

SROS: DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

Session Overview	Classes Where Session Can Be Taught	Teaching Strategies	Links to National Social Studies Standards	Links to National Health Standards
SROs: Do You Have What It Takes? Students learn the role and challenges of being an SRO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Law • Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming • Scenarios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purposes of politics and government (NSCG I. A.3) • The place of law in American society (NSCG III.D.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health. (NHES 5)



The perfect SRO candidate (5 minutes)

School scenarios (35 minutes)

Summary (5 minutes)

OUTCOMES

As a result of this session, students will be able to:

- discuss the role of SROs
- explain SRO procedures in selected situations
- role-play encounters between SROs and students
- empathize with the challenges of an SRO's job
- view SROs as a community asset

HANDOUTS

- 1: It's a Fight (enough copies for one quarter of the class)
- 2: Locker Search (enough copies for one quarter of the class)
- 3: Students Hanging Out (enough copies for one quarter of the class)
- 4: Students Smoking (enough copies for one quarter of the class)

YOUR TEACHING PARTNER

Street Law, Inc., highly recommends that you always co-teach *Street Law for School Resource Officers* sessions with the classroom teacher. State law requires the presence of a certified teacher in the classroom. If you are called out for an emergency, the classroom teacher will be able to help by continuing with the session. Please refer to the front section on “Preparing to teach the sessions” (page 20) for more information.

PREPARING TO TEACH

- Make a copy of this session for the teacher and discuss how the two of you will work together to teach it.
- Copy the handouts as described above.
- Post the outcomes for the class.
- Bring any materials on police officer/SRO recruitment and training. Make sure to bring enough copies for the class.
- Prepare to discuss laws and police procedure relating to dating violence, locker searches, marijuana on school grounds, teenage smoking and truancy.

SUMMARY

At the end of this session, there is a summary section. Students will discuss the information they have learned and clarify any concerns. This is a critical step in the learning process. Ask your teaching partner to help you keep track of time in order to reserve five minutes at the end of class for the summary.

THE PERFECT SRO CANDIDATE (5 minutes)

1

Have the classroom teacher introduce you.

2

Review the posted outcomes with the students.

3

Tell the students that the supervisor of the SRO program is looking for applicants to send to the police academy for specialized SRO training. Briefly explain the duties of an SRO. Encourage students to think about the qualities and background of the person who would be an ideal SRO candidate.

4

Brainstorm these qualities and background with the students and write them on the board. Examples may include:

- ability to communicate with teens
- knowledge of laws pertaining to schools
- honesty
- physical fitness
- valid driver's license
- no criminal record
- college graduate/high school graduate
- experience
- second language
- excellent recommendations
- dedication

5

Talk about the basic training that police officers, in particular SROs, undergo and the skills that they are taught. Some of the possible areas to discuss are:

- the procedure for becoming an SRO
- application requirements
- amount of prior police experience needed
- courses taken for the job and information taught
- training for conflict resolution and anger management

Distribute any information that you have regarding police officer/SRO recruitment and training.



Tip for expanding the session: Discuss police-related careers. Have students create a recruiting poster that targets high school students interested in pursuing law enforcement careers.

SCHOOL SCENARIOS (35 minutes)

1

Divide the class into four groups.

2

From each group, ask for one volunteer to go to “SRO Training Academy.” The SRO should take the students going to SRO training into the hall. If this is not possible, take them into a corner of the room to minimize distractions. SRO procedures to review include:

- how to address a school-based situation (e.g., assessing the crisis level; dealing with crowds; treating all people equally, fairly, but firmly; and keeping your cool despite how others treat you)
- when to use of force, what kind is appropriate (handcuffs, firearms, pepper spray)
- when to arrest
- what to do following an arrest
-

Explain to the officers that today they will each have to deal with situations that SROs commonly face.

3

The classroom teacher should remain with the groups that are not going to SRO training. The teacher should pass out the “It’s a Fight” handout to one group, the “Locker Search” handout to another group, etc.

The teacher should explain that each of their scenarios are common situations that SROs deal with in schools. They are to read the scenario and decide what might happen when the SRO arrives on the scene. They should think about how the people directly involved might respond, as well as how any bystanders might respond to the unfolding situation. Each group will design a role-play based on what would happen next in the handout scenario. The groups should continue the “action” when the SRO arrives to handle the situation.

Important note: Tell students that role-plays may NOT include:

- physical contact between students
- violent or abusive language
- the use of props for the purpose of restraining or harming another student



Tip: If you are teaching alone, give the directions to the class as a whole before breaking into groups for the role-plays. Spend most of your time with the SRO trainees.

4

After five minutes, bring all the students back together.



Tip: If you are short on time, you may choose to have the role-plays performed simultaneously. If so, give each “SRO” a brief description of what is going on, and tell the officer to handle it. The teacher and you should circulate to observe the role-plays. You should look for procedures and situations to comment on in the discussion after the role-plays. Stop all the role-plays within five minutes.

5

Call up the group with the “It’s a Fight” handout and the SRO from that group. Read it aloud for the rest of the class and for the SRO.

Handout 1: IT’S A FIGHT!

Two students, Mike and Michelle, are dating. They are arguing because Mike suspects that Michelle hooked up with some guy this past weekend. Michelle is furious that Mike is accusing her of lying. She is yelling and waving her hands. Michelle shoves him. Mike shoves her back and then punches her. A crowd of students gathers and begins to chant, "Fight! Fight! Fight!" A member of the crowd yells for the SRO ...

[START ROLE-PLAY]



Tip for expanding the session: You can easily extend this section by allowing about five minutes per role-play and 10 minutes per debrief of each role-play. Debrief the role-play immediately following its performance, rather than waiting to debrief all four role-plays.

6

Ask the students not performing the role-play to write down notes about how the SRO handles the situation. Have the first group perform its role-play.

7

Allow about five minutes for the group’s role-play. After the group is finished, thank the group and the SRO. Tell the group that the class will reflect on its role-play at the end. Continue in the same manner with the other three groups.

Handout 2: LOCKER SEARCH

The librarian is fed up with students who check out books but do not return them. She asks a custodian to open all the lockers so that she can look for overdue books. As the custodian is opening locker number 19, the student who uses that locker walks up. Three library books and some marijuana paraphernalia are in sight. A group of students gathers to look on. The custodian immediately calls the SRO ...

[START ROLE-PLAY]

Handout 3: **STUDENTS HANGING OUT**

A group of teenagers is hanging out in the school parking lot during class time. One student is talking on a cell phone while the others are joking around and swearing. The SRO sees the group and goes to check out the scene. . .

[START ROLE-PLAY]

Handout 4: **STUDENTS SMOKING**

After gym class, a couple of students decide to smoke cigarettes in the locker room. The basketball coach sees the smoke coming out from underneath the door and, thinking that there might be a problem, calls the SRO ...

[START ROLE-PLAY]

8

After all of the groups have performed, thank them again.

9

Ask students to offer comments about each of the role-plays. Guide the conversation by asking questions such as:

- What actions did the SRO take that were appropriate?
- What should the SROs have done differently?
- Did students feel they were treated fairly?
- Did students behave appropriately when interacting with the SROs?

10

After each role-play has received at least one comment, briefly discuss how you would respond to each scenario if it happened at your school. Where appropriate, compliment the SROs on how they responded. Make sure you review applicable laws for each scenario. Other issues that you may wish to discuss include:

- “It’s a Fight”: Is dating violence covered under your state’s domestic violence laws? If not, how would the law treat this situation? What might happen to the students involved? Would either of them be arrested? How would the school handle the situation? How could this situation be avoided?
- “Locker Search”: Is this a legal search? (Yes. While students do have Fourth Amendment rights at school, the rights are not implicated in locker searches, since the lockers belong to the school. School officials can open and search them because students have no expectation of privacy in an item that belongs to the school. If the librarian had searched a student’s purse found in the library then the Fourth Amendment as interpreted in the 1985 Supreme Court case *New Jersey v. T.L.O.* would apply. In that case, the Supreme Court ruled that school officials, unlike police, can search the property of students when they have “reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated ... either the law or rules of the school.”) What would you have advised the librarian to do? What are rules for locker searches at your school? What would happen to the students next?
- “Students Hanging Out”: What are current procedures for approaching groups of students? Are cell phones against school rules? Do you get involved in enforcing school rules that do not violate the law? What would happen to the students next?
- “Students Smoking”: What happens if a student is caught smoking? Do you get involved in enforcing school rules that do not violate the law? What would happen to the students next?

SUMMARY (5 minutes)

1

Ask the students the following questions:

- What is the main function of an SRO?
- What did you learn about how SROs respond to suspicious activity?
- For those of you who were playing the role of SROs, how did it feel to be an SRO?
- How can students and SROs work best together?

2

Thank students for their participation and insights.



MORE TEACHING IDEAS

- Arrange for a career fair on law enforcement and other law-related careers.

WEB RESOURCES

- The Center for the Prevention of School Violence provides information about understanding and solving the problems of school violence. Their Web site, www.cpsv.org, features information on curbing school violence including the role of the SRO in creating a safe school.

For more information, please refer to the Resources section in the front of the manual.

This session is adapted by permission from *Police Patrol*, an educational simulation, developed by Constitutional Rights Foundation. The complete and expanded session kit is available from Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Room 13, P.O. Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802, www.crf.org. This kit would be a valuable addition to these sessions. For more information, call (213) 487-5590.

HANDOUT 1

IT'S A FIGHT!

Two students, Mike and Michelle, are dating. They are arguing because Mike suspects that Michelle hooked up with some guy this past weekend. Michelle is furious that Mike is accusing her of lying. She is yelling and waving her hands. Michelle shoves him. Mike shoves her back and then punches her. A crowd of students gathers and begins to chant, "Fight! Fight! Fight!" A member of the crowd yells for the SRO ...

[START ROLE-PLAY]

HANDOUT 2

LOCKER SEARCH

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[START ROLE-PLAY]

HANDOUT 3

STUDENTS HANGING OUT

A group of teenagers is hanging out in the school parking lot during class time. One student is talking on a cell phone while the others are joking around and swearing. The SRO sees the group and goes to check out the scene ...

[START ROLE-PLAY]

HANDOUT 4

STUDENTS SMOKING

After gym class, a couple of students decide to smoke cigarettes in the locker room. The basketball coach sees the smoke coming out from underneath the door and, thinking that there might be a problem, calls the SRO . . .

[START ROLE-PLAY]