



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: School Resource Officer Program, Training, and Grants

2021

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2019 Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 1216, concerning non-firearm measures, to increase school safety and student well-being. In 2021, HB 1216 was amended and rewritten into HB 1214. HB 2014 modified the definition of a school resource officer, added an additional training topic, and expanded the training requirements to include a new category of School Safety and Security Staff Personnel. This bill established Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.320.124, School Resource Officer (SRO) program training requirements for school districts which chose to have an SRO.

Established under HB 1216, RCW 28A.300.650 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 now 13 topic areas for an SRO Program. OSPI also awarded a grant to Educational Service District (ESD) 105 to develop a set of training resources and host a virtual training summit. These materials have been made available to all nine ESDs in Washington. Each ESD has either completed or scheduled the required training.

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 1216 (2019) established school resource officers (SROs) in state law. The Legislature did not require that school districts and schools have an SRO. Rather, they required that when a school district or school chooses to employ an SRO, they must have an SRO Program, which includes required training. House Bill 1214 (2021) expanded and clarified the previous legislation to include all school safety and security staff personnel and added a 13th topic area: Restorative Justice Principles and Practices.

School Resource Officers (SRO)

School resource officers are defined in state law (RCW 28A.320.124) 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 build positive relationships with students and address crime and disorder problems, gangs, and drug activities affecting or occurring in or around K–12 schools. School resource officers 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.

School Resource Officer Programs

If a school district chooses to have an SRO program, there are minimum required training components that SROs must receive and there must be a clear agreement between the school district and local law enforcement agency in order to help establish effective partnerships that protect the health and safety of all students.

For a district to have an SRO, they must require the SRO to complete a required training series which must include the following 13 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/multilingual learners, students who are LGBTQ+, and students who are immigrants;
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 purpose; and
13. Restorative justice principles and practices.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is responsible for collaborating with the School Safety and Student Well-being Advisory Committee (SS-SWAC) and law enforcement entities to identify and make publicly available training materials that meet the requirements of RCW 28A.320.124 and RCW 28A.300.650.

In 2019, the SS-SWAC established the 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. Materials, resources, and more information are available on [OSPI's SRO webpage](#) and have been promoted widely by OSPI and the state's nine educational service districts (ESDs).

Subject to funds available, OSPI is responsible for establishing and implementing a grant program to fund training for SROs to meet the training requirements set out in RCW 28A.320.124. The 2020 Legislature provided \$50,000 per fiscal year (FY) in FY 2020 and FY 2021 for grants to school districts to provide SRO training (Senate Bill 6168, Sec. 520(20) [2020]).

RCW 28A.300.650 identifies which entities are eligible grantees, including:

- School districts,
- ESDs,
- Law enforcement agencies, and
- Law enforcement training organizations.

OSPI created a grant program that included the required parameters in RCW 28A.300.650. ESD 105 was awarded the grant with a period of performance ending on June 30, 2021. ESD 105 hosted the second virtual SRO S5 Summit on June 16–17, 2021. Training information and resources can be found on ESD 105's [S5 Summit: Safety & Support for Students webpage](#).

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

With the passage of House Bill 1214 in 2021, educational service districts (ESDs) are now responsible for developing and offering the safety and security staff training program. Funding was not provided to OSPI in fiscal year 2022 for any additional material or resource development and the grant program has been discontinued. OSPI will continue to partner with ESDs, school districts, and the School Safety and Student Well-being Advisory Committee to support school safety initiatives and data collection in future years.

The [OSPI School Safety and Security Staff Program webpage](#) contains all of the information included in this report and more, including links to ESD 105's website and resources.

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