

**THE BILL BLACKWOOD
LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE OF TEXAS**

Incentives for Education

A Policy Research Project
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INTRODUCTION

Although the idea of college-educated police officers was first introduced by August Vollmer in the early 1900's, it has really only been during the last twenty-five years that police administrators, college professors, and criminal justice experts have strongly debated the necessity of requiring police officers to possess college education (Dantzker 101). The purpose of this policy proposal is to show the benefits to a law enforcement entity and the community it serves through a well trained and educated police officer. This officer in turn should be given some type of incentive to start, continue, and finish their higher education. Through a combination of education and training, officers are better prepared to face the complex situations so often encountered in their work (Ferreira 30). Through continued education an officer becomes more of a professional and less of a liability to their department and the community they serve.

Agencies who provide only the minimum required amount of training and no incentive for education are sending a message to their officers that education and training are not a priority. The American Bar Association in 1972, concluded:

The qualities which law enforcement leaders claim to look for in recruits are the very ones which liberal education is believed to nurture: knowledge of changing social, economic and political conditions, understanding human behavior and the ability to communicate, together with the assumption of certain moral values, habits of mind and qualities of self-discipline which are important in sustaining a commitment to public service (Hayslip 50).

This proposal is directed toward those in police administration, their city councils, mayors, city managers, or sheriffs. Officials who make policies and allocate funds to implement new and innovative ideas to improve law enforcement.

The sources of information used for this proposal are: books, articles in magazines and journals, and surveys. These sources are listed in a completed bibliography.

The intended outcome of this proposal is to show through research and surveys that incentives for training and continued education are a growing trend that need to be followed. My hope is to plant the seed in the minds of my administration and city council that education is an invaluable asset that can no longer be ignored. As stated in an article by Carter and Sapp who quoted an unnamed chief:

The only [arguable] disadvantage to having college trained officers is the higher possibility they might leave your organization some day. I do not look at that as a disadvantage, but a testament to revitalization of an organization through the liquidity of its personnel. If all of your officers were getting college degrees and then leaving the department, you would have a constant influx of creative, intellectual thinking--and that doesn't sound bad (83).

HISTORICAL, LEGAL or THEORETICAL CONTEXT

In the early stages of policing in the United States, there was much to be desired in the quality of those who became police officers. Obtaining a job as a police officer was often the result of political patronage, and preparedness was limited to the provision of a badge and a gun. Police officers sometimes were not the most respected or trustworthy individuals (Shernock and Dantzker 75).

Individuals and organizations alike sought to change this attitude by attempting to professionalize the police profession through education. The belief in the importance of a college education for police officers today derives from two movements. The first and most longstanding source of this belief is the perceived need to reform the police by

professionalizing them, and the second source, the perceived need to change police attitudes (Shernock and Dantzker 76).

August Vollmer, known as the father of police professionalism, attempted to answer this call in the early 1900's. Vollmer, during his tenure as Berkeley, California's police chief, required his officers to attend classes at the University of California, Berkeley, and designed a sequence of courses he felt were important to his officer's education and professionalization (Garner 1).

In 1931, the final report of the Wickersham Commission noted that "the great majority of police are not suited either by temperament, training, or education for their position" (National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, 1931) (Shernock and Dantzker 75). It was not until the latter 1950's and early 1960's that a minimum requirement of a high school or general equivalency diploma (GED) was established and minimal training standards begun (Garner 1).

The major impetus for implementing Vollmer's idea of higher education for police came in the late 1960s (Sherman et al., 1978) through a number of different national commissions. The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (1967a: 107) suggested that "the ultimate aim of all police departments should be that all personnel with enforcement powers have baccalaureate degrees" (Hayeslip 49). The Commission noted the need for important changes in the quality of police personnel, the quality of officer preparation and training, management structure, how police relate to the community, and how police deliver services to the community (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux 165-166).

The President's Commission led to the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (Shernock and Dantzker 77) which led to the creation of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA). A tool of LEAA was the Law Enforcement Education Program (LEEP), which provided monies to universities and colleges to create police-related programs and scholarship monies for students to enroll in these programs (Sherman et al., 1978) (Shernock and Dantzker 77).

The on-going debate over the potential benefits of receiving a college education dominated the 1970s and 1980s. Rather than moving forward to enhance entry requirements and modify curriculum, decision makers continued to struggle over the merit of higher education. There seemed to be an interminable argument over the training versus education issue; a debate long ago resolved in favor of college degree requirements for other professions (Garner 2).

The expectations that society places upon law enforcement officers are ever growing. Legal procedures relating to arrest, the use of force, and search and seizure have become ever more complicated over the years. Society must acknowledge its responsibility in providing educational opportunities to allow police officers to carry out their duties effectively. It would be a grave misjudgment to think that lesser educated officers will be able to handle complex legal problems and questions (Ferriera 26).

Law enforcement is a field, like medicine, where both theory and practice should be included in the educational environment (Ferriera 33). Through the combination of education and training, officers are better prepared to face the complex situations so often encountered in their work (Ferriera 30).

The Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Secret Service to name but two federal agencies have acknowledged the fact that college education is valuable and important by making it a minimum requirement for their agents. But the police service at the municipal level has not accepted this standard, even though local law enforcement may well be a more demanding occupation - "far more complicated, technical, and of far greater importance to the American way of life than is the federal service" (Saunders 81).

REVIEW of LITERATURE or PRACTICE

"If someone has a college degree, especially in police science, law enforcement, etc., that says several things about that person, e.g., he or she has the ability to write and think and has an interest in making law enforcement a true career or profession" (Sharp 28). Some researchers attempt to show how performance, which is difficult to define and measure, relates to education. Officer attitude, discretion, ethics, cynicism, decision-making, and the use of deadly force are some of the variables through which researchers use in an attempt to measure officer performance.

Despite the different measures of performance used, several studies have reported a positive relationship between education and "job performance" (Kappeler, Sapp and Carter 38). Carter and Sapp found that college-educated officers are more "open-minded" than non-college officers. They are also more likely to be tolerant of people of different life-styles, race and ethnicity (1989 155-156). Dantzker points out in his research that college education improves mandatory skills such as communication (written and oral), critical thinking, decision making, and better understanding of human relations

(1992 101).

Carter and Sapp in another article suggest that higher education may reduce liability risks (1989 154). They argued that when educated officers encounter conflict with persons of different cultures and belief systems, the officers will be less likely to resort to force, unlawful means, or disrespect in resolving the conflict (1989 156). Garner, in his research found that higher educated police officers tended to be less ridged, had better discretionary judgment, exhibited more positive attitudes towards policing's legal challenges, and held a broader perspective of the police role (4).

Kappeler, Sapp, and Carter's research found Sterling to summarize some important benefits of higher education for police as:

Greater range of interpersonal skills centered in their ability to communicate, to be responsive to others, and to exercise benevolent leadership.

Greater ability to analyze situations, to exercise discretion independently, and to make judicious decisions.

Strong moral character which reflects a sense of conscience and the qualities of [honesty], reliability, and tolerance.

More desirable system of personal values consistent with the police function in a democratic society (38-39).

Carter and Sapp propose that higher education can lower complaints of (1) failure to train, (2) failure to supervise, (3) failure to protect, (4) negligent entrustment, and (5) failure to direct (1990a 1). They contend that having a minimum college requirement for employment and educational support policies for those officers who wish to continue their education could arguably mitigate complaints of failure to train. (1990a 2). Since

college-educated officers generally make better discretionary decisions than their non-college counterpart, the officer's college education could be an important factor in the defense of a "failure to protect" complaint (1990a 2). A college educated officer has a broader comprehension of civil rights issues from legal, social, historical, and political perspectives (1990a 2) which would address the failure to direct problem. Supervisors with higher education more clearly understand both management concepts and the supervisor's role and are better prepared to understand a broader range of human motivation, evaluation, and control issues (1990a 2). This in turn mitigates the accusation of failure to supervise. A college education standard shows that a department has established more rigorous criteria prior to entrusting the officer with the powers of the police office. As a result, the threat of negligent entrustment is diminished (1990a 2).

The educational requirements for agencies in the State of Texas was researched by Garner through a telephonic survey of seventy-two law enforcement agencies. Garner found that ten police departments had an absolute college educational requirement for entry while another ten had college educational requirement with possible exceptions or substitutions. Of these twenty departments the type of educational requirements varied greatly. The range extended from 15 hours of non-specified college credit to a bachelor's degree (4-5). One department required 15 hours, four required 30 hours, one had a 45-hour requirement, and one additional agency implemented a minimum standard of 60 college hours (5).

On the question of promotion Garner found that only five of the 72 departments surveyed reported that they had an educational requirement to be eligible for promotion

(5). As far as incentives for increasing college education Garner found that only 52 agencies offered some type of incentive for obtaining a college education. Forty-two had various forms of tuition reimbursement, however, this was a result of a city wide policy and not departmental-specific standard. Of the 52 agencies who reported incentive pay for education only 32 offered higher pay for those with degrees. Some departments offered other incentives other than monetary ones. These included the use of vehicles for transportation to classes, time off to attend college courses, and scheduling preferences to accommodate the college semester (7).

Only 3 out of 26 agencies with 15-50 sworn officers had some form of requirements, while 3 out of 8 agencies with 50-100, 8 out of 18 agencies with 100-250, 2 out of 9 agencies with 250-500, and 4 out of 8 agencies with 1,000 sworn officers had enhanced education standards.

DISCUSSION of RELEVANT ISSUES

The most compelling argument for higher educational standards for police is the steadily rising educational level of the general population (Saunders 89). Failure to overtake or at least keep pace with rising standards in other occupations will mean that recruits will have to be drawn increasingly from the minority of the population least educated, least talented, and least qualified to assume the responsibilities of modern law enforcement (Saunders 91).

Kappeler, Sapp, and Carter found a positive relationship between fewer complaints from citizens and college education of two years or more (49). Their research of various

studies indicated that college educated officers consistently received higher performance ratings from supervisors, better peer relations, are more flexible, less dogmatic, and less authoritarian. They also found these college educated officers to take fewer leave days, receive fewer injuries, have less injury time, have lower rates of absenteeism, use fewer sick days, and are involved in fewer traffic accidents than non-college-educated officers (38).

As one chief observed in an article by Carter and Sapp:

The better educated [police officers] tend to stand out in analytical, communications, problem-solving ability, and to display more initiative, less prejudice, and be more global oriented (1990b 82).

College educated officers have a broader comprehension of civil rights issues from legal, social, historical, and political perspectives (Carter and Sapp 1990a 2). These officers have a broader view of policing tasks and a greater professional ethos, thus their actions and decisions tend to be driven by conscience and values consequently lessening the chance of erroneous decisions (Carter and Sapp 1990a 2). Based on these arguments Carter and Sapp conclude that the college educated officer would be less likely to place their department in a liability situation (1990a 2).

Garner points out that policing is an occupation that demands the education and skills of a teacher, lawyer, counselor, social worker, doctor, psychologist, and minister. Yet, of these professions, only policing does not require a basic college degree (9).

Shernock and Dantzker conclude that both education and training are important aspects of policing. They found that training continues to grow because of federal

statutes and court decisions requiring police departments to provide adequate and relevant training. Higher education for police officers, while often considered desirable, is still very much in the process of evolving (93).

In Breci's random sample of Minnesota peace officers he found that officers in rural agencies were least likely to have taken college classes after they were hired. Breci sites a possible reason is their limited access to a college campus. However his survey revealed that these officers were similar to those from larger agencies in their desire to attend classes (59). Some officers in Breci's survey perceived a lack of agency commitment to educational support after they were hired which is contrasted by other research that showed a strong preference for hiring college-educated officers. Breci states that agencies perceive the value of a college education for their officers but are unwilling to invest in advancing the education of those already in the field (59).

Highly educated officers will cost more money. Communities will have to understand the economics; that they get what they pay for. It would be a grave misjudgment to think that lesser educated officers will be able to handle complex legal problems and questions (Ferreira 26). Ferreira points out that budgets are always limited and education is often the one area that might be seen as "nice to have" but not "crucial" to the short term operation of the department. However, the effects of budget cuts or downsizing on training and educational programs will be devastating for the long-term health of a police agency or department (30-31).

Ferreira suggest some of the following solutions to employ officers with more broad-based educational preparation:

Require higher minimum educational qualifications upon entry;

Include educational requirements for promotion and advancement;

Create incentives for serving officers to entice them to advance their education - flexible hours, scholarships, merit pay, etc.;

Encourage personnel to study and set an example by having supervisors advance their own formal educational preparation;

Educate society regarding the complexity of police work so that citizens will understand and promote law enforcement education in their communities;

Inform communities about the many benefits of proper education and training for their police officers so that they can provide the necessary funding for educational opportunities (32).

In Sharps' interview with Frank Pane, Chief of Police in Geneva, NY, Pane is quoted as stating "due to civil service rules there are times we are forced to choose from candidates who have no calling for police work. Requiring a candidate to have a degree in criminal justice would eliminate this problem" (27).

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Modern policing requires insight into complicated issues of legal interpretations, human behavior and cultural differences that becomes available through more education only (Ferreira 32). A well trained and educated officer reduces a department's liability issues with regard to negligent entrustment, failure to train, supervise, protect, and direct.

Departments must encourage officers to acquire the skills they need to break down the barriers that have formed between the police and the community (Breci 59). These skills can be obtained through the exposure to new ideas, cultures, theories and practices that a college education and continued training provide. Greene and Cordner claim "college education improves the interpersonal skills of the police officer, expands individual tolerance of ambiguity, and produces an individual capable of sorting out the complexities of social existence for the general public" (13).

Police administrators should focus on education in law enforcement by promoting it throughout their agencies and by cooperating more closely with colleges and universities in their communities (Ferreira 32). As Garner points out "if policing is ever to be viewed as a true profession, we must demand educational standards that are commensurate" (9). Education would thus become not the measure of a good policeman but a means to make good ones better (Saunders 86)

ABSTRACT

Approximately twenty years ago the average police academy lasted about one hundred hours. Ten years ago the time was increased to approximately four hundred hours. Today's academy hours range anywhere from five to over seven hundred hours. The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Education and Standards (TCLEOSE) sets the standards for academies and minimum required continued training in the state of Texas. The increase in hours shows that TCLEOSE recognizes the need to expand a recruit's knowledge and training in the various topics related to law enforcement.

A well trained and educated officer can only be viewed as an asset to their agency, fellow officers, and the community they serve. Educated officers communicate more effectively in both the oral and written form. This can lower complaints and increase the potential for successful case prosecutions.

Departments need to join TCLEOSE in their quest for increasing an officer's knowledge and training if they hope to employ and retain officers who are prepared to work in our diverse society. Agencies can accomplish this goal by providing some form of incentives to their officers to start, continue and complete their formal education. These incentives can be in the form of tuition reimbursement, schedule adjustments, or increased pay for degrees and/or certificates to name just a few.

The writer used research by various authors and conducted written and telephonic surveys of departments within the state of Texas. The research demonstrates the various benefits a department, its officers, and the community gain by encouraging continued education and training. The surveys show a strong and growing trend by departments who provide incentives to their officers to improve their skills, knowledge, and expertise through continued education. The surveys are broken down by "agencies in and around the San Antonio area" (figure 1) and "agencies outside the San Antonio area" (figure 2). The information provided in the tables show whether or not an agency reimburses their officers for their college tuition, provide salary increases for certificate level achievement, or increase in salary for a college degree. The surveys conducted by the writer can be found in the appendices.

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AGENCIES SURVEYED

Alamo Heights Police Department*
Balcones Heights Police Department*
Bandera County Sheriff Office**
Borger Police Department**
Buffalo Police Department**
Castle Hills Police Department*
Comal County Sheriff Office**
Converse Police Department*
Deer Park Police Department**
Eagle Pass Police Department**
Elmendorf Police Department*
Farmers Branch Police Department**
Fayette County Sheriff Office**
Friona Police Department**
Gardenridge Police Department*
Greenville Police Department**
Harker Heights Police Department**
Helotes Police Department*
Hill Country Village Police Department*
Hollywood Park Police Department*
Hurst Police Department**
Kingsville Police Department**
Kirby Police Department*
Lacy Lakeview Police Department**
Lancaster Independent School District Police**
Leon Valley Police Department*
Live Oak Police Department*
Marshall Police Department**
McKinney Police Department**
Olmos Park Police Department*
Pflugerville Police Department**
Schertz Police Department*
Selma Police Department*
Snyder Police Department**
Sugar Land Police Department**
Terrill Hills Police Department*
Texas Women's University Police Department**
Windcrest Police Department*
Woodway Public Safety Department**

* Denotes agencies in and around the San Antonio area

** Denotes agencies well outside the San Antonio area

Agency*	Certification Pay	Tuition Reimbursement	College Pay
Alamo Heights PD (20)	Yes	No	Yes
Balcones Heights PD (19)	Yes	No	No
Castle Hills PD (21)	Yes	No	No
Converse PD (<20)	No	Yes	No
Elmendorf PD (7)	No	Yes	No
Gardenridge PD (6)	Yes	No	No
<i>Helotes PD (7)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Hill Country Village PD (7)	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Hollywood Park PD (14)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Kirby PD (13)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Leon Valley PD (<25)	No	Yes	No
<i>Live Oak PD (<20)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Olmos Park PD (12)	Yes	No	Yes
Schertz PD (25)	Yes	No	No
Selma PD (<15)	Yes	No	No
Terrill Hills PD (17)	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Windcrest PD (18)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
TOTAL YES	9	3	4
TOTAL NO	8	14	13

Only five out of seventeen agencies surveyed do not provide any type of monetary incentives for their officers to start or continue their education.

() = # of officers

Figure 1

Agency**	Certification Pay	Tuition Reimbursement	Degree Pay
Bandera County SO (17)	Yes	No	No
Borger PD (23)	Yes	No	Yes
Buffalo PD (4)	Yes	No	No
<i>Comal County SO (43)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Deer Park PD (48)	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Eagle Pass PD (43)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Farmers Branch PD (75)	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Fayette County SO (18)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Friona PD (7)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Greenville PD (54)	Yes	No	No
Harker Heights PD (35)	Yes	No	Yes
Hurst PD (80)	Yes	No	No
Kingsville PD (48)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lacy Lakeview PD (20)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lancaster ISD (8)	No	No	Yes
Marshall PD (52)	Yes	Yes	Yes
McKinney PD (54)	No	Yes	No
Pflugerville PD (23)	No	Yes	No
Snyder PD (19)	Yes	Yes	No
Sugar Land PD (80)	No	Yes	No
<i>Texas Women's University (18)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Woodway Public Safety Department (23)	No	Yes	No
TOTAL YES	12	10	8
TOTAL NO	10	12	14

Only five out of twenty-two agencies surveyed do not provide any type of monetary incentives for their officers to start or continue their education.

() = # of officers

Figure 2