

SROS: DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

Lesson Overview	Classes Where Lesson 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.	Government Law Health	Brainstorming Scenarios	The purposes of politics and government (NSCG I. A.3) The place of law in American society (NSCG III.D.1)	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 lesson, students will be able to:

- discuss the role of SROs
- explain SRO procedures in selected situations
- empathize with the challenges of an SRO's job

HANDOUTS

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

YOUR TEACHING

Street Law, Inc. highly recommends that you co-teach *Street Law for School Resource Officers* lessons with classroom teachers. 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 lesson. Please refer to the front section on "Preparing to teach the lessons" within *Integrating Street Law for School Resource Officers Into School Settings* (pages 18–21) for more information.

PREPARING TO TEACH

- Make a copy of this lesson 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 entire class.
- Prepare to discuss laws and police procedure relating to dating violence, locker searches, marijuana on school grounds, teenage smoking and truancy.
- If possible, bring copies of police department procedures and school procedures for handling cases of fighting, loitering and locker searches. You may also want to bring copies of a *Miranda* Warning card.

SUMMARY

At the end of this lesson, 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 school system and police department are concerned about the number of incidents at school that violate laws and disrupt learning. Explain that the supervisor of the School Resource Officer (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 should be selected as a police officer, particularly an SRO who works in schools.

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

Very briefly 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 lesson: 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**

Ask for between three and six volunteers to go to the “SRO Training Academy”. (There are three role-plays that the student SROs will be responding to. You’ll need at least one officer for each scenario. You may choose to have two student officers.)

If you are teaching with a classroom teacher, you should take the students going to SRO training into the hall. (While you are working with the student SROs, the teacher can work with the rest of the class. If you are teaching alone, get the rest of the class started in their assignments and then come back to this group of student SROs.) If it is not possible to go into the hallway, take the SROs into a corner of the room to minimize distractions. Review SRO procedures including:

- 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 force, what kind is appropriate (handcuffs, firearms, pepper spray)
- when to arrest
- what to do following an arrest

Inform the “officers” that in five minutes or less, the school secretary/dispatcher will radio and request an officer or officers to answer a call somewhere in the school. The SROs will have to deal with the situation to the best of their abilities.

2

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.

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

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]

The teacher should explain that each of their scenarios is a common situation that SROs deal with in schools. They are to read their handout 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.

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

3

Give students five minutes to prepare their role-plays. Write the ending time on the board. As students are planning, circulate around the room to observe. Do not offer advice (unless you are asked) until after the students complete their role-plays. After five minutes, bring all the students back together.



Tip: Decide if you want to have the role-plays performed simultaneously or one at a time. There are good arguments for doing it either way. Simultaneous role-plays cause more confusion and chaos, but most SROs find that it is more realistic. It also allows shyer participants to participate because there is no audience. It also saves time, which is in short supply. On the other hand, doing each role-play one at a time allows more participants to watch each scene and it is less noisy.

When everyone is ready, proceed as follows:

If you choose to do the scenarios one at a time: Select one group to begin its role-play. You should act as the school secretary or dispatcher and direct one or two of the SROs to respond to the situation in the role-play.

If you choose to do the role-plays simultaneously: Begin the role-plays. Call in one or two officers at a time as if you are a school secretary or dispatcher. Explain briefly where the call for help is

coming from and what you think may be going on there. Direct the SROs to respond to the situations in the role-plays.

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. Allow the role-plays to continue until the action stops, gets out of hand, or four minutes is up, whatever comes first.

4

Debrief each of the role-plays following these three steps:

A. Ask the student SROs:

- What situation did you have to respond to?
- What did you try to do?
- How did you feel about your involvement?
- What do you wish you could have done differently?

B. Ask the students who conducted the role-plays:

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

C. Where appropriate, compliment the student SROs on how they responded. Discuss the law and/or school policies in each of the scenarios and how you would respond to each scenario if it happened in your school.

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?



Tip: There is a more comprehensive lesson about school searches in the lesson “The Fourth Amendment: What Are The Rules For Schools?” found in this curriculum.

- “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?

5

Many students and some school faculty are confused about whether SROs are in schools to enforce school rules or state laws. Discuss this question and explain your role. Note: This discussion about SROs enforcing school rules or state laws relates to whether SROs are agents of the state and must, therefore, follow state standards for procedures like *Miranda* warnings, search and seizure, etc. Or, would SROs follow a lower standard for those procedures like school personnel follow. You may want to discuss this.

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 incidents in your school?
- 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. Thank the classroom teacher for including you in this lesson.



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 lesson is adapted by permission from Police Patrol, an educational simulation, developed by the Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF). The complete and expanded lesson kit is available from CRF at 601 South Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles, California, 90005. For more information, call (800) 488-4273 or go to www.crf-usa.org.

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

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]

