



School Safety Newsletter

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Obama Administration to Schools: Stop Using Police To Enforce Rules

School-based police officers should mentor and support students, not push them into prison.

The Huffington Post, September 8, 2016

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/police-in-schools-justice-department_us_57d0641ce4b0a48094a735c5

Two weeks ago, civil rights groups in Richmond, Virginia, filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education over the treatment of black students in local schools. The district's black students are disproportionately targeted by police officers who work in the schools, the complaint alleges. One student in the complaint, a 13-year-old with disabilities named J.R., was violently restrained on the ground by a school-based police officer for allegedly clenching his hands into fists.

One week ago, the Southern Poverty Law Center filed a similar complaint with the Department of Education and Department of Justice on behalf of students in Pinellas, Florida. Many kids in Pinellas County Schools are victims of discriminatory police practices, the complaint alleges, under which black students and students with disabilities are disproportionately arrested and subjected to police methods like pepper spray.

These complaints come nearly a year after a school-based police officer at Spring Valley High School flipped a student out of her chair in South Carolina; half a year after a school-based police officer was caught hitting a child in Baltimore; and five months after a video showed a school-based police officer in Texas body-slammng a 12-year-old girl to the ground.

These troubling examples are just some of the ways that putting police in schools can have disastrous effects. On Thursday, the Department of Education and Department of Justice announced a new tool designed to address some of these issues.

Over the past two decades, the number of police officers stationed in K-12 schools has risen dramatically in the name of student safety. The federal government has contributed to this rise in school-based police officers — also called school resource officers, or SROs — by funding between 100 and 150 such positions each year through DOJ's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. The vast majority of the roughly 19,000 school resource officer positions in K-12 institutions, however, are funded on the state or local level.

On Thursday, the COPS office announced that it will require local police agencies to follow a new rubric if they want to receive federal funding for the hiring of school resource officers. Although only a small sliver of school resource officers are funded through the federal government, leaders say they hope the new rubric will guide school districts and police agencies across the country in developing and evaluating their school resource officer programs.

The rubric, called the Safe School-based Enforcement through Collaboration, Understanding, and Respect, recommends that school districts and police agencies develop formalized partnerships before placing police in schools. These partnerships should clearly delineate the role of school police officers and use data to evaluate the effectiveness of existing partnerships. The rubric also recommends that agencies effectively train school

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future through
information
sharing*

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Obama Administration to Schools: Stop Using Police To Enforce Rules **(Continued)**

resource officers on how to work with kids, and teach them about implicit bias and childhood development.

Another rubric describes how state leaders can use policy to support these goals.

“The primary role of the SRO should be to build trust between students and law enforcement and to keep students safe,” U.S. Education Secretary John King said Wednesday during a call with reporters. “But in some schools, SROs have become the disciplinarians, instead of better equipping teachers to address misbehavior and help students learn and grow from their mistakes.”

“Some schools are simply turning misbehaving students over to SROs,” King went on. “This can lead to citations or arrest, and set students on a path to dropping out of school or even to prison.”

The federal agencies also sent letters to various leaders of higher education institutions and college police chiefs, urging them to think deeply about the role of security on campus and to consider the recommendations of the President’s Task Force On 21st Century Policing.

“Beyond K-12 schools, the national issues related to community and police relations, racial justice and officer and public safety also reverberate on college campuses,” King said. “Campus police face many of the same challenges as their local police counterparts.”

School resource officers typically report to a commanding officer at a local police agency. Most states do not require these officers to get any special training in working with kids before they’re placed in schools. As a result, adolescent misbehavior in schools is sometimes met with serious, adult consequences. An August analysis from The Huffington Post and The Hechinger Report found that SROs have used stun guns or Tasers on at least 84 students in the past five years. Indeed, research shows that just the presence of a police officer in school increases the likelihood that a student will be referred to law enforcement for any one of a range of behaviors, including theft and vandalism.

However, when given the proper training and support, school police officers can serve as positive mentors and play an important role in school communities, King said. There is little data on how school resource officers tangibly affect school safety. Still, Ronald Davis, director of the COPS program, cited school resource officers as an example of the type of community policing that helps build trust between families and law enforcement.

“We know the relationships work,” Davis told reporters during Wednesday’s call. “This has been the principal of community policing for three generations, that police and community working together always works better.”

Obama Administration Releases Resources for Schools, Colleges to Ensure **Appropriate Use of School Resource Officers and Campus Police**

The U.S. Department of Education, September 8, 2016

<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/obama-administration-releases-resources-schools-colleges-ensure-appropriate-use-school-resource-officers-and-campus-police>

The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice released today new tools to improve school climates, ensure safety, and support student achievement in our nation's schools.

To the extent a local decision is made to use school resource officers (SROs) in community schools, these resources will help state and local education and law enforcement agencies responsibly incorporate SROs in the learning environment. Additionally, the Departments have highlighted tools available for law enforcement agencies that also apply to campus law enforcement agencies.

"As educators, we are all bound by a sacred trust to protect the well-being, safety, and extraordinary potential of the children, youth and the young adults within the communities we serve," U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King

Monthly Webinars!

First Wednesday of
Every Month at 10 am
(Except January, July,
and August).

Next Webinar

Wednesday

October 5, 2016

Each webinar has a round
table discussion at the
end. Questions are
always welcome!

To participate, you must be a
vetted member. For more
information please email
schoolsafety@isp.state.il.us

Obama Administration Releases Resources for Schools, Colleges to Ensure Appropriate Use of School Resource Officers and Campus Police (Continued)

Jr. said. "School resource officers can be valuable assets in creating a positive school environment and keeping kids safe. But we must ensure that school discipline is being handled by trained educators, not by law enforcement officers. At the college level, the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing has important recommendations that can help campus and local law enforcement both keep students safe and safeguard students' civil rights."

"With the release of these vital resources, the Obama Administration is furthering its commitment to ensuring that schools and SROs follow best practices, ensuring a positive and supportive classroom environment," said Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch. "By fostering relationships of trust and respect between students and school resource officers, we can continue to build safer schools where our young people can learn and thrive—a vital effort that the Department of Justice will continue to advance with our partners at the federal, state, and local levels in the months to come."

To assist states, schools, and their law enforcement partners in assessing the proper role of SROs and campus law enforcement professionals, both the Education Department and the Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov>) released letters to states and districts emphasizing the importance of well-designed SRO programs and calling on leaders of institutions of higher education to commit to implementing recommendations from the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf) in the campus policing context.

To assist in the K-12 context, the Departments also jointly released the Safe, School-based Enforcement through Collaboration, Understanding, and Respect (SECURE) Rubrics (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/support.html>). These new resources can help education and law enforcement agencies that use SROs to review and, if necessary, revise SRO-related policies in alignment with common-sense action steps that can lead to improved school safety and better outcomes for students while safeguarding their civil rights.

Letters:

- Campus letter from Education (<http://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/campus-policing-letter.pdf>)
- P-12 letter from Education (<http://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/secretary-sro-letter.pdf>)
- Campus letter from DOJ (<http://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/cops-campus-letter.pdf>)
- P-12 letter from DOJ (<http://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/cops-sro-letter.pdf>)

Rubrics:

- State and local policy (<http://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/secure-policy.pdf>)
- Local implementation (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/files/sro-local-implementation-rubric.pdf>)

The release of these materials builds on the Obama Administration's work with states and districts to improve discipline practices and climate in the nation's schools. The Departments have worked collaboratively to recognize states and districts leading the way on these issues as well as to provide states and districts with effective alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices and continue to call upon a broad array of stakeholders to rethink approaches to school discipline in order to keep kids in school and out of the justice system. Highlights from the Administration's supportive school discipline efforts include:

- **Joint Federal Policy and Legal Guidance:** Education and Justice jointly released a School Climate and Discipline Guidance Package (<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-departments-education-and-justice-release-school-discipline-guidance-package->) in 2014 to provide schools with a roadmap to reduce the usage of exclusionary discipline practices and clarify schools' civil rights obligation to not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin in the administration of school discipline.
- **#RethinkDiscipline Convening and Public Awareness Campaign:** Education and Justice launched Rethink Discipline (<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/educators-gather-white-house-rethink-school-discipline>) at the White House in July of 2015, convening school district teams, including some law enforcement practitioners and justice officials from across the country and sparking a national dialogue around punitive school discipline policies and practices that exclude students from classroom instruction and targeted supports.
- **Rethink School Discipline: Resource Guide for Superintendent Action:** As a part of Rethink Discipline, the Department of Education developed a resource guide (<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/rethink-discipline-resource-guide-supt-action.pdf>) with a set of potential action items to help school leaders implement safe, supportive school climate and discipline by engaging stakeholders, assessing the results and history of existing school climate and discipline systems and practices; implementing reform; and monitoring progress.

Obama Administration Releases Resources for Schools, Colleges to Ensure Appropriate Use of School Resource Officers and Campus Police (Continued)

Mia Ray Langheim
School Intelligence
Officer



•**Support for State and Local Educational Leaders and Partners from Other Systems:** In 2015, the Department of Justice launched the National Resource Center for School Justice Partnerships (<https://schooljusticepartnership.org>) to advance school discipline reform efforts and serve as a dynamic resource hub for schools, law enforcement agencies, and others to support school discipline reform efforts at the local level.

•**Fostering Safe and Supportive Learning Environments:** In 2016, the Department of Education released the ED School Climate Surveys (<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls>) and the Quick Guide on Making School Climate Improvements (<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/quick-guide>) to help foster and sustain safe and more nurturing environments that are conducive to learning for all students.

•**Addressing Implicit Bias and Discipline Disparities in Early Childhood Settings:** In 2016, the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services recently announced a new investment of \$1 million (<http://www.ed.gov/news/media-advisories/senior-education-and-health-and-human-services-officials-discuss-importance-data-improving-early-learning-outcomes>) in the Pyramid Equity Projectto (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/files/fact-sheet-pyramid-equity-project.pdf>) establish national models for addressing issues of implicit bias, and uneven implementation of discipline, including expulsions and suspensions, in early learning programs.

•**Providing Guidance to Schools on Ensuring Equity and Providing Behavioral Supports to Students with Disabilities:** In 2016, the Department of Education announced the release (<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-releases-guidance-schools-ensuring-equity-and-providing-behavioral-supports-students-disabilities>) of a significant guidance document in the form of a Dear Colleague Letter (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/files/dcl-on-pbis-in-ieps--08-01-2016.pdf>), which emphasized the requirement that schools provide positive behavioral supports to students with disabilities who need them. It also clarified that the repeated use of disciplinary actions may suggest that many children with disabilities may not be receiving appropriate behavioral interventions and supports. Also included was a Summary for Stakeholders (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/files/dcl-summary-for-stakeholders.pdf>).

The new resources and letters released today build on the work of the My Brother's Keeper Initiative (https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/053014_mbk_report.pdf) and the Council on Women and Girls (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/11/13/fact-sheet-advancing-equity-women-and-girls-color>), and respond to recommendations put forth by the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf) to support schools in developing more positive school climates and strengthening the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve. These efforts help districts, schools, and communities build credible and sustainable systems, structures, and partnerships that provide safe, supportive learning environments that uplift students and nurture them when they do well and when they need support to do better.

For more information about the Administration's work on school climate and discipline go to www.ed.gov/rethinkdiscipline.

Ideas and Resources to Involve the Community in School and Campus Safety

Consider Organizing a School-Focused Neighborhood Watch Program

- Ideas to help organize & sustain a school focused neighborhood watch program focused on your child or grandchild's school: (<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B-aXnInDOTeCZmM4dzMtMW5fY2M>)
- Strategy: Starting Neighborhood Watch Groups (<http://www.ncpc.org/topics/home-and-neighborhood-safety/strategies/strategy-starting-neighborhood-watch-groups>)
- National Neighborhood Watch (<http://www.nnw.org>)

Consider Using Volunteers for Police Service

- International Association of Chiefs of Police: VIPS - Volunteers in Police Service (<http://www.iacp.org/VIPS>)
- Community Involvement in Campus Safety. 11-minute video highlights volunteer efforts in college and university law enforcement. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtGC7CE273c&feature=youtu.be>)

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