



2015/16 School Year Report Southeast Polk School District

PURPOSE

To inform police personnel, school administration, and city administration on reported activities involving Pleasant Hill Police officers employed as School Resource Officers (SRO) for Southeast Polk School District during the 2015/16 school year. This report defines activities and statistics involving Southeast Polk students and the responsibilities of the SRO.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF JUNIOR HIGH SRO

Primary responsibility is to provide immediate response to situations involving students at the school. These services include but are not limited to; emergencies of any type, active shooter response, liaison between the police department, parents and the school, deterrent of criminal activity, education, and mentorship. All schools are equally protected and carry the same responsibilities. Spring Creek and Four Mile will have less responses due to lack of criminal activity. Primary responses to an elementary include; mentorship, educational lessons, alarms (fire), staff training, and officer presence and familiarity.

The Junior High SRO is present during a normal school week. There is no SRO present when school is not in session. The SRO provides school presence during any school activity as requested by school administration. This includes, but is not limited to dances, sporting events, academic events, and public open houses.

The SRO assisted administrative staff with nine truancy cases, which involved conducting health and welfare checks on students and locating missing students or those in transit. The SRO concludes the case by reporting potential cases to the Department of Human Services (DHS), and acting as a liaison between agencies. SROs act as a liaison between the schools and state probation officers when cases involve Southeast Polk students under the guidance of state and school representatives.

SROs monitor parking lots during morning and afternoons where busses arrive and depart. This provides protection of potential predators, unwanted persons, students that may have protection orders in effect, prevention of assaults, and bullying.

EDUCATION/TRIARNING

The Junior High SRO conducted criminal law and prevention training for students and staff. Examples of education/training include:

- Drug Awareness/recognition – one classroom day, per quarter
- Constitutional rights – one assembly day
- Bullying Assemblies – five classroom days and two assembly days
- Sexual Harassment – one classroom day
- Cyber crime prevention and safety – one assembly day
- Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) – seven classrooms for 10 weeks
- Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate (A.L.I.C.E.) staff training – one classroom day and continuous training.
- Lock down drills – one per quarter

Junior High Incidents during the 2015-2016 school year

RESPONSIBILITIES OF HIGH SCHOOL SRO

Primary responsibilities involve the high school, but the SRO will assist with issues involving the Junior High, Spring Creek 6th grade Center, and Four Mile Elementary. The SRO provides officer presence during daily school sessions and an officer for any school activity requested by school administration. This includes, but is not limited to; D.A.R.E. education training, school dances, sporting events, academic events, public talks, and open houses.

The SRO also assists school administration with truancy cases. This is normally conducted by accompanying school officials to a student residence to perform a health and welfare check on a student and transporting the student to school. The SRO may be required to report potential cases to the Department of Human Services (DHS) and act as a liaison between agencies.

The SRO assists state probation officers with activities of students under supervision and restrictions mandated by the state. They also conduct classes to educate and inform students in areas involving laws and enforcement, safety, drug abuse education, and good decision making.

The SRO serves as a police liaison who sits in on several boards which attends regular meetings for the school district. These boards include but are not limited to School Safety and Security board, the Southeast Polk anti-bullying task force, Metro school/police juvenile restorative justice initiative through the United Way, Pleasant Hill critical incident emergency management planning, Southeast Polk public safety radio communications improvement board, Eastern Polk County SRO group and Des Moines Metro SRO Council.

AREAS IMPROVED AT THE HIGH SCHOOL

The following areas were identified as deficiencies or potential safety concerns, but actions were taken to improve each of them.

Critical Incident Planning

We are continuing the already established Critical Incident Response Plan, which identifies a plan of action and procedures for major incidents involving school campuses in the Southeast Polk school district.

Communication

The radio repeater system which was installed a year ago has improved campus and district communication. This provides administration an additional line of contact with the SRO.

Pleasant Hill Police Department submitted a grant application to Prairie Meadows for \$100k for public safety radio improvements throughout the High School and Junior High buildings which currently have dead spots. This means the SRO, other police personnel, medical personnel and firefighters cannot communicate with dispatch inside certain areas of the schools.

Although we did not get the full amount asked for, Prairie Meadows was gracious enough to approve the grant for \$50k which will greatly assist in making these improvements possible.

Physical Safety and Security

The padlocks purchased for Physical Education (PE) locker room lockers, greatly decreased the amount of reported thefts.

SROs were actively involved in school district safety and security committee meetings, tornado and lock down drills.

HIGH SCHOOL REPORTS

During the 2015/16 school year, police and staff were involved in 126 criminal incidents, but not all resulted in an arrest. Some were handled in the school without charges being filed. This shows the importance of constant mentoring and public school relations with law enforcement. Statistics were taken from infinite campus.

In May, the SROs assisted with a bomb threat called in to Altoona Elementary. The school was evacuated for safety precautions. Altoona Police, Pleasant Hill Police, Mitchellville Police, Polk County Sheriff's Office, and the Des Moines police Bomb Squad conducted a search of the school to ensure it was safe. The event ended without incident.

AREAS IMPROVED AT HIGH SCHOOL

Communication

Public safety radio (police radios) communication is continually being improved during day-to-day operations in the event of an emergency.

Safety Protocols

A law enforcement/fire department/medical crisis response contingency plan which has been put into place in the event of a major emergency is currently being evaluated and improved.

Education

We are currently streamlining education of K-5 grade students to ensure all students receive the same safety awareness training throughout all Southeast Polk School buildings. The Dare program taught during the 15-16 school year will be replaced by the "411" curriculum, which is currently being taught in West Des Moines, Urbandale, Waukee, and Clive school campuses.

CONCLUSION

Overall, 2015/16 provides SROs a baseline on strategic areas to improve upon for the 2016/17 school year. These ongoing improvements will help strengthen the program involving SROs, administrators and students at Southeast Polk.

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