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CHECKLIST

SCHOOL SAFETY PLANNING

- Review agency policies and procedures regarding tactical situations and Active Shooter deployment. Communicate with schools on their roles and responsibilities during critical incidents.
- Review with school officials the district's crisis response plans to better prepare to respond to a school-based emergency.
- Develop memorandums of understanding, detailing agreed upon roles and responsibilities before, during, and after a school-based emergency.
- Regularly review individual campus safety procedures and reinforce to staff and students the importance of observation, reporting, and a timely response.
- Actively participate in tabletop scenarios and basic school safety drills like lockdown, shelter-in-place, and evacuation.
- Designate a specific reunification site and ensure that all first responders are aware of their assignments in traffic control, access control, and site security.
- Partner with schools to periodically conduct campus safety and security assessments, to build relationships between schools and law enforcement, while increasing awareness of environmental design issues.
- Designate a secured area for media and public information officers, and develop a schedule to keep them advised through regular briefings.

CHECKLIST

SCHOOL SAFETY RESPONSES

- Provide immediate intervention, using Active Shooter measures if necessary.
- Take control of the situation.
- Secure the scene and students.
- Establish the perimeter and command center.
- Designate triage, transportation, and staging areas.
- Order necessary support from school, fire, EMS, and traffic control personnel.
- Secure other schools that have been locked down, and all transportation and evacuation sites.
- Secure all necessary school and support personnel in the command center.
- Establish a secured area for media and all public information officers; keep them advised of the situation with regular briefings as appropriate.
- Mobilize officers to secure the school perimeter, command center, and reunification site.

Limited copies of this volume of the National Sheriffs' Association Law Enforcement: Promising Practices Series are available at no cost. For details, contact NSA at: schoolsafety@sheriffs.org
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A few years ago in Citrus County, Florida, two students' relationship began to deteriorate. The young man, upset because the young woman had another boyfriend, was going to bring a gun to school. Another student was able to communicate this information to a School Resource Officer (SRO). The young man was stopped before he reached the campus, and the gun was recovered. Because of the SRO Program and the positive relationship between law enforcement and students in the school, Citrus County didn't make the news that day.

Keeping America's Schools Safe

**Law Enforcement
Promising Practices Series:
School Resource Officers**



National Sheriffs' Association

THE CHARGE

In response to the recent school shootings, President George W. Bush called on the National Sheriffs' Association to lead the effort in identifying promising practices for ensuring the safety of our nation's schools and the protection of our children.

On October 10, 2006, President Bush participated in a panel discussion on school safety at a national "Conference on School Safety." President Bush asked Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and Education Secretary Margaret Spellings to convene a meeting of leading experts and stakeholders to discuss how federal, state, and local governments can work together with schools, communities, and families to help ensure our schools are safe places for students to learn.¹

Sheriff Jeffrey Dawsy, Citrus County, Florida, remarked on the effectiveness of his community's School Resource Officer (SRO) initiative. After hearing Dawsy's remarks, President Bush identified the value of an opportunity to share with sheriffs and police chiefs how the Citrus County's SRO model might benefit others nationwide. The President then specifically requested that the National Sheriffs' Association "make sure that happens."²

In immediate response to the President's request, NSA presents the first volume in the "Law Enforcement: Promising Practices Series." Designed to provide a snapshot of the key elements of successful law enforcement safe school initiatives for various sizes and types of law enforcement agencies, NSA looks forward to providing you with this vital information to help keep your schools and communities safer today and in future years.

WHY SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS?

In thousands of communities, sheriffs, chiefs, and law enforcement executives are seizing the opportunity to place their best officers in the center of the most victimized and greatest offender population: youth.

School Resource Officers (SRO) are sworn law enforcement officers assigned to schools as their beat. Everyday these officers interact with students in school communities, complete with their own structure, rules, citizens, and crime.³

Through a wide range of comprehensive responsibilities including law enforcement, problem solving, teaching, counseling, and crisis management, SROs bridge critical gaps that can separate students from campus life, and administrative staff and teachers from youth.

"Our school children should never fear [for] their safety when they enter into a classroom."

-President George W. Bush

CITRUS COUNTY'S SRO PROGRAM

Identifying that the School Resource Officer Program is one of the core issues on intelligence to keep communities safe, the Citrus County, Florida Sheriff's Office (CCSO) offers its SRO Program and related initiatives from the formative, elementary school years through middle and high school years.

CCSO designates an operations lieutenant, sergeants, and deputies to implement the SRO Program in its schools. These law enforcement officers build strong partnerships with students, school personnel, and related interagency representatives, and implement the following SRO initiatives:

- Jr. Focus (First Grade): Home safety skills.
- Cyber-safety (Third, Fifth Grades): Dangers of the Internet, prevention skills.
- Child Lures (Third Grade): Responses to prevent exploitation and abuse.
- FOCUS (Fifth Grade): Citrus County's curriculum on drugs, decisions, and crime trends impacting youth.
- Project Alert (Seventh Grade): Safety, drug prevention, decision making skills.

"Law enforcement must work with school administrators and members of their community to ensure that steps are being taken to keep our schools safe. I commend the National Sheriffs' Association's efforts to share the innovative approaches of its members and to encourage communities to discuss what more can be done."

-Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales

STUDENTS OF INTEREST

Core to Citrus County's success with its SRO Program is the "Safe Schools Interagency Team for Prevention" (STP) that meets regularly to share confidential information on "Students of Interest," or those students whose life circumstances may require prevention or intervention services—or just heightened attention from the team.

STP members represent the Sheriff's Office, School Board, County Health Department, Department of Children and Families, Youth and Family Alternatives, Drug/Teen Court, the Department of Juvenile Justice, "Mad Dads," and the State Attorney's Office.

Based on STP strategies, a Student of Interest exhibits one or more risk factors in three of the four following general categories, or has experienced a significant/unique event:

School:

- Change in academic performance
- Change in student behavior
- Change in appearance
- Truancy
- Stealing

Pre-Delinquency:

- Runaway
- Ungovernable
- Associating with gang members, criminals
- Animal cruelty
- Arrest on campus
- Stealing

Substance Abuse:

- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Parental gambling

Home:

- DCF involvement
- Witness to or victim of domestic violence
- Witness to or victim of violence
- Family conflict, change in family dynamics
- Lack of supervision
- Abuse/neglect
- Family history, anti-social behavior, substance abuse
- Police presence at home
- Monetarily disadvantaged
- Family member incarcerated
- Family member with mental health issues
- Transitions/Homeless

"What happens with this program is that we follow the information from one stage to the other to return this child back as a successful student in our community."

-Sheriff Jeffrey Dawsy

SRO: A RETURN ON INVESTMENT

A view often expressed by law enforcement executives regarding an SRO Program is "I believe SROs can be effective in reducing school violence, but how do I promote the program to my community?" Use the information below to share the value of SROs to local decision makers and other community stakeholders:

- Students: schools are safer, students have an additional resource available to them, and they are exposed to positive role models.
- Parents and Guardians: children learn in safer environments.
- Teachers and School Administrators: improved working conditions with an ongoing partnership with law enforcement.
- Law Enforcement: more effective way to serve and protect youth and neighborhoods surrounding schools.
- Criminal Justice: time and money is economized through prevention instead of enforcement.
- Taxpayers: tax dollars are invested more effectively for long-term prevention efforts.
- Community: the community is brought together to address issues of youth violence and crime in comprehensive, successful ways.⁴

¹ www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/print/20061010.html.

² www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/print/20061010-8.html.

³ Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services, School Resource Officers Guide, 2003.

⁴ Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services, School Resource Officers Guide, 2003.