

Policy 3515.31: School Resource Officers

Status: ADOPTED

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CSBA NOTE: The following optional policy is for use by districts that choose to employ school resource officers (SROs) or enter into an agreement with local law enforcement for the purpose of providing SROs on school campuses and/or at school activities. 34 USC 10389 defines an SRO as a law enforcement officer with sworn authority who is assigned by the agency to work in collaboration with schools to (1) address crime and disorder problems, gangs, and drug activities affecting or occurring in or around a school; (2) develop or expand crime prevention efforts for students; (3) educate likely school-age victims in crime prevention and safety; (4) develop or expand community justice initiatives for students; (5) train students in conflict resolution, restorative justice, and crime awareness; (6) assist in the identification of physical changes in the environment that may reduce crime in and around the school; and (7) assist in developing school policy that addresses crime and recommend procedural changes.

Requirements for districts that choose to establish their own police or security department are addressed in BP/AR 3515.3 - District Police/Security Department.

Education Code 38000, as amended by SB 98 (Ch. 24, Statutes of 2020), expresses legislative intent to encourage districts to redirect resources currently allocated to contracts with local law enforcement or the maintenance of district police departments into student support services (e.g., mental health services) and professional development on cultural competency and restorative justice, if found to be a more appropriate use of resources based on student and school needs.

The Governing Board is committed to protecting the safety of students and staff and the security of district property.

The district shall develop a multi-tiered approach focused on the prevention of school violence and crime and the development of a positive school culture, which may include providing mental health services and other student support services, implementing restorative justice practices, implementing professional development addressing cultural competency, and employing and/or contracting with a law enforcement agency to provide school resource officers (SROs) on school campuses and/or school activities.

In order to reduce unnecessary law enforcement interactions with students, the Superintendent or designee shall provide training to school staff regarding the role of SROs and the appropriate circumstances for contacting such officers.

CSBA NOTE: The following paragraphs are for use by districts that contract with local law enforcement for the provision of SROs and may be revised to reflect district practice. If the district decides to contract for SROs, the district should enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that clearly defines roles, responsibilities, and expectations for the district, school site, law enforcement agency, and individual officers. For further information, see the Memorandum of Understanding Fact Sheet issued by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). In addition, sample MOUs are available on the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) web site.

Agencies that receive grant funding from COPS to deploy SROs to school districts are subject to specified requirements, including, but not limited to, requirements to establish an MOU, ensure that SROs complete a basic training course no later than nine months after being notified of the grant award, and assign SROs to work in and around schools for at least 75 percent of the calendar year or 100 percent of the time during the school year, depending on the agreement between the agency and school district. See the COPS web site for information about this grant program.

The Board shall approve a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the local law enforcement agency which includes, at a minimum:

1. The purpose of the agreement
2. A clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of the district, school site, law enforcement agency, and SROs, including responsibility for supervision of the SRO
3. The extent to which information will be shared between the district and law enforcement agency consistent with state and federal laws
4. Requirements for qualifications and training of SROs

5. Assigned hours of SRO duty in and around schools
6. Performance monitoring

The Board may expand on the above requirements to include more specific terms, such as acknowledgement of nondiscrimination requirements, training focused on eliminating disproportionalities in SRO contacts with students, and staffing of an SRO position when the assigned SRO is on leave.

Duties

SROs are duly sworn peace officers who are authorized to carry out their duties pursuant to state law.

CSBA NOTE: The following paragraph reflects a recommendation of the U.S. Department of Education's Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline that educators, rather than police or security officers, should handle student discipline issues. Law enforcement agencies that receive grant funding through COPS are required to include a statement in their MOU that SROs will not be responsible for requests to resolve routine student discipline problems; see COPS' Memorandum of Understanding Fact Sheet.

Job duties of the SRO shall not include the handling of student code of conduct violations or routine student disciplinary matters that should be addressed by school administrators, or conduct that would be better addressed by mental health professionals.

CSBA NOTE: Pursuant to Government Code 7286, law enforcement agencies are required to establish policy that provides a minimum standard on the use of force, with specified components. In addition, pursuant to Penal Code 13651, as added by AB 846 (Ch. 322, Statutes of 2020), an agency that employs peace officers is required to review the job description that is used in recruitment and hiring and make changes that emphasize community-based policing, familiarization between law enforcement and community residents, and collaborative problem solving while de-emphasizing the paramilitary aspects of the job. Although these requirements are the responsibility of the law enforcement agency, not a district that contracts with a law enforcement agency for SROs, it is important that the district is aware of the expectations regarding use of force.

SROs shall be expected to collaborate with district staff in problem solving and, when circumstances warrant intervention with students, to use positive and restorative approaches in accordance with Penal Code 13651. SROs shall use tactics such as de-escalation techniques to mitigate the use of force in an educational setting and shall strictly adhere to the policy on minimum use of force pursuant to Government Code 7286.

When approved by the Superintendent or designee, an SRO may provide classroom presentations and/or parent/guardian education pertaining to safety issues and may link students, parents/guardians, and staff with resources and services.

Qualifications of Officers

CSBA NOTE: NASRO recommends that the selection, training, and supervision of SROs comport with NASRO's Standards and Best Practices for School Resource Officers and that SROs receive at least 40 hours of specialized training in school policing before beginning their assignment. NASRO offers training on adolescent development, trauma-informed investigations, crisis intervention and de-escalation, threat assessment, and active shooter situations.

In addition, Government Code 7286 requires that the law enforcement agency's use of force policy address training regarding the policy, including (1) training standards and requirements related to demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the agency's use of force policy; (2) training and guidelines regarding vulnerable populations, including, but not limited to, children, elderly persons, people who are pregnant, and people with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities; and (3) minimum training and course titles required to meet the objectives in the use of force policy.

Prior to beginning their assignment when possible, SROs shall complete specialized training in school policing, the unique experiences of the diverse populations within the school community, and the law enforcement agency's use of force policy.

Nondiscrimination

SROs shall not discriminate against or treat any person differently on the basis race, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, immigration status, ethnic group identification, ethnicity, age, religion, marital status, pregnancy, Mesa Union School District Somis, Ca

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parental status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or genetic information; a perception of one or more of such characteristics; or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

The Superintendent or designee shall periodically report to the Board disaggregated data on student interactions with SROs to evaluate the appropriateness of such interactions and ensure compliance with the prohibition against nondiscrimination. Such reports may include the number of arrests and referrals for prosecution, the number of reports provided to the school or district regarding student misconduct, or other actions taken by SROs with respect to individual students or others on campus.

As necessary, the Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement practices to prevent disproportionality of student interactions with SROs based on student characteristics and to minimize the potential for referrals of students into the juvenile justice system.

Access to Records

SROs shall not have access to student records, nor release student information to another person, agency, or organization, without written permission from the parent/guardian or adult student, unless specifically allowed or required by state or federal law. (Education Code 49076; 34 CFR 99.1)

SROs shall not solicit or collect information or documents regarding the citizenship or immigration status of students or their family members or provide assistance with immigration enforcement at district schools, except as may be required by state and/or federal law. (Education Code 234.7)
