



# Safe School-based Enforcement through Collaboration, Understanding, and Respect

## SECURE

### Local Implementation Rubric

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#### What is the SECURE Local Implementation Rubric?

The U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Justice (DOJ) have designed the **SECURE Local Implementation Rubric** to help **school districts, schools, and law enforcement agencies** determine the type of school-police partnership that will be most effective in their community and, where appropriate, to incorporate school-based law enforcement officers, commonly referred to as school resource officers (SROs), into the school learning environment. This rubric includes **five suggested action steps** to ensure safe school-based enforcement through collaboration, understanding, and respect within a community's schools. Each action step below is based on research and evidence and reflects examples of existing school and law enforcement partnerships across the country.

#### How do school districts and local law enforcement agencies use the SECURE Local Implementation Rubric?

Jurisdictions can use the **Checklist to Start** for implementing *new* school-police partnerships; *or*, if they have a school-police partnership, as a checklist to assess their existing program. The **Checklist to Improve** is for improving *existing* partnerships for responsible and innovative school safety management practices that include the presence of SROs in schools. The **Checklist to Improve** can also be used by jurisdictions with *new* school-police partnerships after they complete the steps in the **Checklist to Start**.

#### Who should use the SECURE Local Implementation Rubric?

This SECURE Rubric can be used by the school district and local law enforcement officials (including sheriffs, deputies, heads of policy departments, SRO chiefs, and organizations representing SROs ) responsible for crafting, implementing, evaluating, and improving memoranda of understanding (MOUs) that explicitly articulate the role of law enforcement and school resource officers (SROs) in schools. As appropriate, this rubric may be of assistance to local school board members, superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and vice/assistant principals.

## What are the SECURE Rubric Action Steps?

The **SECURE Rubric** includes five common-sense action steps that can help ensure that SROs are incorporated responsibly into school learning environments. These action steps are:

1. Create sustainable partnerships and formalize MOUs among school districts, local law enforcement agencies, juvenile justice entities,<sup>1</sup> and civil rights and community stakeholders.
2. Ensure that MOUs meet constitutional and statutory civil rights requirements.<sup>2</sup>
3. Recruit and hire effective SROs and school personnel.
4. Keep your SROs and school personnel well trained.
5. Continually evaluate SROs and school personnel, and recognize good performance.

**DISCLAIMER:** This rubric is not an endorsement of any law or written agreement. These action steps and recommended activities are provided for the user's convenience and do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of ED or DOJ. Neither ED nor DOJ controls or guarantees the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any outside information. All school district and law enforcement officials and policymakers should also seek independent guidance to ensure that any proposed legislation or policy is consistent with all applicable Federal and State laws.

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<sup>1</sup> These entities include those representing judges, prosecutors, public defenders and civil legal aid partners, probation officers, and relevant social service agencies.

<sup>2</sup> Including Federal, State, and local prohibitions on discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, language status, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and disability; on the use of excessive force; and on improper searches, seizures, or interrogations.

# SECURE Local Implementation Rubric

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ACTION STEP</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHECKLIST TO START</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Use the following checklists when implementing <i>new</i> school-law enforcement partnerships.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHECKLIST TO IMPROVE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Use the following checklists when improving <i>existing</i> school-law enforcement partnerships.</p>
<p><b>1</b> Create sustainable partnerships and formalize MOUs among school districts, local law enforcement agencies, juvenile justice entities, and civil rights and community stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measure student, family, school staff, and community experience of school safety and law enforcement presence to gauge your starting place.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Consider available data on discipline incidents, ticketing, arrests, and school perception.</li> <li>○ Use relevant data from mandated collections, including state and district accountability data as well as the US Department of Education’s Civil Rights Data Collection.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Find resources on best practices for school-law enforcement partnerships.</li> <li>▪ Draft an MOU together with stakeholder groups to develop a sustainable and regularly-reviewed partnership:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collect and adapt exemplar MOUs from existing school-law enforcement partnerships from across the country to suit local needs.</li> <li>○ Make language applicable and accessible to all audiences (including students, families, school staff).</li> <li>○ Include language that explicitly prohibits SROs from involvement in enforcing school codes of conduct or engaging school discipline, and clarify their role to ensure safety and security.</li> <li>○ Identify needs and local concerns in the MOU as demonstrated by local data.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use data to assess the effectiveness of existing partnerships and MOUs.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Consider available disaggregated data on discipline incidents, ticketing, arrests, and school perception, as well as number and percentage of sworn legal officers in schools.</li> <li>○ Use relevant data from mandated collections, including state and district accountability data as well as the US Department of Education’s Civil Rights Data Collection.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Establish a regular timeline to evaluate and revise MOUs to reflect changes in local needs and concerns:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Involve school administrators, educators, local law enforcement, students, parents and families, and other relevant stakeholders during MOU revision process.</li> <li>○ Share MOUs with colleagues in other communities for feedback and information on best practices.</li> <li>○ Share MOUs with State officials and local lawmakers to inform State policy related to SROs in schools.</li> <li>○ Provide school administrators and SROs with up-to-date copies of MOU agreements and discuss implementation strategies within the context</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		of specific school environments.
<p><b>2</b> Ensure that MOUs meet constitutional and statutory civil rights requirements.<sup>3</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incorporate Federal and State constitutional requirements, including legal requirements relating to searches, seizures, uses of force, and interrogations.</li> <li>▪ Incorporate the requirements of Federal, State, and local civil rights statutes, including those prohibiting race, color, national origin, language status, disability, religion, and sex discrimination.</li> <li>▪ Gather, organize, and present data<sup>4</sup> on law enforcement practices (including searches, seizures, citations, ticketing, arrests, use of force, interrogations, court referrals, alleged student misconduct leading to law enforcement practices, etc.).</li> <li>▪ Disaggregate the data by race, ethnicity, age, sex, type of offense, English learner (EL) status, and disability status.</li> <li>▪ Include a mechanism to receive complaints about discrimination and other input from parents and students, and to gather information about the complainants' race, age, sex, EL status, and disability status.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a process for regularly collecting and analyzing data (including searches, seizures, citations, ticketing, arrests, use of force, interrogations, court referrals, alleged student misconduct leading to law enforcement practices, etc.).</li> <li>▪ Use this data to regularly evaluate and revise policies if information indicates that a school-based law enforcement program is being carried out in a manner that is inconsistent with Federal and State constitutions, civil rights laws, and applicable privacy laws.</li> <li>▪ Involve stakeholder groups to design and implement a plan of action to address constitutional, privacy, or civil rights-related concerns.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b> Recruit and hire effective SROs and school personnel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Draft and publish hiring guidelines for SROs with input from students, parents and families, and community stakeholders, potentially including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ability to work effectively with students, parents, teachers, and school administrators</li> <li>○ An understanding of the importance of diversion</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a regular timeline to review and update SRO hiring guidelines.</li> <li>▪ Maintain an onboarding / training program for new SROs in which they are mentored by experienced SROs on topics including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Constitutional and civil rights</li> <li>○ Childhood and adolescent development</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Including Federal, State, and local prohibitions on discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, language status, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and disability; on the use of excessive force; and on improper searches, seizures, or interrogations.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to U.S. Department of Education, FERPA Frequently Asked Questions: "[Sharing information with School Law Enforcement Units and School Resource Officers.](#)"

	<p>programs and alternatives to arrest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Respect for youth and families of all backgrounds and cultures</li> <li>○ An understanding of developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed practices for interacting with youth</li> <li>○ Consideration of the applicant’s past discipline and legal history</li> <li>○ Strong interpersonal communication skills</li> <li>○ Strong public speaking ability</li> <li>○ Effective law-related teaching and mentoring skills</li> <li>○ Minimum years of experience</li> <li>○ An interest in promoting and enriching the lives of youth</li> <li>○ Knowledge of the specific needs and local concerns of the community</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include interviews by school staff, students, parents and families, community stakeholders, and youth development experts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Age-appropriate responses to student conduct</li> <li>○ Disability and special education issues</li> <li>○ Conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques</li> <li>○ Bias-free policing, including implicit bias and cultural competence</li> <li>○ Responses to trauma</li> <li>○ Restorative justice techniques</li> <li>○ Interacting with specific student groups such as those with disabilities or limited English proficiency or who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT).</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regularly review performance using SRO-specific rating instruments to ensure a good fit between SROs and particular schools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b> Keep your SROs and school personnel well trained.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include language in the MOU on ongoing training needs and plans for both SROs and school staff, and incorporate joint training of SROs and school staff as appropriate.</li> <li>▪ Develop an ongoing training and refresh program that covers the topics listed in the onboarding training list in step #3. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Other topics can include: use of force that reflects differences in strength and physical vulnerabilities of youth, limited appropriate use of handcuffs in a school setting, consequences of student involvement in the criminal and juvenile justice system, and all available alternatives to arrest.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Train school personnel not to call upon SROs to address non-violent or non-threatening behavior by</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a schedule to regularly review current data with SROs and school staff, including analysis on suspensions, expulsions, and arrests, which may indicate there are civil rights concerns where disproportionality exists (particularly for students of color and students with disabilities).</li> <li>▪ Establish a schedule to regularly solicit the input of SROs and school staff on effective training for preventing unnecessary arrests for minor, non-crisis disciplinary incidents.</li> <li>▪ Establish a schedule to regularly incorporate SRO and educator input on local best practices into SRO training manuals and staff handbooks on professional practice.</li> <li>▪ Involve SROs in school life activities designed to improve</li> </ul>

	<p>using less punitive methods such as restorative justice or using the student code of conduct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Train SROs to exercise discretion to minimize arrests for minor misbehaviors and use all available diversion programs and other alternatives to arrest.</li> <li>▪ Solicit SRO input in the development of training materials to prevent unnecessary arrests of students involved in minor school-based offenses.</li> </ul>	<p>trust and relationship building between SROs, students, families, and staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incorporate real-life simulations in SRO and staff training to provide opportunities for practice in the effective de-escalation of non-crisis disciplinary incidents to prevent unnecessary arrests in schools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5</b> Continually evaluate SROs and school personnel, and recognize good performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Design a comprehensive performance evaluation and recognition system (including a regular performance schedule that is appropriate and made clear throughout the hiring process and onboarding) that maps to trainings provided and capabilities you expect staff to demonstrate, and is conducted by experienced and qualified professionals.</li> <li>▪ Evaluate ability to de-escalate and use alternative disciplinary actions to prevent citations, ticketing, and arrests.</li> <li>▪ Create a mechanism to collect feedback from students, families, and peers, and other school staff for SRO and school staff evaluations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incorporate research on positive youth development and safe and supportive learning environments in all evaluation and support systems.</li> </ul>