discipline problems involving students. The administration of student discipline, including student code of conduct violations and student misbehavior, is the responsibility of school administrators, unless the violation or misbehavior involves criminal conduct.

The MOU should include the roles and responsibilities of the school partner. These roles may include providing a secure work space for the SRO to conduct interviews and maintain confidential records, establishing standing meetings, or working with school administrators

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21. See *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2013), http://rems.ed.gov/docs/REMS_K-12_Guide_508.pdf.

in identifying problems and evaluating progress under the MOU. The school administrator should ensure that staff cooperates with police investigations and any subsequent actions related to crime or criminal activity on campus.

The law enforcement partner is responsible for the selection of personnel assigned to the school, and these officers should adhere to the principles of community policing. This section of the MOU should define the hours of SRO duty, including arrival and departure times, and specify if after-hour duties may be performed and if spending time in court, attending interagency meetings, and investigating school-related crimes are within the scope of SRO duties.

The MOU should include examples of the activities that the SRO will engage in, such as the following:

- Handling requests for calls for service in and around schools

- Conducting comprehensive safety and security assessments

- Developing emergency management and incident response systems based on the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the four phases of emergency management: mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery

- Developing and implementing safety plans or strategies

- Integrating appropriate security equipment and technology solutions, including incorporating crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) as appropriate to enhance school safety

- Responding to unauthorized persons on school property

- Serving as liaison between the school and other police agencies, investigative units, or juvenile justice authorities when necessary and consistent with applicable civil rights laws and privacy laws

- Serving as a member of a multidisciplinary school team to refer students to professional services within both the school (e.g., guidance counselors or social workers) and the community (e.g., youth and family service organizations)

- Building relationships with juvenile justice counselors to help connect youth with needed services

- Developing and expanding crime prevention efforts for students

- Developing and expanding community justice initiatives for students

Information sharing

This section should address the type and the extent to which information will be shared between the law enforcement agency and school or school district partners. For example, define the type of information that the school is permitted or willing to share with law enforcement, as well as information flow from law enforcement to school partners. When entering into an MOU, agencies should consider all federal or state laws that govern the collection, use, and dissemination of student records.

Federal privacy laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA),[22] the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA),[23] and civil rights and other laws must be considered when developing plans for information sharing that involves personally identifiable information from student education records.

Supervision responsibility and chain of command for the SRO

This section should clearly establish a definitive chain of command for the SRO, including the individuals with the responsibility for the supervision of the SRO. With rare exception, this responsibility lies with the law enforcement executive or his or her law enforcement designee.

Signatures

The MOU must be signed and dated by both the highest ranking law enforcement executive (i.e., police chief or sheriff) and the school officials who will have general educational oversight and decision-making authority (i.e., board of education director, superintendent, or school principal). The MOU should be developed with participation from school administrators and officers assigned to the school so that staff who are impacted by the agreement clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. Successful MOUs are often developed by teams that include students, parents, and other community members committed to keeping schools safe, in addition to school and law enforcement members. The MOU should be publicly available to members of the school community.

Supplemental information

Local SRO training requirements, complaint processes, and performance monitoring should be listed and described in the body of the MOU document to help inform all parties and the community.

Training description

The COPS Office recommends including a section that describes what the local training requirements are prior to placing SROs in educational settings, as well as what the specific local in-service training requirements will be throughout their deployment in the schools and who is responsible for providing that training.

Data collection and performance monitoring

The COPS Office also recommends a separate section that establishes a local process to closely monitor the activities of the SRO program, including comprehensive disaggregated data collection on school-based arrests, citations, searches, and referrals to court or juvenile justice programs consistent with applicable federal, state, and local privacy laws. This can also include a process for raising and reviewing issues and complaints regarding elements outlined in the MOU or partnership activities.

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22. "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)," U.S. Department of Education, accessed September 8, 2016, http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html. For an overview of FERPA issues relevant to emergency planning and SRO programs, see "Closer Look," in *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans* (see note 21).

23. "Health Information Privacy," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, accessed September 8, 2016, http://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html.

Additional NIOT Resources

Not In Our Town (NIOT) is a national campaign that guides, supports, and inspires individuals and communities to work together to stop hate and build safe, inclusive environments for all. For more information or for assistance organizing a screening in your area, please contact NIOT at info@niot.org or 510-268-9675.

Additional film and print resources are available on NIOT's website at www.niot.org. The following selection highlights some of NIOT's additional resources:

Guides

Building Stronger, Safer Communities: A Guide for Law Enforcement and Community Partners to Prevent and Respond to Hate Crimes
http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P270

This guide produced by the COPS Office and Not In Our Town offers leadership strategies and actionable tactics to help law enforcement agencies work with community partners. Real-life examples documented by the Not In Our Town movement against hate and intolerance illustrate how agencies can work with community stakeholders to create an atmosphere where hate is not tolerated and take positive steps in the aftermath of a hate crime. The guide also provides multiple lists of resources to promote action, engagement, and empowerment for the community and law enforcement.

Not In Our Town Quick Start Guide
https://www.niot.org/guide/quickstart

The ideas in this guide came from community members who wanted to do something about hate and intolerance. Their successful efforts have been a shining light for the Not In Our Town movement.

Ten Ideas for Sparking Action in Your Town
https://www.niot.org/guide/10actionideas

Whether responding to violence or working to prevent divisions, community leaders can use this guide to inspire their towns to stand up to intolerance and create a diverse environment where everyone is safe, accepted, and included.

Videos

A Bowling Green Legacy
https://www.niot.org/cops/bowlinggreenlegacy

Presented in conjunction with the COPS Office, this 13-minute film follows the actions of students working with administrators, law enforcement, and community members to forge new bonds after racially charged actions shake their community. When racist tweets

and "White power" graffiti leave students feeling threatened and unsafe, the campus and community of Bowling Green, Ohio, unite to take a stand against hate and join the national Not In Our Town movement.

A Hate Crime Detective's Message to High School Students

https://www.niot.org/cops/media/hate-crime-detectives-message-high-school-students

Detective David D'Amico, a bias crimes investigator at the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office in New Jersey, regularly visits schools to talk frankly and powerfully to the group responsible for the majority of these crimes—young people. His presentation includes cautionary advice not only about how derogatory words used online are hurtful but also about how such words can make the user a target for recruitment by hate groups.

Students Take on Cyberbullying

https://www.niot.org/nios-video/students-take-cyberbullying

When teachers Jamie Lott and Mary Sok asked their World Cultures class about bullying at their school, the class described the hallways as safe. But after listening to a presentation given by Detective Dave D'Amico, a bias crimes investigator, they started a discussion about the widespread problem of online bullying and how they as a class could take the first steps toward preventing it.

Waking in Oak Creek

https://www.niot.org/cops/wakinginoakcreek

Presented in conjunction with the COPS Office, this 30-minute film reveals the powerful and inspiring community response to intolerance after deadly hate crime shootings at the Sikh Temple of Wisconsin. In the year following the attack, the mayor, police department, and community members are awakened and transformed by the Sikh Spirit of Chardi Kala, or relentless optimism.

Interviews

Building Relationships

https://www.niot.org/cops/resources/building-relationships

Recently on NPR's All Things Considered,[24] Philadelphia Police Chief Charles Ramsey discussed the value of community policing in the wake of the tragic events in Ferguson, Missouri, with Robert Siegel. What are police best practices to prevent and respond to incidents in the communities they patrol? Here's one excerpt from their interview.

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24. A transcript of the complete interview can be found at "Parsing the Rulebook to a Police Officer's Use of Force," narrated by Robert Siegel, All Things Considered, *NPR*, August 20, 2014, http://www.npr.org/2014/08/20/341958697/parsing-the-rulebook-to-a-police-officers-use-of-force.

Other Resources and Initiatives

Bullying in Schools
http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P029

There is always concern about school violence, and police have assumed greater responsibility for helping school officials ensure students' safety. As pressure increases to place officers in schools, police agencies must decide how best to contribute to student safety. This guide provides police with information about the causes and extent of bullying in schools and recommendations for developing effective approaches and practices that contribute to student safety.

Campus Threat Assessment Case Studies:
A Training Tool for Investigation, Evaluation, and Intervention
http://ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-w0693-pub.pdf

This guide allows threat assessment team members to explore and practice threat assessment through small and large group exercises using pre-developed case studies. The guide will strengthen team members' comprehension and application of the threat assessment principles proscribed in the program Campus Threat Assessment Training: A Multidisciplinary Approach for Institutions of Higher Education, which was developed and delivered nationwide by Margolis Healy & Associates and funded by the COPS Office.

A Day in the Life of a School Resource Officer
http://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/04-2013/a_day_in_the_life.asp

This article combines the experiences of eight SROs in Cayuga County, New York, to create a snapshot of a typical day at school. The article shows what SROs do in their role as counselor, educator, and law enforcement officer and offers a first-hand account of the diverse nature of school-based law enforcement.

Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence, 2nd Edition
https://www.bja.gov/Publications/IACP_School_Violence.pdf

This guide presents different strategies and approaches for members of school communities to consider when creating safer learning environments. The interventions presented in this guide incorporate multiple strategies and have the potential to yield benefits beyond reducing hazards associated with school shootings. Additional benefits include lowering rates of delinquency, disruptive behaviors, bullying, and all other forms of violence and antisocial behavior; increasing the likelihood troubled youth will be identified and receive treatment; improving the learning environment by reducing intimidating, disruptive, and disrespectful behavior; and preparing communities for responding to not only shootings at schools but also all other human-made and natural disasters.

How SROs Can Divert Students from the Justice System

http://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/05-2015/sros_and_students.asp

This article focuses on how school-based law enforcement partnerships can help divert students from involvement with the justice system. To be more specific, it discusses the roles of SROs, the training they should receive, what schools should look for when choosing the right officer for their school environment, and the use of policies.

Keeping Your School Hallways Safe

http://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/07-2014/keeping_your_schools_safe.asp

Many schools have implemented SROs or security officer programs. But faced with limited resources, schools are also turning to automated software solutions like Awareity's TIPS, a web-based risk and prevention platform. This article discusses how these software solutions empower students to anonymously share information and allow SROs and school administrators to identify potential threats, investigate concerns thoroughly, and ensure their school environment is as safe as possible.

National Association of School Resource Officers

https://nasro.org/

This not-for-profit organization is dedicated to providing high quality training to school-based law enforcement officers to promote safer schools and safer children. This website and its resources offer a variety of benefits to school resource officers, law enforcement officers, school administrators, school board members, school safety professionals, and others interested in protecting schools. These resources include NASRO's quarterly "Journal of School Safety;" access to NASRO's school law database, which includes statutes and court decisions on public education and school safety; and resources such as sample memoranda of understanding, best practices for body-worn cameras, and online investigation resources.

NIJ's Comprehensive School Safety Initiative

http://nij.gov/topics/crime/school-crime/Pages/school-safety-initiative.aspx

This initiative is meant to improve school and student safety nationwide through rigorous research that produces practical knowledge. This is accomplished through partnerships among educators, researchers, law enforcement, and behavioral and mental health professionals who work toward increasing knowledge about the root causes, characteristics, and consequences of school violence; developing, supporting, and evaluating school and student safety programs; and developing a comprehensive school safety framework based on the best available information and evidence and testing it in selected school districts.

Police-Youth Dialogues Toolkit: Guide for Improving Relationships and Public Safety through Engagement and Conversation

http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P321

Police-youth dialogues are facilitated conversations that build trust and understanding by allowing teens and police to speak honestly about their experiences with one another. These dialogues provide windows into the other's point of view, enabling participants to find common ground. The Center for Court Innovation and the COPS Office developed this toolkit as a resource for communities that wish to implement police-youth dialogues. Drawing from projects across the country that use dialogues, the toolkit consolidates expertise, providing strategies and promising practices.

Potential Effects of the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice Recently Released School Discipline Guidance Package on Law Enforcement

http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-W0736

While incidents of school violence have decreased overall, too many schools are still struggling to create positive, safe environments. The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice released a school discipline guidance package to assist public elementary and secondary schools in meeting their obligations to administer student discipline without discriminating and to build and maintain positive school climates and effective discipline policies. This BOLO discusses that guidance package and how schools using school-based law enforcement can effectively meet those obligations.

Rethinking Discipline

http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html

Teachers and students deserve school environments that are safe, supportive, and conducive to teaching and learning. Creating a supportive school climate—and decreasing suspensions and expulsions—requires close attention to the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all students. This website offers administrators, educators, students, parents, and community members tools, data, and resources to increase their awareness of the prevalence, impact, and legal implications of suspension and expulsion; to find basic information and resources on effective alternatives; and to join a national conversation on how to effectively create positive school climates.

A Role for Officers in Schools

http://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/03-2013/a_role_for_officers.asp

This article identifies some of the concerns surrounding police presence in public schools and how a national consensus-building project, coordinated by the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center, has been working toward addressing those concerns. The initiative's goal is to provide recommendations and implementation guidance to minimize dependence on student suspension and expulsion; to improve students' academic outcomes; to reduce their involvement in the juvenile justice system; and to promote safe and productive learning environments.

The Role of Law Enforcement in Responding to School-Based Incidents: Guidance from The "I Love U Guys" Foundation

http://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/02-2013/the_role_of_le_in_responding_to_school_based_incidents.asp

This article discusses two simple but profound resources developed by The "I Love U Guys" Foundation to help schools and first-responders during a school-based emergency or incident: Standard Response Protocol (SRP) and Standard Reunification Method (SRM). The foundation explored school safety through symposiums, focus groups, research, and the dedication of a strong, diverse board of directors. As a result, they have created, packaged, promoted, and instituted programs and initiatives advancing student safety throughout the nation.

Safe School-Based Enforcement through Collaboration, Understanding, and Respect (SECURe) Rubrics

http://cops.usdoj.gov/supportingsafeschools

The COPS Office recently partnered with the U.S. Department of Education on the development of these rubrics, which offer guidance to communities and law enforcement agencies on properly implementing the most effective SRO programs so they can positively impact the lives of our nation's students.

School Resource Officers

https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/03/28/school-resource-officers

This blog post from the White House discusses the need to reassess ways to improve the overall school climate and look beyond simply having more police officers in schools. The website also covers President Obama's plan to reduce gun violence, Now Is the Time, which includes tools to create a safer environment at schools across the country and includes a call to put as many as 1,000 new SROs and counselors on the job.

School Resource Officers Navigating Information Sharing

http://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/06-2013/SROs_and_Information_Sharing.asp

This article discusses the confusion around whether SROs can legally share or obtain information with school staff about students they all serve. This question also applies to information sharing between these school-based law enforcement officers and professionals serving children outside the school, such as health care providers and social service caseworkers. In addition, this article covers how information sharing must be done in compliance with federal and state privacy laws.

School Safety CD-ROM

http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-CD010

Bullying, stalking, and other interpersonal crimes affect our nation's children at an alarming rate. As such, this CD-ROM provides more than 110 documents and links related to school violence, gangs, bullying, and property crime as a resource to local policymakers, law enforcement, school administrators, parents, and students. This disc provides school safety information in terms of bullying and interpersonal violence, youth violence prevention, alcohol and substance abuse, community partnerships, property crime and nuisance violations, SROs, and emergency preparedness and management.

Student-Parent Reunification after a School Crisis

http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-W0749

Although not typically considered first responders, school personnel are expected to be prepared to respond to school-based emergencies, whether natural (e.g., dangerous weather) or man-made (e.g., violent attacks). This bulletin discusses one critical aspect of crisis response-accountable reunification of students with their parents or guardians in the event of a school crisis or emergency. The example protocol included in this bulletin can make the student-parent reunification process more predictable and less chaotic for all involved, as it provides school and district safety teams with proven methods for planning, practicing, and achieving a successful reunification.

Supporting Safe Schools

http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/Default.asp?Item=2687

This COPS Office web page provides resources and information that help support safe schools where students can learn and teachers can educate. The web page also discusses the office's grant funds that help deploy SROs.

TAPS Academy

http://www.tapsacademy.org/

The goal of the Teen and Police Service (TAPS) Academy is to reduce the social distance between at-risk youth and law enforcement. The 11-week curriculum places these teens and law enforcement personnel on equal footing and creates an environment that encourages sharing and problem solving. The curriculum covers specific topic areas associated with children and youth safety, such as violence, physical and sexual abuse, stalking, domestic trafficking, sexual exploitation, and bullying.

Using School COP: A Guide for School Administrators and Safety Personnel
http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-W0715

This guide helps school administrators, police officers assigned to a school, and non-sworn school security staff to reduce student discipline and crime problems using a software application called the School Crime Operations Package, or School COP, located at www.schoolcopsoftware.com/index.htm.

West Side Story Project Toolkit
http://ric-zai-inc.com/ric.php?page=detail&id=COPS-P191

The West Side Story Project is a collaboration between police, theatre, and schools that uses the themes of the musical *West Side Story* to address youth violence, youth-police relations, and cultural differences. The project demonstrates how these groups can use theatre arts to reduce youth conflicts (both internal and external) and build relationships. This toolkit comprises five booklets, a CD, and a DVD that provide directions, suggestions, and examples for building this collaboration. The toolkit shows middle and high school students how to participate in activities that engage them in dialogues about gang and youth violence prevention, immigration, and racial and ethnic relations. Simultaneously, students are introduced to the experience of musical theatre and can create their own art and drama based on themes from *West Side Story*.

About the COPS Office

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community police and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Another source of COPS Office assistance is the Collaborative Reform Initiative for Technical Assistance (CRI-TA). Developed to advance community policing and ensure constitutional practices, CRI-TA is an independent, objective process for organizational transformation. It provides recommendations based on expert analysis of policies, practices, training, tactics, and accountability methods related to issues of concern.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than $14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.

■ To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 129,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.

■ Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.

■ To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than eight million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.

■ The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement.

The COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics—from school and campus safety to gang violence—can be downloaded at www. cops.usdoj.gov. This website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.

This guide is meant to help community groups facilitate discussions and training sessions in conjunction with screenings of the 17-minute Not In Our Town film *Beyond the Badge: Profile of a School Resource Officer.* Produced in collaboration with the COPS Office, the film profiles Ronald Cockrell, a St. Louis County, MO, school resource officer, as he works to bridge the gap between students and police officers six months after the police shooting and protests that left North St. Louis County reeling. The story focuses on Cockrell's efforts to build relationships, listen to students address their fear of police in a school town hall, mentor young people on how to deal with conflicts, and work with his colleagues to support a student whose father is murdered. The guide provides discussion questions for use in community screenings as well as a list of supplemental resources. Used together, the film and guide can help communities to better understand the role and purpose of school resource officers.