



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

School Resource Officer Program, Training, and Grants

2020

Authorizing Legislation: [RCW 28A.300.650](#)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Implementation	6
Conclusion and Next Steps	7
Legal Notice	8

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a status update on the implementation of Sections 12 and 13 of House Bill 1216 (2019), concerning non-firearm measures to increase school safety and student well-being. Section 12 identifies the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program training requirements for school districts that choose to have an SRO. Section 13 requires the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to identify and make available resources for the SRO Program's training requirements and to establish and implement an SRO Grant Program for the delivery of the required training for the SRO Program.

OSPI researched and made available training content that meets the requirements of the 12 topic areas for an SRO Program. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, OSPI was unable to identify a grantee to deliver the training in the 2019–20 year.

INTRODUCTION

House Bill (HB) 1216 (2019) allows for the establishment School Resource Officers (SROs). The Legislature does not require school districts or schools have an SRO. However, the legislation does require that when a school district or school chooses to have an SRO, they establish an SRO Program, which includes required training.

School Resource Officer (SRO)

Section 12 (4) of HB 1216 (2019) defines an SRO as a commissioned law enforcement officer in the state of Washington with sworn authority to make arrests, deployed in community-oriented policing, and assigned by the employing police department or sheriff's office to work in schools to address crime and disorder problems, gangs, and drug activities affecting or occurring in or around K–12 schools. SROs should focus on keeping students out of the criminal justice system when possible and should not be used to attempt to impose criminal sanctions in matters that are more appropriately handled within the educational system.

In Washington state, an SRO is not a school district employee, but a law enforcement officer who is working in the district as the result of a contracted arrangement between the local law enforcement agency and the school district.

SRO Program

An SRO Program, defined in HB 1216 (2019) Section 12 (1) and codified in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.320.124, states that in order for a district to have an SRO, they must require the SRO to complete required training on the following 12 identified topic areas:

1. Constitutional and civil rights of children in schools, including state law governing search and interrogation of youth in schools;
2. Child and adolescent development;
3. Trauma-informed approaches to working with youth;
4. Recognizing and responding to youth mental health issues;
5. Educational rights of students with disabilities, the relationship of disability to behavior, and best practices for interacting with students with disabilities;
6. Collateral consequences of arrest, referral for prosecution, and court involvement;

7. Resources available in the community that serve as alternatives to arrest and prosecution and pathways for youth to access services without court or criminal justice involvement;
8. Local and national disparities in the use of force and arrests of children;
9. De-escalation techniques when working with youth or groups of youth;
10. State law regarding restraint and isolation in schools, including RCW 28A.600.485;
11. Bias free policing and cultural competency, including best practices for interacting with students from particular backgrounds, including English learners, LGBTQ, and immigrants; and
12. The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([20 U.S.C. Sec. 1232g](#)) requirements including limits on access to and dissemination of student records for non-educational purposes.

SRO Training Materials

Section 13 (1) of HB 1216 (2019), and codified in RCW 28A.300.650, subject to appropriation, requires the state School Safety Center at OSPI to collaborate with the School Safety and Student Well-being Advisory Committee and law enforcement entities to identify and make publicly available training materials that meet the requirements of RCW 28A.320.124.

SRO Grant Program

Section 13 (2) of HB 1216 (2019), and codified in RCW 28A.300.650, subject to appropriation, requires OSPI to establish and implement a grant program to fund training for SROs that meets the training requirements set out in RCW 28A.320.124.

IMPLEMENTATION

SRO Training Materials and SRO Program

In 2019, the School Safety and Student Well-being Advisory Committee (SS-SWAC) established an SRO Workgroup to work in collaboration with the OSPI School Safety Center on the development of training materials that meet the requirements of an SRO Program. These materials are posted on the [OSPI School Safety Center SRO Webpage](#) and have been promoted widely.

SRO Grant Program

Through the 2020 Supplemental Operating Budget (Senate Bill 6168 [2020]), the Legislature provided \$50,000 to OSPI for the SRO Grant Program. RCW 28A.300.650 specifies eligible grantees including school districts, educational service districts (ESDs), law enforcement agencies, and law enforcement training organizations.

RCW 28A.300.650 also indicates training may be developed by schools in partnership with local law enforcement and organizations that have expertise in topics such as juvenile brain development, restorative practices or restorative justice, social-emotional learning, civil rights, and student rights, including free speech and search and seizure. Additionally, the training may be provided by the Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC).

OSPI created a grant program that included the required parameters in RCW 28A.300.650. However, due to the time constraints and competing demands from the COVID-19 pandemic, potential applicants would be unable to complete the work by the June 30, 2020 deadline, and therefore declined to apply. As a result, there was not a grantee to provide training in 2020. Although the SRO Grant Program did not have any applicants in 2020, OSPI has a mitigation plan and intends to award a grantee in the 2021 fiscal year.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

In 2020, the SRO program training requirements were compiled and posted to the OSPI website. A grant application was finalized and posted. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, eligible applicants had conflicting commitments and were unable to apply for the grant. This is expected to change in state fiscal year 2021. The SRO Workgroup will continue to meet to make recommendations to the School Safety and Student Well-being Advisory Committee for both program improvements and future funding priorities.

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