



The Nelson A. Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth College

The Center for Public Policy and the Social Sciences

Policy Research Shop

THE USE OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS IN HIGH SCHOOLS

*An Analysis of Practices and their Applicability to
Hanover, New Hampshire*

Presented to the Town Manager of Hanover, NH

PRS Policy Brief 1213-15

June 25, 2013

Prepared By:

Kamran Ali

Megan Bogia

Ayesha Dholakia

Ifeoma Achebe

Adria Brown

Thomas Dexter-Rice

Troy Dildine

This report was written by undergraduate students at Dartmouth College under the direction of professors in the Rockefeller Center. The Policy Research Shop is supported by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). The PRS reports were developed under FIPSE grant P116B100070 from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the contents of the PRS reports do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.



Contact:

Nelson A. Rockefeller Center, 6082 Rockefeller Hall, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH 03755
<http://rockefeller.dartmouth.edu/shop/> • Email: Ronald.G.Shaiko@Dartmouth.edu



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	1
3. BACKGROUND	2
3.1 WHAT IS AN SRO?	2
3.2 SROs AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNITY	3
3.3 SAU-70 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE & HISTORY	4
4. CASE STUDIES	5
4.1 BELMONT, NEW HAMPSHIRE	6
4.1.1 <i>Description of the Belmont SRO Program</i>	6
4.1.2 <i>Lessons Learned from Belmont's SRO</i>	7
4.2 MOULTONBOROUGH, NEW HAMPSHIRE	7
4.2.1 <i>Description of Moultonborough SRO Program</i>	7
4.2.2 <i>Lesson's Learned from Moultonborough's SRO</i>	7
4.3 PELHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE	8
4.3.1 <i>Description of the Pelham SRO Program</i>	8
4.3.2 <i>Lessons Learned from Pelham's SRO</i>	9
4.4 CLINTON, NEW YORK	9
4.4.1 <i>Description of the Clinton SRO Program</i>	9
4.4.2 <i>Lesson's Learned from Clinton's SRO</i>	10
4.5 SUFFIELD, CONNECTICUT	11
4.5.1 <i>Description of the Suffield SRO Program</i>	11
6. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES	12
7. POLICY OPTIONS FOR HANOVER	12
7.1 MENTOR-BASED PROGRAM	12
7.2 COST-SHARING APPROACH	13
7.3 SRO TRAINING	13
8. LIMITATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	14
REFERENCES	15



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper examines the potential functions of school resource officers (SROs) in high schools. It investigates various models of SROs currently in place in order to inform the Hanover School Administrative Unit-70 (SAU-70) and the Hanover Police Department on the options for implementing an SRO in the school district. Background information on what an SRO is and their relationships within host communities are presented. This is followed by multiple case studies of towns similar to SAU-70. The case examples are examined for best practice models and lessons learned. In addition, the advantages and disadvantages of these cases are discussed. Finally, three implementation options for Hanover are presented, including a mentor-based program, a cost-sharing approach, and SRO training. The report concludes with a discussion of areas for future research.

1. INTRODUCTION

Although law enforcement officials have been serving in schools since prior to the 1930s, the concept of an SRO did not emerge until the 1950s in Flint, Michigan. Nonetheless, prior to the 1990s, it was uncommon to assign police officers to serve in schools on a full-time basis.¹ Reports of increased disorder in schools led to the implementation of a variety of practices meant to increase school safety, such as metal detectors, video surveillance, and police officials in schools.² However, recent events, particularly the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut in December 2012 have driven the national conversation about school safety and towards an increasing role for armed officers in schools. Today, data from Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics show that there are over 17,000 SROs in place around the country. However, this likely underestimates the actual number of personnel, as it is difficult to obtain an exact number given discrepancies in various SRO programs nationwide.³

The Town of Hanover and School Administrative Unit-70 (SAU-70) are considering increasing the police presence in its schools by implementing an SRO specifically for the purpose of fostering more positive relationships between students and law enforcement.⁴ For this reason, this report examines the various roles SROs play in school districts similar to Hanover. We aim to synthesize information from five case studies and present options that are best suited to Hanover and SAU-70 if the town and school district choose to implement an SRO program.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper investigates models of SROs currently in practice in five communities and looks at the advantages and disadvantages of the position relative to police-student relationships and the feasibility of implementation. Hanover Town Manager, Julia Griffin facilitated access to town officials in Belmont, Moultonborough, and Pelham, New Hampshire who have previous experience with SROs. Additionally, Clinton, New



York, and Suffield, Connecticut were selected based on their similarities to Hanover. In addition to these cases, informant interviews were conducted with Hanover High School's Principal Justin Campbell, and Police Prosecutor Chris O'Connor, a previous SRO in Mascoma, to further understand the stakeholders and dynamics of SAU-70 and governance environments in Hanover and Norwich.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 What is an SRO?

The Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 defines an SRO as a: "career law enforcement officer, with sworn authority, assigned by the employing police department to work at a school in collaboration with school and community-based organizations."⁵ Beyond this definition, the functions of an SRO vary by district. The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) has developed a triad model that describes the various duties of an SRO including law enforcement, counselor, and educator. NASRO has also developed training programs that prepare SROs for a school setting.⁶

SROs act directly as law enforcement officials and are intended to reduce the burden on patrol officers at schools, improve the image of police officers among youth, and reduce school violence.⁷ According to NASRO, an SRO's law enforcement duties are "the maintenance of a safe school environment...including handling assaults, theft, burglary, bomb threats, weapons, alcohol and drug incidents...and conducting crisis management in the case of an emergency."⁸ A recent NPR story brought to light additional ways in which an SRO who helps secure the school environment also may have positive effects on student mental health. As described in NPR's Richard Gonzalez in *How to Be The Good Guy with a School Gun*, a student from a Stockton, CA school stated that Officer Myra Franco's presence was especially calming when the school was on lock down, and she had no fear that Officer Franco would alleviate the situation.⁹

An SRO also can work as counselors, which can be useful for a campus that may be less privy to violence or criminal activity. NASRO defines an SRO's counselor role as "the role of informal counselor or problem solver."¹⁰ Officer Franco again is an example. She states in her interview, "several groups of students do approach [me], some with small talk and others with tidbits of information about tensions on and off campus."¹¹ The ability to know about campus climate from students can be extremely beneficial in addressing day-to-day conflicts at any school. Finally, the SRO can be an educator, responsible for "creating individual lessons and curriculum based on the needs of the schools served."¹² This particular role for an SRO is especially emphasized in another school, located in a small, upper income, and predominantly white town in the Bay Area. Officer Patterson, the current SRO, described the negative culture surrounding relationships and how most students do not have positive role models. Like Officer Franco, Patterson has good standing with students. He was able to learn that a high



achieving student had a complex drug business. He intervened with the parents and student and was able to avoid incarceration.¹³

3.2 SROs and Their Relationship to the Community

The town of Hanover has expressed a specific interest in implementing an SRO program for the purpose of improving student perceptions of police. Existing research on this topic has yet to be conclusive regarding whether police presence in schools improves student perceptions of police.¹⁴ For instance, a study of high schools in Southeast Missouri found that “interaction with the SRO had no significant impact among this sample as far as influencing students’ perception of the police in general.”¹⁵ The study suggests that an early stage of an SRO program can be treacherous, as students could perceive the introduction of an authoritative figure as a threat to their autonomy.¹⁶ This concern is especially relevant in a school like Hanover High School, where there is a focus on personal responsibility.

However, other studies project the opposite effect. Researchers in Anchorage, Alaska, for example, surveyed Anchorage residents about their perception of the SRO program in the city’s public schools.¹⁷ The study found that public perception of the SRO program was not influenced by information particular to the program, but rather was most closely associated with whether the respondent had interacted with a police officer in the year prior to the survey.¹⁸ Although this study does not include student respondents, it could be conjectured that police presence in schools would enable positive interaction with students, thus improving their perception of police officers. Several other studies referenced in this article confirmed that interaction with police helps form positive opinions of police.

SROs are most effective if they can build a working relationship with students, which is best accomplished by being respectful of students. As cited by a report submitted to the National Institute of Justice, “students expressed that they did not mind police presence on a full-time basis as long as they did not feel they were being ‘harassed’ or ‘treated like criminals’.”¹⁹ Similarly, a different report submitted to the National Institute of Justice finds that the frequency with which the SRO has conversations with students is determinative of the program’s success. Frequent conversations with SROs make students more comfortable reporting crime.²⁰ The authors also suggest that students are more likely to have a positive opinion of SROs if they have repeated interactions.²¹

Based on the above findings, it is important to note the inconclusiveness of studies on the effectiveness of SROs in educational environments. In addition to these findings, meta-analyses on the effectiveness of policing schools have similarly found that it is too early to make recommendations to SROs as to what are best practices. This is due to the fact that multiple studies with similar experimental designs have yet to be conducted. Individual studies have been done, yet because of different experimental designs, the results cannot be compared and often conflict with one another. For instance, a 1979

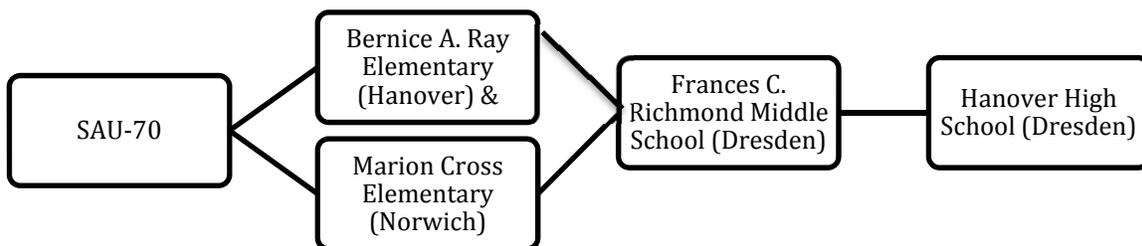


review of the SRO program in Hillsborough County, Florida found that students in schools with an SRO did have an overall more positive perception of law enforcement, yet there was no conclusive evidence that the program had any impact on delinquency rates. A 2008 study on an SRO program in North Carolina suggested that an SRO has little or no impact on the levels of negative behavior in schools, and a 2006 study on a Community Liaison Officer Program in Cape Breton, Canada found inconsistent findings between the perceived positive outcomes from those involved and the survey data that showed that student safety was not positively affected by the presence of an SRO.²²

3.3 SAU-70 Administrative Structure & History

In order to adopt the best practices suggested in the literature, one must understand the interworkings of the Hanover school system, SAU-70. New Hampshire uses a system of School Administrative Units for school governance. The state is partitioned into several units consisting of multiple towns.²³ The school administrations between these towns are consolidated under one superintendent and administrative office. Extending across the borders of New Hampshire and Vermont, SAU-70 oversees the three school districts of Dresden, Hanover, and Norwich. Hanover School District directs the operations of the Bernice A. Ray Elementary School serving the grades kindergarten to fifth. Norwich School District overlooks Marion Cross Elementary School serving the grades kindergarten to sixth. Dresden School District includes Frances C. Richmond Middle School and Hanover High School. Each school district includes a school board, with the Dresden School Board comprised of representatives from both Hanover and Norwich. Historically, SAU-70 has never employed an SRO. However, surrounding areas, such as Lebanon, Hartford, and Mascoma, currently utilize SROs.

Figure 1: Structure of SAU-70



The Hanover Police Department is associated with the Hanover Middle and High Schools. If SAU-70 implements an SRO in just the high school the process will be streamlined because the high school falls solely under the jurisdiction of the Hanover Police Department. If SAU-70 chooses to have an SRO in the elementary schools, there may be greater complexity given the interstate jurisdiction and involvement of more than one police department. As a result, our research has focused on SRO models implemented within a high school setting. Additionally, Hanover has expressed a



specific interest in making stronger connections between teens and law enforcement officers.²⁴

4. CASE STUDIES

In order to understand how other communities have chosen to implement SRO programs, this section focuses on five towns with active SRO programs: Belmont, NH, Moultonborough, NH, Pelham, NH, Clinton, NY, and Suffield, CT. We examine the model and lessons learned from each town’s program. The following case studies were compiled based on interviews with three SROs, one each from Belmont, Clinton, and Pelham, the police chief of Belmont, and the town manager of Moultonborough. These interviews were chosen either based on recommendations from Hanover Town Manager Julia Griffin or by the similarity of each of these towns to SAU-70. Table 1 summarizes the findings.

Table 1: Summary of Findings

Case Study Location	Overview of SRO Program	Lessons Learned
Belmont	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary purpose: Violence Prevention • Practitioner-Level SRO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality is essential • Aware of surroundings
Moultonborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary purpose: Safety and positive relationships • “Family-Like” Relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality is essential • Mutual understanding of responsibilities • Clear reporting structure
Pelham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary purpose; extensive educational involvement • NASRO-trained SRO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality is essential • Open-mindedness in school setting
Clinton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary purpose: Violence Prevention • Counselor role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRO organizations for training and networking • Agreement between police department, school district, and federally funded initiative (CORE)
Suffield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary purpose: safety and positive relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote legal system as supportive tool • Counselor-based approach



4.1 Belmont, New Hampshire

Belmont is a small town located in central New Hampshire approximately sixty miles from Hanover. According to the United States Census Bureau, in 2011, the town of Belmont had a population of 7,371 residents, with 1,591 (21.6 percent) school age residents.²⁵ The Shaker Regional School District of Belmont has a total of 1,443 students (90.7 percent of the school-age population) spread out among two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.²⁶

4.1.1 Description of the Belmont SRO Program

Belmont School District has one SRO for the elementary, middle, and high schools. According to the current SRO, Joel Marcello, the primary purpose of the position is to keep the students and teachers safe and to attend to breaches in the law. The secondary purpose is to foster a relationship with students. Occasionally, the SRO also will assist with non-police functions. However, as Police Chief Lewandoski emphasized, the SRO is responsible to the police department, as his salary comes from the police department rather than the school district. In order to train further for the position, Officer Marcello went to basic training in New Hampshire and went out-of-state to attain certification as a practitioner-level SRO.²⁷ According to the Belmont Police Department website, attaining practitioner-level certification involves being an SRO for at least three years, completing both the “Basic” and “Advanced” SRO training through the NASRO, an additional 160 hours of specialized training, attending a National SRO conference, and an application.²⁸ NASRO training will be discussed in further detail later in this report.

Officer Marcello explained that he develops his relationships with children from an elementary school level by engaging in their daily activities, like reading books to them and eating lunch in the cafeteria. The small size of the school district also allows him to recognize new students immediately and introduce himself. Officer Marcello noted that students need to feel comfortable approaching him and telling him about concerning situations in the school without feeling like they will be revealed.²⁹

Officer Marcello also serves as the juvenile prosecutor in Belmont, and his goal with each case is to identify what is in the student’s best interests. He reports that his strong relationships with students allow him to understand and work with offenders to find the best outcome for their needs, especially given that “CHINS” (Children in Need of Services) petitions are the most common. Furthermore, outside of the school, SRO Marcello organizes youth programs in which students visit the police station and learn about life as an officer so as to strengthen police to student bonds.³⁰



4.1.2 Lessons Learned from Belmont's SRO

Both Chief Lewandoski and Officer Marcello emphasized the importance of an SRO's relationship with students. They suggested that the personality of the officer in the position and their appreciation for children make a difference in cultivating positive relationships, rather than being an additional, unyielding authority. When an SRO is in the high school, he or she has to uphold the students' anonymity when they come to officers with tips³¹ SROs must also be comfortable dealing with pranks and be aware of their surroundings³² because of the incidences of violence among high school students.³³ Finally, some concerns were mentioned about the SRO being "spread too thin" at times and that the school may benefit from having a second SRO.

4.2 Moultonborough, New Hampshire

Moultonborough, New Hampshire is 70 miles east of Hanover. According to the Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau of New Hampshire, Moultonborough had 4,029 residents in 2011 of which 534 were school-age children (13.3 percent).³⁴ Moultonborough School District is made up of two schools, Moultonborough Central School that serves children in grades Pre-K to 6 and Moultonborough Academy that educates students in grades 7 to 12. Combined, these two schools have approximately 650 students and exclusively serve the town of Moultonborough.

4.2.1 Description of Moultonborough SRO Program

There is one SRO that serves both of the schools in Moultonborough and the program was initially federally funded. When the grant ended, the Moultonborough community assumed the responsibility of continuing its mission. Town manager of Moultonborough, Carter Terenzini, described the interaction between the SRO and the school district as being almost a "family-like" relationship. The SRO was integrated into the school district as a part of the staff and had less of a connection with the town police department. Mr. Terenzini described the SRO as having a great personality and emphasized the strong connection he had with the children at the schools. However, Mr. Terenzini also expressed concern regarding mutual understanding between the institutions, a concern which came about when the police department needed to reclaim the SRO. The schools felt that they had "lost a member of their family." To resolve this issue, the school district decided to allocate funding to keep the SRO.³⁵

4.2.2 Lesson's Learned from Moultonborough's SRO

From his experiences, Mr. Terenzini spoke about how critical it is to establish who the SRO reports to and what his or her primary responsibilities are when constructing the program. Furthermore, he believes that when a school district helps share the cost of the SRO, it demonstrates their commitment to and seriousness about the position. However,



he also stressed that having any police officer in the school is not sufficient. Finding the right person for the job makes an SRO program successful, emphasizing the importance of fit and personality when selecting an SRO. However, Mr. Terenzini also underlined the significance of ensuring that all parties (school district, police department, SRO) have shared understanding about the roles and responsibilities of the position.³⁶

It is important to note that Mr. Terenzini previously worked in the Mt. Morris Consolidated School District in Michigan where the city partnered with the school district to get an SRO. Two characteristics of their SRO program worth mentioning are the strong working relationship between the Chief of Police and the school district and the cost-sharing formula used to pay for the SRO. In this formula, the police department paid for the percentage of the time he was not at the school (summer months) and because the school district included multiple cities, each city paid a percentage of the salary proportional to the number of students enrolled at the schools.³⁷

4.3 Pelham, New Hampshire

Pelham, New Hampshire is 100 miles southeast of Hanover. According to the Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau of New Hampshire, Pelham had a population of 12,929 in 2011. Of these individuals, 2,829 are of school age (21.9 percent).³⁸ The Pelham School District enrolled 2,037 students in 2012 – 2013: 894 elementary students, 535 middle school students, and 608 high school students.³⁹

4.3.1 Description of the Pelham SRO Program

The Pelham SRO serves all three schools as well as a local catholic school. Officer Brian Kelly has been a police officer for six years and is in his second year as an SRO. Officer Kelly views his role as “extra hats” he wears in addition to being a police officer. His involvement in the school district extends much further than just being there as a violence deterrent. He teaches DARE curriculum and gives talk to high school students about drugs, driving, and safety. Furthermore, he occasionally goes to criminology classes as well as health classes for open Q&A sessions or to present specific topics. This allows students to ask questions they might not be able to ask schoolteachers and administrators. Officer Kelly sees his role as a way to connect with young people in the community and give them some level of comfort with the police. Officer Kelly also develops his own programs throughout the year, such as a drunk driving simulation involving golf carts and “drunk goggles.” More recently, Officer Kelly began to coach lacrosse at the high school. He commented that in his two years as an SRO he has noticed a significant increase in comfort level with him when students realized that police officers have lives outside of their law enforcement work.⁴⁰



4.3.2 Lessons Learned from Pelham's SRO

Officer Kelly has attended SRO training offered through the NASRO and felt that the training helped better prepare him for his role. He suggested that future SROs should keep an open mind because, although one has to enforce the same laws, the context of a school is different from normal policing environments. Officer Kelly also spoke about how it often takes time to find one's niche as an SRO because they are not school administrators, and yet they may also not feel a part of the police department anymore. Finally he emphasized the importance of fit, recommending that school administrators choose an SRO who is patient and able to talk easily with students.⁴¹

4.4 Clinton, New York

Clinton, home of Hamilton College, is part of the Town of Kirkland and Oneida County.⁴² Clinton has a population of approximately 1,931 residents and median family income at \$80,377 (US Census Data 2011). Clinton Central School District (CCSD) is comprised of students from Clinton, Clark Mills, Franklin Springs, and the Town of Kirkland. The high school includes grades 9-12 with an average enrollment of 423 students.⁴³

4.4.1 Description of the Clinton SRO Program

Clinton's SRO Program is an agreement between the Town of Kirkland Police Department, CCSD, and the Oneida-Herkimer-Madison Board of Cooperative Educational Services' (O-H-M BOCES) Safe Schools/Health Students Initiative CORE.⁴⁴ Safe Schools/Health Students Initiative CORE is a project of Project LAUNCH, a federal initiative funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration aimed at promoting child wellness at school.⁴⁵ The O-H-M BOCES Safe Schools/Health Students Initiative CORE objectives were to create a safer and secure environment using a more intensive strategic approach and to assist with internal school programs.⁴⁶ As a result, the SRO program was established within a context of addressing concerns about safety, youth violence, and substance abuse.⁴⁷

The SRO model at Clinton Central School District emphasizes a safety-based model. According to the SRO Agreement of Services contract, the presence of an SRO is focused on decreasing the occurrence of incidents involving outside police intervention. The presence of the SRO at Clinton is also aimed at relationship building between the SRO and students and teachers.⁴⁸ Officer Kriz, who has been the Clinton SRO for the last three years, emphasized that his primary role is being a law enforcement officer. However, he is also a counselor for students that want to talk and an educator, putting together presentations regarding juvenile drug, law, and alcohol issues. Officer Kriz has been a certified SRO since 1997 and has also served as a juvenile officer since 1990. He received his training through NASRO and is also an active member of the New York



State Police Juvenile Officer Association through which he attends annual conferences and training sessions.⁴⁹

O-H-M BOCES Safe Schools/Health Students Initiative CORE agreed to provide one police officer to serve full-time as a SRO, serving 40 hours per week cumulatively at any school within the district and is to be paid a salary of \$37,500.⁵⁰ This federal funding extends through the middle June 2013. After CORE funding expires, the SRO will be funded through a cost-sharing model in which the school district, Town of Kirkland, and Village of Clinton each contribute one-third of the cost for the SRO. When school is not in session, the SRO is on the normal payroll of the police department working on the road.⁵¹ The SRO must enforce New York State laws, rules, and regulations and act as a liaison between police and fire officials. The SRO is delegated to investigate all crimes and incidents that occur on school grounds and report it to the school administration. He is also contracted to screen people entering the building and to take action to prohibit trespassing or loitering on school grounds as well as to monitor activity on social networking sites. The SRO also has counselor-based responsibilities in order to maintain a relationship with students as well as develop a working relationship with staff.⁵²

4.4.2 Lesson's Learned from Clinton's SRO

SROs at Clinton are utilized on and off school grounds, which presents challenges for the SRO model. For example, in 2011, 70 Clinton High School boys occupied a restaurant and reportedly harassed a female Clinton student and her two female friends with racial slurs and sexual taunts during lunch period when they are permitted to leave school grounds.⁵³ The principal, SRO, and police officer all reported to the scene. The Principal noted the following: "reports do not [usually] come back about bullying or disruptive behavior" and "...this one incident certainly should not mar how the kids have behaved in the past."⁵⁴ The nature of the incident also calls for further study and a more elaborate model regarding how SROs can be used most effectively off-campus. Officer Kriz commented that if the cafeteria had the capacity to fit all the students, then the best way to deal with such issues would be to have a closed campus. He discussed the difficulty of having to bounce around from patrolling the halls as well as the parking lot and how there is no way to prevent everyone from leaving in their cars. He felt that having the campus closed for lunch would ultimately increase student safety and help prevent such occurrences.⁵⁵

Officer Kriz highly encouraged membership in organizations such as the New York State Police Juvenile Officer Association, as they offer a lot of free training and allow new SROs to connect with other SROs and juvenile officers working in the same field. Finally, Officer Kriz noted that the disadvantage of a having a federally funded SRO program is that once funding runs out, not all school districts have the funds to maintain the program and it runs the risk of getting cut out of the budget.⁵⁶



4.5 Suffield, Connecticut

The Town of Suffield is part of Hartford County and is located on the Connecticut River between Hartford and Springfield, Massachusetts. Suffield provides the amenities of a rural-suburban locale and is home to Suffield Academy, a coeducational, college preparatory boarding school.⁵⁷ Suffield has a larger population than Hanover at 15,513 and its median income is comparable at \$109,085 (US Census Data 2011). Suffield Academy has a student population of 412⁵⁸ and Suffield Public School has an enrollment of 861.⁵⁹ Educational and support service personnel for the Suffield Public Schools include: 67 faculty members, 4 school counselors, a school psychologist, and 10 educational assistants.⁶⁰

4.5.1 Description of the Suffield SRO Program

The main responsibility of the Suffield SRO is to ensure safety and security on school grounds in order to reduce incidents involving trespassing, alcohol and drug use, weapon possession, and assaults.⁶¹ In order to reduce these offenses, the model at Suffield emphasizes a counselor-based approach to cultivate trust and respect between both the officer and students.⁶²

The objective of the SRO model at Suffield is to increase personal contact between an officer and students on a daily basis in order to increase positive attitudes among students toward law enforcement officials.⁶³ The ultimate goal of this approach is to help students learn the value of the legal system by heightening their awareness to the law and allowing students to access the legal system and use it as a supportive tool, which can, in turn, help with crime prevention.⁶⁴ The function of the Suffield SRO is defined as the following:

“The SRO is not necessarily a DARE officer (although many have received such training), security guard, or 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.”⁶⁵

Based on publically available documents, the Suffield SRO mainly functions as a teacher and counselor to students to create a positive educational environment as well as a collaborator with principals to help achieve community goals. The SRO at Suffield is also accessible to both parents and students directly via the school website.⁶⁶ He or she is utilized in the classroom as a resource for law-related education, violence diffusion, safety programs, and alcohol and drug prevention. The SRO also works with the administration to solve school problems and meets with students for conferences individually. Finally, the SRO functions as a liaison between the police department and the school community.⁶⁷



6. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

According to the case studies, SROs appear to help police officers get involved directly in schools. Children and youth often are more comfortable with police officers on patrol. For example, the Belmont SRO specifically mentioned that it was more likely that students would wave to officers on the street and confide in them with personal problems. Police officers also appear to contribute to a more positive educational environment and feelings of safety within the school. Students appear to be more likely to pursue law enforcement after feeling more connected to officers through the SRO program and other more active participation in programs run by the SRO. Finally, any juvenile offenders might receive more personalized help in case of an offense through the aid of an SRO with whom they are already familiar.

However, the implementation of an SRO program may cause challenges in the relationship between school districts and the local police station. If the two institutions' expectations are not aligned, it can lead to tension or misunderstanding of issues such as funding for the SRO position or the appropriate responsibilities and tasks of an SRO. Such a strain could have a negative impact on the community and the SRO's effectiveness. For example, in Moultonborough meetings were held to debate the appropriate SRO position which polarized local law enforcement and the school district. Furthermore, if an SRO's personality is not a good match for the school setting or if the SRO is implemented as a hasty, knee-jerk reaction, students, parents, and faculty may have a negative impression of the SRO and therefore a negative relationship. Finally, even with the implementation of an SRO, there is no guarantee of safety at all times.

7. POLICY OPTIONS FOR HANOVER

As Hanover considers whether or not to implement an SRO program at Hanover High School, the town can consider the following questions:

1. How will an SRO effectively foster positive attitudes toward law enforcement among students?
2. What is an effective way to fund the SRO program in SAU-70?
3. How can the town of Hanover best prepare an SRO to achieve the violence prevention and relationship-building goals of the program?

Keeping these questions in mind, the following options may be viable in Hanover.

7.1 Mentor-Based Program

Once Hanover determines if it is financially feasible and practical to place an SRO in Hanover High School, the town can choose to implement a mentor-based program in order to improve perceptions of police, facilitate a positive relationship between students and local law enforcement, and maximize positive interactions between police officers and students. Selecting an officer who is approachable and viewed by students as an ally



and mentor would be the most effective method to maximize positive interactions between students and police officers.

It is important to note that many of the SRO programs studied for this report had one SRO for all the schools in the district. This allowed the SRO to get to know students from an early age and maintain a relationship over time. It is our understanding that Hanover wishes only to implement an SRO program at the high school level. If this is the case, it is important to note that the benefits from relationship building may not be as pronounced as seen in some of the other cases where the population of students served by an SRO was smaller.

7.2 Cost-Sharing Approach

To fund the program, Hanover can implement a cost-sharing model that could include the school district, police department, and town of Hanover for the SRO. First, such a mechanism would foster positive communication between the school district and police department, as both parties would have a stake in the SRO program. Additionally, since SAU-70 is a multi-town district, it could help prevent any disputes that may arise over funding responsibility. Clarity of expectations and memos of understanding can also facilitate a positive cost-sharing model.

7.3 SRO Training

Finally, Hanover may find it beneficial to sponsor training for the SRO through a program such as those offered by NASRO, a non-profit organization founded in 1991 whose mission is to provide quality training to school-based law enforcement officers. According to Mo Canady, NASRO Executive Director and a former SRO, being an SRO requires skills beyond those of a regular armed officer, such as teaching, counseling, and interpersonal skills. However, if the training is successful in making an SRO qualified in these areas, Canady claims that the SRO would make a positive addition to any school.⁶⁸

NASRO offers two main training programs titled “Basic SRO” and “Advanced SRO” that would likely benefit any potential SRO. The “Basic” program is a 40-hour, five-day program targeted towards officers with two years or fewer of experience working in an educational environment. It is meant to train officers on how to function effectively in schools as outlined by the aforementioned triad of responsibilities. The next program, the “Advanced” program, is a supplementary 24-hour, three-day program that advances these skills. Moreover, NASRO offers more specific, shorter programs, such as “Interview and Interrogation Techniques for the SRO,” “Combating Gangs and Bullying,” and “Enhancing Lockdown.” These programs are available in states across the country and would likely be useful preparation should Hanover implement an SRO of its own.⁶⁹

In the three interviews conducted with Principal Justin Campbell, Town Manager Julia Griffin, and Police Prosecutor Chris O’Connor, there were two notable considerations



that can be accounted for when assessing the feasibility of these options for Hanover. First, Prosecutor O'Connor and Principal Campbell described a common perception of Hanover and Norwich as primarily safe communities. Although, the police department is only 2.3 miles away from the campus of Hanover high school, having someone on site allows for a physical symbol of safety to exist for the students. Principal Campbell further described Hanover High School's policy of student responsibility and accountability,⁷⁰ including an open campus, lack of hall passes, and bells marking the beginning and ending of classes.⁷¹ As mentioned in the background section, the concern of students viewing an SRO as a threat to their autonomy is especially relevant in Hanover High School's environment. Given this context, they suggested that a School Resource Officer should focus on education not only law enforcement if implemented in the school district.⁷² Second, the three informants emphasized the need for cooperation between administrators, parents, and students in order to implement an effective SRO program. All interviewees portrayed the introduction of an SRO model in Hanover schools as a substantial change that would lend itself to further research with stakeholders prior to implementation.⁷³

8. LIMITATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are notable gaps in the empirical research that is applicable to a potential SRO program at Hanover High School. Many studies investigate the crime-preventing abilities of SROs rather than the more subtle effects of SROs, such as perception changes. There is also little literature about communities that are similar to Hanover. Exceedingly limited literature, if any, examines the effects of SROs in small affluent communities in New England. Based on a review of the literature, meta-analyses of studies that have attempted to determine the efficacy of school policing have been conducted, such as the aforementioned one by WestEd. Such analyses argue for a more robust research agenda on the efficacy of SROs prior to any recommendations being made on "best practices." This is because previous studies utilize different experimental designs, so generalizations across such studies are premature. Additional interviews that would supplement these findings would be with SROs and/or town managers of school districts that have previously had SROs and later decided to terminate their SRO program for reasons that are not primarily financial. Such perspectives would allow a better analysis of reasons for which SRO implementation may not be suited for a particular town. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to explore alternative programs by which Hanover could improve the relationship between the police department and the school district other than placing an SRO in the school district. Doing so could help decide whether implementing an SRO is the most effective way of achieving the intended goals of increasing school safety and promoting positive relationships between youth and law enforcement.



REFERENCES

- ¹ Brown, Ben. "Understanding and assessing school police officers: A conceptual and methodological comment." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 34.6 (2006): 591-604
- ² Ibid.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Griffin, Julia. Personal interview. 24 April 2013.
- ⁵ (1968). *Omnibus crime control and safe streets act of 1968*. Retrieved from website: <http://www.house.gov/legcoun/Comps/CRIME68.pdf>.
- ⁶ "Training." NASRO. National Association of School Resource Officers, n.d. Web. 17 May 2013.
- ⁷ Hutchinson, Asa. "Report of National School Shield Force." National School Shield. National Rifle Association, 2 April 2013. Web. 15 May 2013.
- ⁸ "Training." NASRO. National Association of School Resource Officers, n.d. Web. 17 May 2013.
- ⁹ "How to Be the Good Guy with a Gun at School." *Guns in America: A Loaded Relationship*. NPR. 2013 March 20. Radio.
- ¹⁰ "Training." NASRO. National Association of School Resource Officers, n.d. Web. 17 May 2013.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Jackson, Arrick. "Police-school Resource Officers' and Students' Perception of the Police and Offending," *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 25.3 (2002): 631.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Brad Myr Stol, "Public Perceptions of School Resource Officer Programs," *Western Criminology Review* 13.3 (2011): 20-40.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Travis, Lawrence and Julie Coon. "The Role of Law Enforcement in Public School Safety: A National Survey." National Criminal Reference Justice Services. Center for Criminal Justice Research, 10 Jul. 2005. Pg. 197.
- ²⁰ Finn, Peter, Michael Shively, Jack McDevitt, William Lassiter, and Tom Rich. "Comparison of Program Activities and Lessons Learned among 19 School Resource Officer (SRO) Programs." National Criminal Reference Justice Services. Department of Justice, 28 Feb. 2005.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Petrosino, Anthony, Guckenburg, Sarah, and Fronius, Trevor. "Policing Schools' Strategies: A Systematic Search for Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Studies." WestEd (2011).
- ²³ New Hampshire Department of Education, (2011). *School administrative units*. Retrieved from website: http://www.education.nh.gov/data/documents/sau_map.pdf
- ²⁴ Griffin, Julia. Personal interview. 24 April 2013.
- ²⁵ "Community Profile of Belmont, New Hampshire." New Hampshire Employment Security. Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, n.d. Web. 18 May 2013.
- ²⁶ "Shaker Regional School District: 2011-2012 Annual Report." Shaker Regional School District. Shaker Regional School District, n.d. Web. 18 May 2013.
- ²⁷ Lewandowski, Mark. Personal interview. 2 May 2013.; Marcello, Joel. Personal interview. 2 May 2013.



-
- ²⁸ *Belmont police department home page.* (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.belmontnh.org/bpd/bpd2c.htm>
- ²⁹ Marcello, Joel. Personal interview. 2 May 2013.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ *Ibid.*
- ³² Lewandowski, Mark. Personal interview. 2 May 2013.
- ³³ National Center for Education Statistics. (2008). *Indicators of school crime and safety.* Retrieved 2009-02-27.
- ³⁴ "Community Profile of Moultonborough, New Hampshire." New Hampshire Employment Security. Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, n.d. Web. 18 May 2013.
- ³⁵ Terenzini, Carter. Personal interview. 7 May 2013.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸ "Community Profile of Pelham, New Hampshire." New Hampshire Employment Security. Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, n.d. Web. 18 May 2013.
- ³⁹ Nhsba 12-13 actual & projected enrollment figures. (2013, March 12). Retrieved from <http://www.pelhamsd.org/domain/418>
- ⁴⁰ Kelly, Brian. Personal interview. 7 May 2013.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² Munson, Philip. "A Brief History of Clinton." Clintonnychamber.org. Clinton New York, Chamber of Commerce n.d. Web. 21 Feb. 2013.
- ⁴³ "2012 Clinton High School Profile." CCS.edu. Clinton Central School District, n.d. Web. <http://www.ccs.edu/files/50109/hs_profile_12_web.pdf>.
- ⁴⁴ "School Resource Officer Agreement of Services." CCS.edu. Clinton Central School District, 12 Sept. 2012. Web. <<http://www.ccs.edu/files/58759/sro.pdf>>.
- ⁴⁵ "Project Launch: About Us." Projectlaunch.promoteprevent.org. National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, n.d. Web. 21 Feb. 2013.
- ⁴⁶ "School Resource Officer Agreement of Services." CCS.edu. Clinton Central School District, 12 Sept. 2012. Web. <<http://www.ccs.edu/files/58759/sro.pdf>>.
- ⁴⁷ "Project Launch: About Us." Projectlaunch.promoteprevent.org. National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, n.d. Web. 21 Feb. 2013..
- ⁴⁸ "School Resource Officer Agreement of Services." CCS.edu. Clinton Central School District, 12 Sept. 2012. Web. <<http://www.ccs.edu/files/58759/sro.pdf>>.
- ⁴⁹ Kriz, Charles. Personal interview. 12 June 2013.
- ⁵⁰ "School Resource Officer Agreement of Services." CCS.edu. Clinton Central School District, 12 Sept. 2012. Web. <<http://www.ccs.edu/files/58759/sro.pdf>>.
- ⁵¹ Kriz, Charles. Personal interview. 12 June 2013.
- ⁵² "School Resource Officer Agreement of Services." CCS.edu. Clinton Central School District, 12 Sept. 2012. Web. <<http://www.ccs.edu/files/58759/sro.pdf>>.
- ⁵³ Ferris, Joleen. "Large Group of Clinton Students Accused of Harassing Girls at Chinese Restaurant." *News Channel Two.* NBC, 6 Dec. 2011. Web. 10 June 2013.
- ⁵⁴ Bader, Daniel P. "Clinton Schools Probe Harassment Incident Involving Students." *Uticaod.* Observer-Dispect, 6 Dec. 2011. Web. 10 June 2013.
- ⁵⁵ Kriz, Charles. Personal interview. 12 June 2013.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*



⁵⁷ Town of Suffield, CT - About Suffield - History." Suffieldtownhall.com. Town of Suffield, CT, n.d. Web. 21 Feb. 2013.

⁵⁸ *Suffield academy profile*. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.boardingschoolreview.com/school_ov/school_id/45

⁵⁹ *Suffield high school overview*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/connecticut/districts/suffield-school-district/suffield-high-school-4550>

⁶⁰ 2012-2013 Suffield High School Profile." Shs.suffield.org. Suffield Public Schools- Suffield High School, n.d. Web. <http://shs.suffield.org/www/suffieldct_shs/site/hosting/Guidance/SHS%20Profile%2012-13.pdf>.

⁶¹ "Suffield High School- School Resource Officer." Suffield High School. Suffield Public Schools, n.d. Web. 21 Feb. 2013.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Town of Suffield, CT - About Suffield - History." Suffieldtownhall.com. Town of Suffield, CT, n.d. Web. 21 Feb. 2013.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ "Suffield High School- School Resource Officer." Suffield High School. Suffield Public Schools, n.d. Web. 21 Feb. 2013.

⁶⁷ "Town of Suffield, CT - About Suffield - History." Suffieldtownhall.com. Town of Suffield, CT, n.d. Web. 21 Feb. 2013.

⁶⁸ "Training." NASRO. National Association of School Resource Officers, n.d. Web. 17 May 2013.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Justin Campbell. Personal interview. Feb 2013.

⁷¹ Chris O'Connor. Personal interview. 22 Feb. 2013.

⁷² Chris O'Connor. Personal interview. 22 Feb. 2013. ; Justin Campbell. Personal interview. Feb 2013.

⁷³ Ibid.