



# Beyond the Badge:

## Profile of a School Resource Officer

*A guide for law enforcement*

by Fran Sterling and Paul A. Di Lella



**COPS**  
Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice



Photo credit: Not In Our Town

*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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*Partners in  
stopping hate*



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The Internet references cited in this publication were valid as of the date of publication. Given that URLs and websites are in constant flux, neither the author(s) nor the COPS Office can vouch for their current validity.

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# Contents

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- Acknowledgments . . . . . iv**
- A Note from the Filmmakers . . . . . v**
- Introduction . . . . . 1**
- How to Host a Screening and Discussion . . . . . 3**
- Activities to Help Understand  
School Resource Officers . . . . . 5**
  - Overview . . . . . 5
  - Activity 1. Language clarification . . . . . 5
  - Activity 2. Participants’ reactions to statements  
Officer Cockrell made in the film. . . . . 10
- Understanding the Role of Law Enforcement  
in the Community and Schools . . . . . 13**
  - Agency messaging and interactions with the community . . . . . 13
  - Interactions with youth . . . . . 13
  - School safety and SROs . . . . . 13
- Conclusion . . . . . 15**
- Appendix A. Film Evaluation Survey . . . . . 17**
- Additional NIOT Resources . . . . . 18**
  - Guides . . . . . 18
  - Videos . . . . . 18
  - Interviews . . . . . 19
- Other Resources and Initiatives . . . . . 20**
- About the COPS Office . . . . . 26**

# Acknowledgments

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## A Note from the Filmmakers

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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 and Libby McInerney also contributed to this guide.

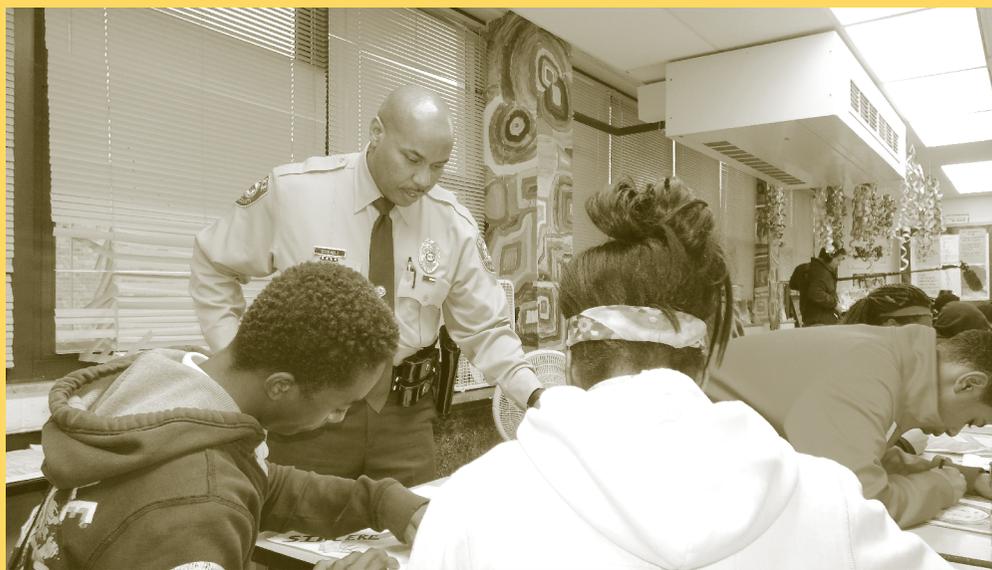


Photo credit: Not In Our Town

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

# Introduction

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*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.

Law enforcement wants youth 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 communities requires diligence and dedication from all stakeholders, including law enforcement, leadership, educators, parents, students, and community members. 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).<sup>1</sup>

Law enforcement agencies are invited to host screenings of *Beyond the Badge* to

- model SRO promising practices;
- inspire creative and constructive relationship-building methods inside and outside of schools;
- develop or enhance community partnerships with schools and other community organizations supporting youth development;
- promote safe and inclusive communities for everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> 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

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Creating dialogue among the diverse organizations, agencies, and community members in your community is an important tool in fostering and maintaining safe schools. Trainers 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. It contains sample discussion questions for trainers to use in order to engage with their audience.

For law enforcement training, consider organizing officers into smaller groups for part of the discussion. Especially in a large group, difficult or open-ended questions might make some officers 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 group the experiences, perceived challenges, proposed strategies, or other issues raised in the breakout sessions.

If an agency is interested in hosting a public event, 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. 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.

The film and this 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

- Watch the film and familiarize yourself with the questions and information in this guide.
- Break the officers into small groups at tables or other convenient areas before the screening.
- After the screening, facilitate groups through the discussion questions. Be clear about the time allotted for discussions and answering questions.



Photo credit: Not In Our Town

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

# Activities to Help Understand School Resource Officers

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## Overview

The following two activities can be used either sequentially or separately as the screening organizers see fit. The film *Beyond the Badge* can be incorporated into a larger training seminar as a way to outline promising practices. The film's length also lends itself to be used as part of a meeting with other groups who work with youth. A group activity and discussion questions are included to help prompt a healthy and productive discussion.

## Activity 1. Language clarification

**Objective:** The partnership between schools, school districts, and law enforcement is essential in ensuring schools continue to thrive. This activity aims to clarify language and help participants to develop a shared understanding of what the responsibilities of an SRO include and what school safety means in our diverse communities. Discussing a range of definitions will enable participants to reflect on how their understanding of school safety affects their professional roles.

### What are the responsibilities of an SRO?

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. The following examples provide overviews of SRO responsibilities from three different perspectives. Participants can discuss the similarities and differences between these perspectives.

“*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*

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### *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.<sup>2</sup>

### *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.<sup>3</sup>

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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/sqp/crs/misc/R43126.pdf>.

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>.

In addition, 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.<sup>4</sup>

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.”<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup>

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.”<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

### What is a safe school?

Each school district and state may define school safety using slightly different terms. Some integrate school safety and antibullying policies, while others may create explanations that stand alone.

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4 “NASRO Position Statement on Police Involvement in Student Discipline,” NASRO, accessed April 25, 2016, <https://nasro.org/news/nasro-updates/nasro-position-statement-police-involvement-student-discipline/>.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

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

8 “NASRO Position Statement” (see note 4).

### *Example 1. Washington State School Advisory Council*

The School Safety Advisory Committee for the state of Washington defined school safety as follows:

The term “**school safety**” refers to and includes the critical and necessary environment in which effective teaching and learning can take place. **School safety** supports student learning by creating and promoting a physically, emotionally, socially, and academically secure climate for students, staff, and visitors.

A focus on **school safety** helps create a learning environment which has a positive impact on behavior, attendance/drop-out rates, and ultimately, academic achievement. It involves planning for the prevention, intervention, and mitigation of, and recovery from the variety natural, physical, social, and technological threats to the school and the entire school community.

Broad categories of concern under the heading of **school safety** include, but are not limited to, negative or risky student behaviors, digital/Internet safety, gang activity in schools, disaster and emergency preparedness and the drills and sheltering concerns accompanying them, threats and threat assessment, other health and safety concerns.

More specific **school safety** issues under these broad categories include harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB), weapons in schools, cyberbullying and digital Internet safety and security, natural disasters, school mapping, weather-related issues, lockdowns, terrorism, flu, and human trafficking.<sup>9</sup>

### *Example 2. University of Colorado at Boulder*

The University of Colorado at Boulder created a fact sheet that issued the following explanation of a safe school:

A positive school climate is necessary in developing a safe school.

Research shows that schools with a positive and welcoming school climate increases the likelihood that students succeed academically while protecting them from engaging in high risk behaviors like substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and violence. A positive school climate encourages behaviors with clear consequences for violating rules as well as rewards for meeting expectations. School climate can be understood as the frequency and quality of interactions among and between staff, students, parents, and the community throughout the entire school community.

In a positive school climate, the caring attitude of the school is clearly visible and is reflected by widespread participation in all areas of the school.<sup>10</sup>

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9 “School Safety—Draft Definition-By Laws” [Word doc], State of Washington, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, School Safety Advisory Committee Meetings, August 23, 2012, <http://www.k12.wa.us/SafetyCenter/pubdocs/AugustAdvisoryMeeting/SchoolSafety-DRAFTDefinition-ByLaws2012.docx>.

10 “What Is a Safe School?” Fact Sheet (Boulder, CO: University of Colorado, 2000), <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/publications/factsheets/safeschools/FS-SC04.pdf>.

The university also believes that the following factors, according to the National School Safety Center, can affect a student's perspective of his or her school climate:

**Student involvement:** The degree to which students are involved in and enjoy classes and extracurricular activities at school

**Student relationships:** The level of comfort students feel in relating to one another and the ease with which they make new friends

**Teacher support:** The amount of help and care teachers direct toward students

**Physical environment:** The extent to which the school building reflects the caring attitude of the school and the school buildings are clean, well cared for, supervised, and safe

**Conflict resolution:** Whether students are clear about the rules and feel conflicts are resolved fairly and rules are consistently enforced

**Participation in decision making:** The extent to which students, administrators, and teachers share in making decisions about school improvement

**Curriculum:** The extent to which students feel that what is taught in classes meets their needs

**Counseling services:** Whether students feel counselors are accessible and able to help with personal problems; job and career information; and concerns about drugs, alcohol, and sex

**Recreation alternatives:** Whether students are satisfied with existing recreational activities and teachers' support of these activities

**Personal stress:** The amount of pressure students feel they are under and the resources they have to cope with it<sup>11</sup>

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11 *National School Safety Center, School Safety Check Book* (Malibu, CA: Pepperdine University Press, 1990), as quoted in "What Is a Safe School?" (see note 10).

### Example 3. Chicago Public Schools

Chicago Public Schools include school safety within their larger antibullying policy:

The Illinois General Assembly has found that a safe and civil school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve and that bullying causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students and interferes with their ability to learn and participate in school activities. Bullying has been linked to other forms of antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping and dropping out of school, fighting, using drugs and alcohol, sexual harassment, and violence. It is the goal of the Chicago Board of Education (“Board”) to create a learning environment in all its school communities where students are protected from bullying so they feel safe and supported in their efforts to succeed academically and develop emotionally into responsible, caring individuals.<sup>12</sup>

#### Discussion pause

- 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 agency endorse?
- Comparing the three examples of safe schools in activity 2, what are the important similarities, and what are the obvious differences?
- What role does an SRO play in supporting efforts at providing a safe school environment?

### Activity 2. Participants’ reactions to 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. This activity aims to help participants discuss, either individually or in small groups, their thoughts, feelings, and reactions to a variety of statements Officer Cockrell made in the film *Beyond the Badge: Profile of a School Resource Officer*.

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<sup>12</sup> “Anti-Bullying,” *Chicago Public Schools Policy Manual* (Chicago Board of Education, July 22, 2015), <http://policy.cps.edu/download.aspx?ID=264>.

### 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 became relaxed. I got relaxed with them. And that’s when the relationship started developing.”
- “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 pause

The following questions can be used to initiate the conversation:

- Which quotes stand out? Why?
- Which sentiments do you share with Officer Cockrell?
- Which statements do you disagree with?
- Are there any other quotes or statements that you feel are important?



Photo credit: Not In Our Town

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

# Understanding the Role of Law Enforcement in the Community and Schools

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A trainer or facilitator can use the following discussion questions as prompts for training or events. However, natural and free-flowing conversations can also be completely appropriate to help spur learning and open dialogue.

## *Agency messaging and interactions with the community*

- Does your agency send the message that it is fully engaged with the community? If so, how? If not, why?
- Is your agency actively promoting and maintaining positive relations with the community to build trust? If so, how? If not, why?

## *Interactions with youth*

- How can law enforcement open paths of communication with youth? What are the obstacles?
- What recommendations would you imagine students would suggest if asked how to improve the relationship between youth and law enforcement?

## *School safety and SROs*

- Who is responsible for school safety?
- What are the roles of SROs in your agency? In your community?
- What are some behaviors and indicators of a good SRO?
- What is the role of an SRO or a law enforcement agency's role in promoting best practices for safe schools?
- Some people think that metal detectors and other technology make a school safer. Others think a positive school climate and relationships within a school can make it safer. What do you think?
- A law enforcement agency and school and community partners work together to define the roles an SRO plays. Do you think school and community involvement is important in defining the role of an SRO?
- Do you have the opportunity to work in the schools? As an SRO?
- What further support systems would you need to promote a more positive and effective SRO relationship within your school?



Photo credit: Not In Our Town

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

# Conclusion

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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 if 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.



# Appendix A. Film Evaluation Survey

**Note:** To download a printer-friendly version of this two-page 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



## 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	<input type="radio"/>				
b. Overall impact of film	<input type="radio"/>				
c. Effectiveness of group discussion (if applicable)	<input type="radio"/>				

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.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. I better understand the need to support hate crime victims.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. I better understand why hate crimes need to be reported, investigated, and prosecuted.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. I will seek ways to improve relationships with at-risk communities and organizations that serve them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. I am more likely to take action to address hate and intolerance in my community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

## Additional NIOT Resources

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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](mailto:info@niot.org) or 510-268-9675.

Additional film and print resources are available on NIOT's website at [www.niot.org](http://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,<sup>13</sup> 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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13 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

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### **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](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](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](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](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](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](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](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](http://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

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**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](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov). This website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.



This guide is meant to help law enforcement representatives 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 internal agency trainings as well as a list of supplemental resources. Used together, the film and guide can help agencies to better understand the role and purpose of school resource officers.



**COPS**  
Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice

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To obtain details on COPS Office programs,  
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Visit the COPS Office online at [www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov).



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