

**The Bill Blackwood
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**

**Making Katy ISD Schools Safer and More Effective:
A Recommendation of Implementation of School Resource Officers**

**An Administrative Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Required for Graduation from the
Leadership Command College**

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ABSTRACT

Can having a Katy Independent School District Police Officer/School Resource Officer stationed on Secondary Campuses produce a safer learning environment for Katy Independent School District students and parents and can they contribute to the education and success of students as role models, good citizens, successful business people and good parents? In today's society making schools safer and more effective is a concern of many people. Having a school resource officer on campus *is* not something new. SROs in the schools are steadily increasing.

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) defines "School Resource Officer" as "Officers who promote a better understanding of our laws, why they were enacted and their benefits. The officer provides training for the school staff and for students. A School Resource Officer (SRO) is a certified law enforcement officer who is permanently assigned to provide coverage to a school".

A School Resource Officer (SRO) is a certified law enforcement officer who is permanently assigned to provide coverage to a school. Information was obtained from journal articles, websites, surveys and interviews of school resource officers, campus based officers, administrators, students and parents. The officer represents a positive role model. The benefits of implementing a School Resource Officer in the Katy ISD would not only benefit the school system but also the local law enforcement along with the community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	
Introduction	1
Review of Literature	3
Methodology	6
Findings	9
Discussions/Conclusions	13
References	15

Introduction

Can having a Katy Independent School District Police Officer/School Resource Officer stationed on Secondary Campuses produce a safer learning environment for Katy Independent School District students and parents and can they contribute to the education and success of students as role models, good citizens, successful business people and good parents? In today's society making schools safer and more effective is a concern of many people. A School Resource Officer (SRO)/Campus Based Officer (CBO) is a certified law enforcement officer who is permanently assigned to provide coverage to a school. The SRO/CBO is specifically trained to perform three roles known as the Triad Model: law enforcement officer, law-related counselor, and law-related education teacher. The SRO/CBO acts as a comprehensive resource for his/her school.

Drugs, alcohol, gangs and other social ills threaten the future safety of our society. It's harder for school administrators to provide our youth with a safe learning environment due to so many outside factors influencing our young people. Our young people are being exposed to more violence every day. Today's music the students listen to, the violence they see on television, in the movies, and video games, are all sending a message to the students that it's okay to do drugs and it is okay to use violence to solve your problems. Students sometimes don't understand their importance in their school and in their community and how their behavior today can affect their future. Some students tend to use some form of violence to solve problems instead of using conflict resolution where no one becomes a victim and the problem is resolved in a peaceful manner. Whether it is disruption of class, assault, disorderly conduct, fighting, public intoxication, possession and/or delivery of drugs, bringing a weapon to school, this kind

of behavior in the schools is not acceptable and can affect the learning environment.

Many times K.I.S.D. police officers are called to a school because of disruptive behavior and this in turns affects the learning environment for all students because the teacher has to stop teaching and deal with the student's disruptive behavior.

This research is to review the pros and cons of stationing a Katy I.S.D. Police Officer on campus. Information will be obtained from journal articles, websites, surveys and interviews of school resource officers, campus based officers, administrators, students and parents. In addition to applying the authors own experience gained as a police officer working in the schools through teaching DARE, GREAT and other programs this information is intended to show the positive results of a police officer being stationed on a school campus.

This information is intended to reveal that schools can be made safer and more effective by assigning a Katy I.S.D. Police Officer to a campus. This in turn will benefit the entire community. Violence in the schools and community will be reduced. The crime rate goes down. Discipline action decreases due to lack of disruptive behavior. Students are made aware of their important part in society and of their choices and the consequences of those choices. Students are to be held accountable for their actions. Students are more successful because they feel safer and have a safe and orderly environment to learn in.

The officer will have a better rapport with students and staff through communication and interaction. The officer represents a positive role model. The officer's role is prevention, intervention and education. The officer can increase safety and security in ways far greater than we may ever know. Everyone in the school and

community benefits when there is an officer assigned to a Katy I.S.D. Secondary Campus.

If recognized by the school district the result of this research should lead to implementation of School Resource Officers stationed on Katy Independent School District secondary campuses making our students more successful due to a safer environment conducive to learning. Implementing SROs starting at the junior high campuses would utilize that officer by not only teaching the D.A.R.E. JR. High Curriculum in seventh grade but the Officer could also teach the D.A.R.E. Elementary Curriculum to sixth grade. Another alternative could be the Officer would teach assigned elementary schools the elementary curriculum and return to the junior high campus they are assigned. Also the Officer could visit and teach lower grades at the elementary schools occasionally. Katy ISD would be taking a proactive approach and showing the Katy ISD community that they care.

Review of Literature

After reviewing articles, surveys, and studies by individuals and organizations, the SRO programs are very similar and the trend of having a SRO on campus is increasing. Having a school resource officer on campus is not something new. The first formal program was developed in Liverpool, England in 1951 (Bond, 2001). In the United States in 1958, the first school resource officer was assigned to a high school in Flint, Michigan (Bond, 2001). SROs in the schools are steadily increasing. In the 1960s and 1970s SRO programs were established in Florida and other areas. In the 1990s an increase of SROs came about because of the community policing philosophy. And with

the major violence occurring in schools recently, the number of SROs in schools has continued to increase.

There is no standardized definition for what a "School Resource Officer" is. The federal definition is a career law enforcement officer, with sworn authority, deployed in community-oriented policing, and assigned by the employing police department or agency to work in collaboration with schools and community-based organizations to: a) address crime and disorder problems, gangs, and drug activities affecting or occurring in or around an elementary or secondary school; (b) develop or expand crime prevention efforts for students; (c) educate likely school-age victims in crime prevention and safety; (d) develop or expand community justice initiatives for students; (e) train students in conflict resolution, restorative justice, and crime awareness; (f) assist in the identification of physical changes in the environment that may reduce crime in or around the school; and (g) assist in developing school policy that addressed crime and recommend procedural changes (Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative).

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) defines "School Resource Officer": Officers who promote a better understanding of our laws, why they were enacted and their benefits. They provide a visible and positive image for law enforcement. They serve as a confidential source of counseling to students concerning problems they face. They bring expertise into schools that will help young people make more positive choices in their lives. They also work to protect the school environment and to maintain an atmosphere where teachers feel safe to teach and students feel safe enough to learn (NASRO).

The Center for the Prevention of School Violence's definition is a certified law enforcement officer who is permanently assigned to provide coverage to a school or set of schools. The SRO is specifically trained to perform three roles: law enforcement officer: law-related counselor: and law-related education teacher. The SRO is not necessarily a DARE officer (although many have received such training), security guard, or an officer who has been placed temporarily in a school in response to a crisis situation but rather acts as a comprehensive resource for his/her school (Center for the Prevention of School Violence Material).

All of the organizations used the Triad Model for implementing the SRO Program. This appears to be what has made it as successful as it is. First and foremost the officer is there for enforcement to keep a safe and orderly environment. When a law is broken the officer has his duty to act whether it be writing a citation or making an arrest. This action lets students know that there are clear expectations for behavior and if violated they will be dealt with.

The second part of the Triad Model is the law-related educator. The officer provides training for the school staff and for students. This is prevention through education. The Officers provide training for the staff. Included in that training are crime prevention, personal safety, signs and symptoms of drug abuse, criminal law, and many others. Officers also teach to students the following areas: Intro to Law Enforcement, Intro to Criminal Justice, Intro to Criminal Law as well as D.A.R.E., G.R.E.A.T., personal safety, conflict resolution, drug abuse prevention, gang awareness, citizenship, crime prevention and many others. The officer teaches the students just how important

their role is in the community, which is to be a responsible citizen. And the students also learn the consequences of not making good choices and what can happen.

And the last part of the Triad Model is law-related counseling. Many times principals ask officers to counsel with a student who may need some guidance. The students usually are on the verge of making bad choices or have already made some bad choices. The officer can counsel and let them know what can happen if they chose to continue this kind of behavior. The officer can explain the criminal justice system and how it all works.

In nearly all of the surveys that were conducted, the question of does the SRO Program work was asked. Each survey came up with the same answer. The SRO Program does work in many ways. Some of the surveys showed a significant decrease in crime. The presence of an officer on campus can deter illegal and disruptive behavior. Having an officer on campus can deter someone from bringing a weapon on campus. Having the officer's patrol car parked in a highly visible place can be a deterrent for unwanted trespassers and also a sign of relief for parents and students knowing there is an officer present on campus. An officer can be a positive role model for the students. The officer pays attention to disruptive behavior such as bullying, name-calling, minor disagreements, and intimidation because they can prevent the situation from escalating into a fight, assault, or school shooting. A SRO Program will bring many benefits to the students, staff and community. Some we may never know of.

Methodology

In today's society making schools safer and more effective is a concern of many people. A School Resource Officer (SRO) is a certified law enforcement officer who is

permanently assigned to provide coverage to a school. The SRO is specifically trained to perform three roles: law enforcement officer, law-related counselor, and law-related education teacher. The SRO acts as a comprehensive resource for his/her school. Can having a school resource officer on campus produce a safer learning environment for students and parents and can they contribute to the education and success of students as role models, good citizens, successful business people and good parents? Will the students, staff and community have a better sense of safety on the campuses of Katy I.S.D. Secondary Schools if an SRO Program was implemented?

The research is comprised of three areas. The first was a questionnaire given to a group of Katy I.S.D. parents, school staff members (teachers and principals) and a group of students. The second was interviews with three School Resource Officers. And the third is the author's own experience working with campuses and students.

The research from the questionnaires show that staff members, students and parents feel an officer on campus can be beneficial to the students, staff and community. It also shows that there is a need to have SROs stationed at the secondary campuses for many reasons such as a sense of security and to deter illegal and disruptive behavior. The officer can educate parents, students, and staff about our laws and the justice system and many other programs such as conflict resolution, crime prevention, drug and gang awareness, and current safety issues. The officer is a valuable resource to all and a problem solver. One staff member said, "How can a district this size not have SROs?" Surrounding districts do have officers and in some cases have two officers on one campus.

The Officers along with the author all stated that they found being a campus officer was very rewarding. They knew they made a difference in many students' lives, even some they will never know about. They all saw a decrease in illegal and disruptive behavior. The crime rate also went down. The officers also saw an attitude change towards law enforcement. The officers said they established a good rapport with students and staff and parents. All officers taught some type of classes from D.A.R.E., G.R.E.A.T., crime prevention, law related classes, conflict resolution, citizenship and others. Two officers were assigned to one campus. The one officer was assigned to a junior high but then left campus occasionally to visit at a couple of elementary schools. When finished doing visitations at the elementary he would return to his junior high campus. At the junior high campus he teaches the D.A.R.E. Core Curriculum to the sixth graders and the D.A.R.E. Jr. High Curriculum to the seventh graders as well as other prevention programs, responds to calls, monitors the hall during class changes, presents a positive role model image, communicates with students and staff and has a good working relationship with all. Officer Matt Petrie said the relationships he has made being there at junior high are immeasurable. Petrie said 98% of his job is proactive.

The author's experience working with campuses has been going on since 1996 when the author became a D.A.R.E. Officer. The author would go to a different campus each day and stay all day. Principals and teachers let the author know they felt safer when the author was around. And that it was good to see law enforcement present because the students tended to act better and attendance was better on those days the author was present. The author was a resource for them when they had questions. The author listened to students when they needed someone to talk to and guided them to the

right source if the author couldn't help. Many times the author was able to help them. The author changed student attitudes about law enforcement. The author said, "I will never forget the day I walked into a junior high class and a female student said, "I don't like cops." The author said, "Why?" The student didn't answer. The author told her "You and I are going to be friends before this is all over and you will realize cops are here to help you and we are your friends." As time went on she became more open with the author who had found out that someone had been arrested in her family. The author and student talked about the arrest and how we as officers have a duty to enforce the law and sometimes we arrest the people they love. Recently the author saw her in her community. She realized it was Deputy BI. And she came to give the author a big hug. She has been very successful in her school and will now pursue college.

While at Katy I.S.D. the author has taught at several elementary and junior highs. The author also sees the same results. It doesn't matter where the author is, which campus, which students, the author will still make a difference in students lives as well as a difference in the community.

Findings

SROs bring many benefits to the campus. They are, first and foremost, a law enforcement officer who helps keep peace and order. Certified law enforcement officers enforce laws and citations are written or arrests are made when needed.

An officer has the knowledge and expertise of a public safety specialist who can help administrators in the coordination of Safe School Planning and the safety of the physical school environment. Trained as a first responder, an officer is on campus to deal with immediate life threatening situations. The officer also works to resolve problems

that threaten the safety of the school as well as the learning environment. They help teachers and staff stay focused on education by reducing the amount of time the principal and teachers have to spend on disciplinary matters. When crime and disruptions are reduced, the teachers can do what they were hired to do and that is teaching in their classroom.

SRO's can provide guidance to students and act as a link to resources in the school and the community. The SRO is there for students to talk to and for students to look up to as a role model. Students can have positive contact with a SRO keeping communication flowing.

SRO's are also teachers who provide students and staff with their expertise in law-related subjects. This benefits everyone; students, staff and the Katy ISD community.

Information gained from an article and survey completed by a graduate student at SHSU, Diana Huffman has been very helpful. The results are the same as many other surveys. The following information was from her research.

General characteristics of a SRO/CBO Program (Huffman, 1995)

Goals

- Reduce delinquent behavior
- Form better communication between youth and law enforcement
- Develop respect for law and order
- Obtain assistance to divert delinquent behavior
- Create a more positive concept of the legal and judicial system
- Demonstrate proactive and reactive aspects of law

- Provide counseling and referral services

Related results

- Patrol officers have a better understanding of youth
- Good cooperation and working relationship between youth and law enforcement
- More accurate account of illegal activities in schools

A SRO Program is an intervention as well as a preventive program (Huffman, 1995).

Range of officer responsibilities in Texas (Huffman, 1995)

- Classroom presentations
- Counseling
- Assist teachers and principals
- Provide a positive role model for students
- Intervene in disputes
- Deter and reduce on-campus crime
- Communication with students
- Gang intervention and training
- Provide a safe learning environment for students and teachers

Most important tasks an officer performs (Huffman, 1995)

- Communications with students
- Interaction with students
- Creating a positive role model and relationship

- Counseling with students
- Campus security
- Providing a law enforcement presence on campus
- Providing a safe learning environment for students and faculty
- Investigation of crimes and law enforcement actions
- Intelligence gathering
- Preventing children from using drugs and gang involvement and intervention

"The role of the SRO is an effective means of promoting positive relationships with children and youth and coping pro actively with the advancing spectra of juvenile crime" (Grant 1993).

Examples of Programs that could be taught

- D.A.R.E
- G.R.E.A.T.
- Crime Stoppers
- Consequences
- Careers in Law Enforcement
- Personal Safety
- Lectures on topics: Sexual assault, self-esteem, drug and alcohol abuse, laws, peer pressure, conflict resolution, and different crimes usually committed by juveniles

Responses to the Query-'Primary Impact of the Program'

- Better communication between youth and police
- Reduction of drug use and gang activity

- Youth have contact with police in a no confrontational setting leading to a better understanding of the criminal justice system and the police
- Provides students with someone to talk to
- Students, parents and school personnel have a greater sense of security and safety
- Teaches youth how not to be victims and the consequences of their actions
- Improved working relationship between police and school district
- Decrease of on-campus offenses and higher clearance rates
- Graduation rates have increased and drop-out rates have declined

Discussion/Conclusions

Is there a need to make our schools safer and more effective? In today's society making schools safer and more effective is a concern of many people. A School Resource Officer (SRO) is a certified law enforcement officer who is permanently assigned to provide coverage to a school. The SRO is specifically trained to perform three roles: law enforcement officer, law-related counselor, and law-related education teacher. The SRO acts as a comprehensive resource for his/her school. Can having a school resource officer on campus produce a safer learning environment for students and parents and can they contribute to the education and success of students as role models, good citizens, successful business people and good parents?

While patrolling the campuses in Katy ISD, the author has witnessed such disruptive behavior and has written many citations for disruption of class, disruption of transportation, fighting, possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia. Also experience of being on a campus in a previous job it is proven that having an officer on campus as well

with this research has shown having a SRO does in fact deter illegal and disruptive behavior. Having an officer stationed on campus sends a message to the community that the district has made school safety a priority. It also allows students to know that there are clear expectations for behavior and if violated will be dealt with.

The officer in turn helps the school to focus on educating by reducing the amount of time principals and teachers must spend on disciplinary matters. School administrators have more time to lead and see to education when crime and other disruptive behavior are reduced. Teachers can do what they were hired to do and that is to teach through classroom instruction.

The Katy I.S.D. Police and the district have a long-term investment in developing productive and law-abiding citizens for the community. Sharing a goal of ensuring the safety and well being of our students and staff will only help this investment to flourish.

All the research concludes that an officer based on secondary campuses does prevent and reduce juvenile crime. Evidence supports that it is effective and makes a difference in the community as a whole.

From the research it is a recommendation that Katy I.S.D. implement School Resource Officers at all secondary campuses, starting with junior high campuses first can be supported. And the reason for starting with junior high campuses is that this is the age when the disruptive behavior begins and if it can be deterred early then hopefully it will not be dealt with it at the high school level.

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May, 2003

The Bill Blackwood
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas
Administrative Research Paper
Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

I am looking for assistance from staff, students, and parents in my research paper I am writing. I am writing an Administrative Research Paper in order to graduate from Leadership Command College at The Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas at Sam Houston State University.

My research is about assigning School Resource Officers/Campus Based Officers to secondary campuses. A SRO/CBO is a law enforcement officer that is permanently assigned to a school. The SRO/CBO is specifically trained to perform three roles: law enforcement officer, law related counselor, and law related teacher. SRO/CBO can promote a better understanding of our laws, why they were enacted and their benefits. They provide a visible and positive image for law enforcement. They bring expertise into the schools that will help young people make more positive choices in their lives. They also work to protect the school environment and to maintain an atmosphere where teachers feel safe to teach and students feel safe enough to learn.

Please check one of the following:

Staff _____ Student _____ Parent _____

Please answer the following questions:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Do you feel a need for a SRO/CBO on campus?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Would having a SRO/CBO on campus make you feel safer?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Would you feel safer if you had a SRO/CBO to talk to?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Do you have fears of violence in your school or your child's school that you don't voice to school administrators or teachers?	1	2	3	4	5
5. The SRO/CBO could be beneficial to everyone in the community.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The SRO/CBO could deter crime by being present on campus.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The SRO/CBO could educate parents, students and staff about our laws and the justice system.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The SRO/CBO could help make schools safer and more effective.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The SRO/CBO could develop crime prevention programs for students.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The SRO/CBO could train students in conflict resolution and crime awareness.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The SRO/CBO could identify and address physical changes in the environment around school that may reduce crime in or around school.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The SRO/CBO could educate students and staff about safety issues.	1	2	3	4	5
13. The SRO/CBO could provide a visible and positive image for law enforcement.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The SRO/CBO would be a valuable resource for students, staff and parents.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The SRO/CBO could keep order on campus and handle all calls on campus.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The SRO/CBO could be a community liaison/problem solver.	1	2	3	4	5

Add any additional comments on the back of this questionnaire. Thank you !