

Appendix B: Interview Protocols

Interview Questions – Texas Study 1

1. Describe the role of school-based law enforcement officers in your campus.
2. Explain the role you believe school-based law enforcement officers should have on a campus.
3. Describe who is responsible for establishing the roles and responsibilities of school-based law enforcement officers in your campus.
4. How would you describe today's typical student in your campus?
5. How would you describe the difference in enforcement and punishment now compared to when you were in high school?
6. Describe the types of discipline actions you most commonly employ on students.
7. What would you describe as alternative ways of punishing students compared to the ones that currently exist in your campus (if you believe there should be one)?
8. Have you ever felt there was an instance where the punishment did not fit the school offense? Describe the example.
9. Describe factors of your campus that make it conducive for either delinquent activity or no delinquent activity.
10. Describe the training that you received as a school-based law enforcement officer. Did you feel it was adequate (why/why not)?

Interview Protocol – Texas Study 2

1. Describe the structure and environment of the campuses in which you work.
 - a. Describe the area around your campus?
 - b. Generally, what is the environment of the campus like?
 - c. Generally, what are the students like on your campus?
 - d. Is there anything unique about your campus?
2. Describe the role(s) of SROs/SBLEs in the campuses in which you work.
 - a. Why do you think officers take on these particular roles in the school environment?
 - b. Do you believe officers should have these roles? Why or why not?
 - c. Are the roles of law enforcement officers different in the school environment as opposed to officers working the “streets”?
3. Describe what role(s) others (such as teachers, campus administrators, district administrators, and police administrators) think SROs/SBLEs have and/or should have in the campuses in which you work.
 - a. Why do you think these roles differ from what your actual role(s) is?
 - b. Why do you think the actual and expected role(s) from others is similar?
4. Explain the role you believe SROs/SBLEs should have on a campus.
 - a. Why do you think officers should have this role in the school environment?
 - b. How would your campus function if the law enforcement presence was removed?
5. What are the most common incidents that SROs/SBLEs working in the school environment encounter today?
 - a. Why do you think these are the type of incidents they most commonly address?
 - b. Do you believe the law enforcement officers in schools should only handle criminal behavior? Why or why not?
6. Describe the range of responses to student misconduct that you most commonly employ.
 - a. What types of responses do you use most frequently?
 - b. How do these responses to student misconduct vary by situation?

7. Explain how zero-tolerance policies and SB 393 have impacted the range of responses to student misconduct that you most commonly employ.

8. What would you describe as alternative ways of responding to student misconduct compared to the ones that currently exist in your campus (if you believe there should be alternatives)?

a. Why do you think these alternatives are more appropriate ways of responding to student misconduct?

b. Why do you believe there are no alternative ways of responding to student misconduct?

9. Describe the training that you received prior to starting your career or assignment in school-based policing.

10. Describe the training that you received since being involved in school-based policing.

a. Did you feel it was adequate in preparing you to work in a school (why/why not)?

b. What should be in the training for school-based law enforcement?

11. How has your training influenced the role(s) in which you have in the school environment (if at all)?

12. How has your training influenced your responses to student misconduct in the school environment (if at all)?

Southern SRO Interview Protocol

Introduction Questions

- Are you the only SRO that works in this school? How long have you been at this school? What did you do before? How long has the school had an SRO?
- What purpose do you serve in the school?

SROs' Roles and Activities

- What is a typical day in your shoes look like? In other words, can you walk me through a typical day from before school starts until the day ends?
- Can you describe how you interact with students on a daily basis?
 - Can you tell a story about a recent interaction between you and a student that was particularly meaningful to you?
 - What about how you interact with students who are having behavioral problems?
- Many schools have SROs that are involved in education—to what extent are you involved in education?
 - Probe: Impact of this on student behavior and sense of connectedness or belonging?
- Many schools have SROs that are involved in informal counseling of students—to what extent are you involved in informal counseling of students?
 - Probe: Impact of this on student behavior and sense of connectedness or belonging?
- Many schools have SROs that are involved in law enforcement—to what extent are you involved in law enforcement?
 - Probe: Impact of this on student behavior and sense of connectedness or belonging?
- Have you ever had to use force in your role as an SRO? Please explain.
 - What role do teachers or school administrators play in the decision to use force?
 - Have you ever had to arrest students? If so, why?
 - What role do teachers or school administrators play in the decision to arrest?
- Do you feel that you interact differently with different groups of students?
 - Probe: Boys/girls, grade levels, race?
- What is your perspective on what the ideal roles of an SRO should be in <DISTRICT>?
 - To what extent does your role conform to these ideal roles?
 - How is the official job description of the SROs defined?
 - Who has access to that information?
 - How closely is that followed?

Impacts of SROs

- From your perspective, what impacts have you had on the school?
- What impacts have you had on the security strategies used by the school/district?
 - More security or making other structural changes to the school?
 - Changes to the code of conduct?

- Have you influenced any changes in the responsibilities of other school personnel? For example, have you invited any teachers or staff to work with you on safety-related issues?
- New emergency management plans?

People have suggested that there may be possible benefits and drawbacks about having SROs in schools. I would like your opinion on the benefits and drawbacks of having SROs across several different processes.

- What are the benefits and drawbacks about your presence in this school/district?
 - Probe on student behavior, feeling safe in school, teaching and learning, school discipline, sense of connectedness to school community, sense of freedom and autonomy.

Understanding the school context

- What is your school like? How do you describe the school?
- Do you believe your school is safe? Why or why not? Examples?
- What do you perceive as the biggest threats to school safety in this school in particular?
 - Any threats within the school?
 - Any threats from outside the school?
- How big of a priority is maintaining school safety?
- How do you work to maintain safety in the school/district?
- What are the biggest obstacles to maintaining a safe school environment?
- Are there unique aspects of being a suburban school district that affect your approach to school safety?

Now, I want to talk a bit about one tool that many schools utilize as part of their efforts for maintaining safe schools. Specifically, I would like to ask you a few questions about school discipline in your school.

- How do you take part in the school discipline system?
 - What sorts of behaviors do you deal with most frequently?
 - How do you address illegal behaviors in the school?
 - How do you address violations of school rules that are not illegal?
 - How is your involvement with school discipline documented, if at all?
 - How would you describe the school's system of discipline?
 - Probe for zero tolerance approaches, restorative approaches, and/or approaches that address social/emotional skills.
- How does the system of school discipline relate to your efforts to maintain school safety?
- As you may know, inequitable school discipline by race has gathered a fair amount of attention in the media recently. How do you work to ensure school discipline is utilized in an equitable manner?
 - Do you feel that the district is successful in this regard? Why or why not?

SRO Implementation (These should only be asked of SROs that have been in the district 5+ years)

Next, I would like to ask you some questions about why and how SROs have been implemented and used in the district.

- How many different people have filled the SRO position(s) in this school since they were created?
- Why were SROs placed in the district originally? [for folks who have been there a long time]
- What were the problems that led to expanding SROs into elementary schools?
 - What impact did Sandy Hook have?
 - Were there issues within <DISTRICT> specifically that led to this?

Closing Questions:

- What do you see as the overall strengths of this school with regard to safety, discipline, and SRO use?
- What would you most like to see done differently?

Midwest SRO Interview

To get us started, I will ask a few basic questions about you and your job.

1. How long have you been an SRO?
2. Have you always been at this school, or have you been at others?
 - a. If you have been at others, which schools were they and how long were you there?
3. [IF NECESSARY] How long have you been at this school?
4. Do you work in this school on a full- or part-time basis?
5. Are there any other SROs in this school?
 - a. If yes, how long have they been here?
 - b. If yes, are they full- or part-time?
6. Are there other private security or police assigned to this school?
 - a. If yes, tell me about them.
7. Why did you become an SRO?

Now I will ask you a series of questions pertaining to the general roles you perform in school.

I'm also going to ask you about the percent of time you spend on various activities. Don't worry about making sure they all add up to 100%—we're just trying to get a sense of what you do and how often you do it.

Do you participate in the following at your school?

8. Security enforcement and patrol (Yes/No)
 - a. What percent of your time would you say is devoted to this? ___%
9. Maintaining school discipline (Yes/No)
 - a. What percent of your time would you say is devoted to this? ___%
10. Coordinating with local police and emergency team(s) (Yes/No)
 - a. What percent of your time would you say is devoted to this? ___%
11. Identifying problems in the school and proactively seeking solutions to these problems (Yes/No)
 - a. What percent of your time would you say is devoted to this? ___%
12. Training teachers and staff in school safety or crime prevention (Yes/No)
 - a. What percent of your time would you say is devoted to this? ___%
13. Mentoring students (Yes/No)

a. What percent of your time would you say is devoted to this? ___%

14. Teaching a law-related education course or training students (e.g., drug-related education, criminal law, or crime prevention courses) (Yes/No)

a. What percent of your time would you say is devoted to this? ___%

Please indicate the extent to which each of these statements reflect what currently exists in the school where you work as well as the extent to which they reflect what ought to exist.

15. [IF APPLICABLE] The role of the SRO does differ significantly from the role of other school security personnel

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

In what ways are the roles of a SRO and an officer in the community similar?

In what ways are the roles of a SRO and an officer in the community different?

16. The role and function of the SRO is clearly understood by the teachers

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

What policies or functions of SROs in your school do teachers seem to have difficulty understanding?

What actions do school administrators take to facilitate communication between SROs and teachers so that teachers do understand the role that SROs are to play in their school?

17. The SRO program with which you are involved had clearly stated objectives

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree

- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

How are these objectives communicated to you and to other members of the school community?

18. SROs have discretion whether to make an arrest or a referral when a situation involves a student who commits a law violation

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

What role do school administrators play in the decision as to whether an arrest is warranted?

What role do you play in the decision of whether to arrest when a law violation is committed?

19. Students who violate the law are referred to both the SRO and school administration

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

When a teacher becomes aware of a law violation by a student, what is the teacher's typical first step of notification? Do they notify you or school administration first?

Can you give an example of a typical scenario?

20. School administration encourages strict law enforcement on campus by the SRO

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

To what extent does the school administration encourage strict law enforcement or let you use your discretion?

Can you give an example of what the administration does or says?

21. The teachers encourage strict law enforcement on campus by the SRO

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

To what extent do teachers encourage strict law enforcement or let you use your discretion?

Can you give an example of what teachers do or say?

22. The SRO carries a firearm at all times while on campus

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

How do you think this affects teacher and students perceptions of you as an SRO?

Is there an example of how someone has viewed you differently because of your gun?

23. The SRO carries a TASER at all times while on campus

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

How do you think this affects teacher and students perceptions of you as an SRO?

Is there an example of how someone has viewed you differently because of your TASER?

Because of their many roles, teachers, staff, and students may seek support from SROs for various reasons. I would like to ask you a few questions about the topics or issues they are likely to discuss with you. Please indicate the extent to which each of these statements exists or ought to exist in the school where you work.

24. SROs serve as law-related counselors to students, staff, and community

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

Can you tell me a story about a time you recently acted as a law-related counselor?

25. The SRO is available to meet with students to discuss family problems or concerns

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

Can you tell me a story about a time you recently discussed family concerns with a student?

26. The SRO is available to meet with students regarding academic concerns

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

Can you tell me a story about a time you recently discussed academics with a student?

27. The SRO is available to meet with students regarding behavioral or law-related concerns and problems

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

Can you tell me a story about a time you recently met with a student about behavioral concerns?

28. The SRO acts as a clearinghouse of information and directs students and adults to appropriate resources for help

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

Can you tell me a story about a time you recently pointed someone to the appropriate resources?

29. The SRO aids school teachers or staff in identifying students in need of non-academic counseling

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

Can you tell me a story about a time you recently helped teachers or staff identify students in need of counseling?

30. The SRO provides advice to students, in informal settings, about the consequences of illegal behavior

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

Can you tell me a story about a time you recently advised a student in this way?

31. The SRO performs law-related teaching in traditional classrooms

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

What do you teach?

What do you think would be important to teach?

32. SROs dispel the possible misunderstandings young people have regarding police and

the criminal justice system

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

Can you tell me a story about a time you recently dispelled a misunderstanding about the police or criminal justice system?

33. SROs teach/provide restorative practices, like circles, peer mediation, or conflict resolution programs, at school

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

Tell me about your involvement with restorative practices.

If your school uses restorative practices, in what situations are these practices most likely to be used?

What types of situations are not appropriate for a restorative practices?

34. When appropriate, teachers and administrators attempt to handle classroom management issues on their own and only call on the SRO as a last resort.

This exists

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

This ought to exist

- (a) Strongly disagree
- (b) Disagree
- (c) Agree
- (d) Strongly agree

Can you tell me about a typical time when a teacher or administrator asks you for help?

Tell me about a time when they've asked you for help and you felt it was not appropriate for you to intervene.

What about a time when you thought they made the right decision by asking you to intervene?

35. In what ways have you observed that the presence of an SRO is useful for de-

escalating situations? In what ways have you observed that the presence of an SRO escalated situations?

There have been some studies that suggest that SROs' roles are shaped by factors related to school context. By school context I mean features of the school such as the school climate or approach to discipline, the neighborhood such as crime rates or gang activity, and the student body such as socioeconomic status or racial composition.

- a. How would you describe the student body in this school? How does the student body shape your roles here?
 - b. Can you describe the overall feel of the school here? Do you think that people feel connected and a sense of community here? How does this shape your roles here?
 - c. Can you describe the school's overall approach to discipline? How does this approach shape your roles here?
 - d. Describe the neighborhood that this school is in. How does the neighborhood shape your roles here?
36. Could you take a few minutes and tell me about a typical day as a SRO at ____ school? For example, where do you spend most of your day? When do you have the most contact with students? How are you notified when an incident occurs? How often does this occur?
37. What procedures and actions do you take to ensure that all facilities are safe and secure?
38. What types of problem behaviors do you spend the majority of the time dealing with as a SRO?
 - a. Would you have different answers for boys and girls?
 - b. Do you address problem behaviors differently for boys and girls?
39. What do you think are the most important responsibilities for SROs in general?
40. What do you think are your most important responsibilities as an SRO in this school?
41. It seems like it would be very difficult to answer to both the school and the law enforcement agency. Can you talk about how you navigate being in between these two different organizations?
42. What are the most challenging aspects of your job?
 - a. Can you tell me about the last time this happened?
43. What part of your job, working as a SRO, do you find the most important or the most satisfying?

- a. Can you tell me about the last time this happened?
- 44. What strategies do you use to build relationships with students?
 - a. Some SROs say that the type of uniform they wear has an effect on their relationships with students. What are your thoughts on this?
- 45. What sort of training did you receive to become an SRO?
- 46. Have you received any additional training in the following:
 - a. Trauma Informed Care
 - b. Restorative Practices

Can you tell me more about how this is used in your school setting? What is the SROs role in using restorative practices?

- c. Implicit Bias/Cultural Competency training

Can you tell me more about the need for this type of training?

- d. Adolescent Development (social and cognitive)
- 47. What other types of trainings do SROs in the district receive?
 - 48. How well equipped do you feel to do your job?
 - 49. Before concluding the interview, could you please tell me the race and gender that you most closely identify to?

Those are all the questions I have for you today. Thank you very much for your time! Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't talked about, or anything you would like to revisit that we have talked about?

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