



# Appleton Police Department

## School Resource Officer Unit



# The SRO Unit History

The Appleton Police Department's SRO program is one of the longest running SRO programs in the state of Wisconsin. Enacted on January 11, 1979 with three officers being assigned to the three Junior High Schools in the city, we recently celebrated 40 years of service. In 1979, the three assigned were selected from 14 officers who applied. The selection involved submitting a resume and a report on why they wanted the position.

Their duties included Student Services Team membership, student assistant programs, Summer of Service program, ALICE training, Sources of Strength.

There are currently 12 police officers working in City of Appleton schools. Each has a primary office at the elementary, middle, or high school they are assigned to, including parochial and private schools. In addition to the 12 SROs, there is a Lieutenant who serves as a coordinator to the program and who also works on a variety of community initiatives to provide better services to juveniles and their families.



# The SRO Unit Mission

## M I S S I O N

Be a resource to the students, parents, and staff of all of the school communities we serve within the City of Appleton.

Work with our school, government, and community based resources to be a connection for those we serve to gain access to needed support and resources.

Establish rapport and relationships with students, in particular those deemed at risk, and find ways to divert them from becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.

Collaborate with the Outagamie County Youth and Family Services Unit, to be a link between the schools and community in an effort to manage the behaviors of youth involved in the criminal justice system.

Investigate crimes of physical and sexual abuse in concert with Children Youth and Families and community partners to protect vulnerable individuals in our city.

Work in partnership with our schools to ensure safe and secure campuses.

# SRO Selection Process

1. A competitive process – no contract language, they serve at pleasure of the Chief.
2. Officers apply by submitting a memorandum indicating their interest.
3. A review of the following criteria is conducted by the SRO Coordinator:
  - Current strengths and weaknesses
  - Current job knowledge
  - Prior preparation for position
  - Contribution to department mission
  - Suitability for assignment
  - Prior evaluations
  - Understanding of the role of the SRO and relationship with AASD

# SRO Selection Process

5. SRO Coordinator interviews officers direct supervisor and Captain.
6. Interested officers participate in an oral interview panel.
  - The panel consists of the SRO Unit Coordinator, Captain, SRO, and school district personnel for the school the SRO will be assigned.
7. Candidate is recommended to the Chief of Police for final approval.
8. Once selected, the new SRO completes an onboarding process.
9. The onboarding process includes:
  - Training on proper handling of Sensitive Crime Investigations.
  - Training on SANE exams and the role of the SRO.
  - Training on the mission of the SRO program and Policies.
  - Meeting with the AASD Pupil Service Assistant Superintendent about expectations.
  - Special Education, and seclusion and restraint legalities.
  - Orientation with Child Protective Services, Juvenile Intake, Boys and Girls Club and other community partners.

# SRO On-going Training

- The APD School Resource Officers attend regular training on topics related to their roles and responsibilities.
  - ACES, sensitive crimes, ICAC, Multi Disciplinary Teams, youth mental health, understanding youth with disabilities, school security/threat assessment, ALICE Instructor.
- APD SRO's have acquired specialized training in ICAC, Threat Assessment, and are also Community Interviewer trained.
- The SRO's are also encouraged to attend training offered by the AASD on issues and programs the AASD offers such as ACES and AODA in youth.
- Approximately three times per school year SRO's from Outagamie County, Calumet County and the cities of Neenah and Menasha attend meetings. Speakers are brought to these meeting about various topics pertinent to the SRO role and collaboration is also fostered along jurisdictional lines.

# APD SRO Unit

- **Collaboration** - The unit has a Lieutenant assigned specifically to the SRO Unit who is responsible for both the oversight of the officers activities and for fostering the relationship between the department and the school district. The SRO supervisor works closely with the administration of all schools to continue the implementation of best practices related to all students and issues.
- **MOU** - Prior to this discussion the only MOU was a financial agreement and general guidelines. Because of this discussion we have a tentative MOU, based on the NASRO and DOJ/DPI recommended language.
- **Tracking** – activity is recorded and monitored by the supervisor and in our Budget – Performance Indicators which include tracking informal contacts with students and number of complaint resolutions/diversions made through informal means.
- **Five Pillar Strategic Plan of 2015 – Youth Intervention and Mentoring Pillar**
  - Early identification and intervention, initiate wraparound services with the school district.
  - Diversion instead of citation – Reduced juvenile arrests (citations and referrals) from 698 (2016) to 296 (2019) reduction of over 57%, using “desk probation” and eliminating truancy citations and school district taking over referrals to intake for truancy.

# General Duties and Responsibilities

- Provide early intervention to keep small problems from becoming large ones
- Divert students from the juvenile justice system when appropriate
- Serve as liaisons between juveniles and/or their parents, service organizations, school personnel, and the community
- Provide information about legal matters to students, their parents, and the school staff
- Work with school administrators on developing policies and procedures to keep schools safe
- Be a friend, counselor, and listener to youth with personal problems
- Investigate crimes where juveniles are either victims or perpetrators and enforce applicable laws
- Investigate sensitive crime investigations involving both adults and juveniles
- Supervise school grounds, extra curricular school activities, and school neighborhoods
- Make referrals to other agencies
- Serve as a positive role model to students
- Work closely with child protection, social services, juvenile intake, and other community agencies
- Serve on school Student Services Teams
- Share information with school administrators about the conduct of students in the community
- Provide training to other police officers on the special needs and concerns of youth
- Serve on a variety of committees and task forces working to improve services available for juveniles

