

PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY
SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Background:

Act 67 of 2019 requires all school police officers, school resource officers, and school security guards to complete the Basic School Resource Officer Course offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) or an equivalent course of instruction approved by the commission prior to working in a school setting.

The Commission adopted standards for an equivalent course of instruction for school security personnel (SSP) on December 11, 2019. Further, the Commission delegated authority to PCCD staff to evaluate and approve vendors to offer the equivalent course of instruction to the NASRO Basic School Resource Officer Course.

[Section 1315-C](#) of the PA Public School Code provides for PCCD, the PA Department of Education (PDE), and the PA State Police (PSP) to periodically reassess the training requirements for all school security personnel, including NASRO's Basic School Resource Officer Course.

In June 2021, PCCD hosted a virtual meeting for all SSP training providers and staff members of PSP and PDE. The primary objective of the meeting was to review the current training standards and to discuss any necessary revisions. During the remainder of 2021, staff from PDE, PSP and PCCD continued to meet to devise suggested edits to the training program standards to improve training. The revised training standards are included below.

The School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC) reviewed the suggested changes at its January 26, 2022 meeting and expressed no concerns. On March 9, 2022, the revised standards were formally approved by the Commission.

In order to be compliant with these revised standards and be approved to offer an equivalent course of instruction to NASRO's training, each school security training provider must incorporate the following standards into their curriculum and submit the revisions to PCCD staff at RA-CD-SSSC@pa.gov no later than December 9, 2022. If you have any questions or need clarification on any of these standards, please do not hesitate to contact Shaun White at 717-265-8718 for assistance.

SCHOOL SECURITY PERSONNEL TRAINING STANDARDS

Article XIII-C of the Public School Code of 1949 defines and delineates training requirements for school security personnel, which is comprised of School Resource Officers (SROs)¹, School Police Officers (SPOs)², and School Security Officers (SSOs)³. The law mandates that prior to entering upon the duties of their office, all school security personnel "*shall successfully complete the Basic School Resource Officer Course of Instruction offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) or an equivalent course of instruction approved by the commission.*"⁴

The following information provides an overview of the components of "an equivalent course of instruction" to be used in the formation of an alternate training option. For the purposes of this document, the term School Security Personnel (SSP) will be used to refer to SROs, SPOs, and SSOs unless specified otherwise.

The SSP Basic Course includes instruction in the following areas:

- School Security Personnel
 - Differences in language and thought process between 'regular' law enforcement and SSP
 - History of early SRO/SPO programs and their successes and failures
 - Elements of the SSP role in the context of school environments

¹ [PA Public School Code of 1949, Section 1301-C \(Definitions\)](#)

² [PA Public School Code of 1949, Section 1301-C \(Definitions\)](#)

³ [PA Public School Code of 1949, Section 1301-C \(Definitions\)](#)

⁴ [PA Public School Code of 1949, Section 1313-C \(a.1\)\(1\)](#)

- The goals of SSP in the school, among the student body, and in the community
- The importance and key elements of the school entity's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with law enforcement with jurisdiction over the entity.
- Statutory responsibility, based on the SSP's role, for taking a student into custody on school grounds
- Ethics and the SSP
 - The importance and need for the SSP's high standard of ethics
 - Components of ethical behavior for SSP
 - Definition of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
 - The importance of maintaining confidentiality and abiding by the law
 - Ethical considerations unique to the role of SSP
 - Cultural Awareness
 - Relationships with students
 - Maintenance of appropriate boundaries
 - Communication and social media
 - Making appropriate referrals for students in need
 - The importance and need for discretion, foreseeability and flexibility in guiding ethical behavior
- The SSP in the School Setting
 - Law-Related Education (LRE) as it pertains to the SSP
 - Aspects of LRE
 - Connection with administration and other school personnel
 - Stages of youth development
 - Working with students throughout the developmental stages
 - The learning process, states of development and different kinds of learning styles
 - Effective presentation skills
 - Class management methods
 - De-escalation techniques for dealing with students/parents
 - Use of force and alternative methods
- Understanding Students with Special Needs
 - The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
 - Overview – Definition
 - The role of SSP when working with students with disabilities
 - The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
 - State law regarding FERPA and Individualized Educational Program (IEP) records
 - School policy regarding student educational records and IEP records
 - Requirements for educating individuals with disabilities
 - IEP components
 - SSP legal access to IEP information, check school policy
 - Parental involvement
 - Communication considerations
 - 504 plans
 - The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and other legal restrictions
 - Mental Health records
 - Disciplinary considerations
 - Behavioral expectations and challenges
 - Alternative methods of discipline
- The SSP as a Role Model/Mentor
 - Communication and interactions strategies to foster relationships with students and families
 - Finding overlapping spaces for schools and community
 - Using community as an informative space from which to develop positive understandings of students and families
 - Identifying implicit biases of students and families
 - Demonstrate how role model/mentor apply FERPA
 - Reference definition from Ethics section

- Examples of how FERPA will come into play with each SSP role
 - How to balance the role of law enforcement with student confidentiality and student rights
 - Exceptions
 - Implications for the SSP
 - Identifying student behavior that merits referral to community or professional services
 - Utilizing the Student Assistant Program (SAP) and other school-based programs
 - Safe2Say
 - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
 - Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)
 - Connection with the Threat Assessment Team
 - Community and professional resources
 - Creating and maintaining a safe, positive, pro-social learning environment as a prevention strategy
- Social Media and Cyber Safety
 - Various forms of social media and internet outlets
 - Impact of social media and the internet on students and the school environment
 - Malicious use of social media and the internet
 - Cyber-bullying, threats and abuse
 - Online sexual crimes, including sexting
 - Reporting abuse to law enforcement
 - Cyber safety strategies
 - Communication and social media
 - Making appropriate and ethical referrals for students in need
 - The importance and need for discretion, foreseeability and flexibility in guiding ethical behavior
- Recognizing Developmental Stages of the K-12 Student
 - K-12 developmental stages
 - Educational platform for developmental stages
 - The SSPs' role in working/dealing with each developmental stage
 - Aspects and values of youth culture
 - De-escalation based on child's ability to process
 - Mental and behavioral health
 - Risk factors and warning signs
 - Recognize and respond to alcohol and other drugs
 - School policy and action plans to support students
 - Student social and emotional well-being
 - How is this secured by the SSP?
- Violence and Victimization
 - The different types of stress and impact on the body
 - Signs and symptoms
 - Available resources in the school/community
 - How the SSP should address/assist with observed behavior
 - Working with parents
 - Providing information on victimization and other LRE
 - De-escalation
 - Types and signs of bullying behavior in the school environment and the virtual world, including the role of social media
 - Signs, risk factors and pro-social interventions regarding anti-social behavior
 - Resources and Reporting
 - School policy/statute
 - [PCCD Office of Victims' Services](#)
- Trauma-Informed Education
 - Understanding Trauma in the School Setting
 - Awareness of school policies and procedures
 - Mandated reporting
 - Understanding the widespread impact of trauma and pathways to recovery

- Recognizing trauma signs and symptoms
 - Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and how it might impact the work of the SSP
 - Youth behavior
 - Communication
 - Resources for strategies for working with traumatized and victimized youth
 - [PCCD Model Trauma-Informed Approach Plan](#)
 - [PDE Trauma Resources](#)
 - [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)
 - [SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#)
- Child Abuse, Sex Trafficking, and Human Trafficking of Youth
 - Overview of child abuse, mandated reporter requirements
 - Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)
 - Vulnerable populations
 - Recruitment and control process of victims
 - Management mechanisms and identifiers
 - Cultural differences
 - Examples of terms that have different meanings in different cultures
 - Gang Recognition
 - The importance of knowing which gangs are prevalent in the area
 - Resources and Reporting
 - [PA Department of Human Services, Human Trafficking](#)
 - [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#)
 - [Innocence Lost National Initiative](#)
 - [Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children \(CSEC\)](#)
 - [U. S. Department of State, 20 Ways You Can Help Fight Human Trafficking](#)
 - [Office of Justice Programs, Victim-Centered Approach](#)
 - School policy
 - Strategies and practices to approach and engage victims
 - Need for a victim-centered approach
- Youth Drug Trends in the School Environment
 - Impact of youth trends, including drug use, on the school environment
 - Strategies and tools for staying current on youth trends and drugs affecting the school environment
 - Categories of drugs popular among adolescents
 - Examples of popular drugs varied throughout PA
 - Information from someone in the County or PA Drug Taskforce or Single County Authority (SCA) on how to stay updated on current drug trends
 - Responding to drug overdose
- School Law
 - Topics and fundamental points of federal and state case law pertinent to juvenile rights and offending
 - Balancing an understanding of juvenile law with the potential for liability
 - Awareness of ongoing updates in PA laws regarding school safety
 - Inclusion of school policy
- Developing Cultural Awareness and Diversity Sensitivity
 - The impact of culture and diversity on law enforcement and community relations
 - Cultural Sensitivity
 - Implicit and explicit biases
 - How biases effect school culture
 - Self-awareness exercise
 - Overcoming participant obstacles/fear
 - Awareness of potential biases and how it can affect the work of the SSP
 - Defining Equity and Inclusion in schools
 - [PDE Equity and Inclusion](#)
 - Understanding the importance of equity and inclusion in the school setting
 - Creating an inclusive environment for underrepresented student groups in schools

- How school systems impact underrepresented students
 - Laws that the SSP should be aware of regarding underrepresented students
 - Strategies to counter identified barriers and build/strengthen individual and community relationships
 - Cultural responsiveness
- Threat Response: Preventing Violence in School Settings
 - The threat assessment process at the school
 - Referral and collaboration with the school's Threat Assessment Team
 - New curriculum for threat assessment team (not required for participants)
 - Threat assessment materials can be found at: [Threat Assessment \(pa.gov\)](#)
- School Safety and Emergency Operations Plans
 - Effective proactive school safety measures
 - School Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
 - Factors
 - Protocols and responsibilities
 - Scenario responses
- Risk/Vulnerability Identification and Mitigation
 - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
 - Campus safety and security
 - Assessment of the building and surrounds
 - Identifying soft targets in the environment of the school
 - Interior
 - Exterior
 - Working with administrative staff to target hardening methods in areas of vulnerability
 - [School Safety and Security Assessment Criteria](#)
 - Physical
 - Behavioral Health/Student Assistance
 - Policy and training
- Practicum in the Study of Case Scenarios
 - Conclusion Activities (Capstone)
 - Authority and responsibilities delineated in statute
 - Presentations
 - Tabletop exercises
 - Case scenarios – essay to demonstrate action in school