Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

2020 Annual Census NC School Resource Officers

Session Law 2019-222, House Bill 75

Date Due: April 15, 2020
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2019-2020
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION VISION: Every public school student in North Carolina will be empowered to accept academic challenges, prepared to pursue their chosen path after graduating high school, and encouraged to become lifelong learners with the capacity to engage in a globally-collaborative society.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MISSION: The mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is to use its constitutional authority to guard and maintain the right of a sound, basic education for every child in North Carolina Public Schools.

ERIC DAVIS
Chair: Charlotte – At-Large

JILL CAMNITZ
Greenville – Northeast Region

TODD CHASTEEN
Blowing Rock – Northwest Region

ALAN DUNCAN
Vice Chair: Greensboro – Piedmont-Triad Region

REGINALD KENAN
Rose Hill – Southeast Region

DONNA TIPTON-ROGERS
Brasstown – Western Region

DAN FOREST
Lieutenant Governor: Raleigh – Ex Officio

AMY WHITE
Garner – North Central Region

J. WENDELL HALL
Ahoskie – At-Large

DALE FOLWELL
State Treasurer: Raleigh – Ex Officio

OLIVIA OXENDINE
Lumberton – Sandhills Region

J.B. BUXTON
Raleigh – At-Large

MARK JOHNSON
Secretary to the Board: Raleigh

JAMES FORD
Charlotte – Southwest Region

NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Mark Johnson, State Superintendent :: 301 N. Wilmington Street :: Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2825

In compliance with federal law, the NC Department of Public Instruction administers all state-operated educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability, or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

Inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination issues should be directed to: Joe Maimone, Chief of Staff 6307 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-6307 / Phone: (919) 807-3431 / Fax: (919) 807-3445

Visit us on the Web: www.ncpublicschools.org
Preface

This annual Census report is the product of a collaborative effort between the Department of Public Instruction, Center for Safer Schools, North Carolina public school units and the multiple law enforcement agencies who willfully support the mission of school safety through the deployment and support of School Resource Officers (SROs). The information contained herein is the result of surveys distributed to each public-school unit through school District Safety Directors and Chief Financial Officers. This information will be used to satisfy the legislative requirement as contained in HB 75 and identify potential needs such as funding, staffing and training advancements for SROs.

This report is submitted in furtherance of legislation established under Session Law 2019-222 as contained in House Bill 75.

Executive Summary

School resource officers (SROs) are law enforcement officers who are assigned to work within the school setting. Officers have the jurisdictional authority to make arrests and conduct investigations on school grounds, however these duties account for only a fraction of the functions they perform. The SRO program is a vital part of any department’s community policing philosophy, beginning with the trust that students gain by interacting with an officer. Such relationships can be extremely important in preventing threats of any sort on and off campus. School Resource Officers are also called upon to provide some legal or civics lessons to students, teachers and administrators in classroom environments. SROs not only provide a level of deterrence on the school campus, but they also assist the school and first responders to prepare safety canvases of the campus and to plan and prepare for potential critical incidents on campus.

Selecting officers suitable to become SROs is an important first step. Officers should be efficient at communicating with youth and have a desire to work with school-aged children and youth. They should also be comfortable working in school environments where they will work independently with little to no supervision and where school administration may not fully understand their sworn law enforcement responsibilities. Although they work on a school campus, their primary role is that of a law enforcement officer who uses professional discretion and recognizes the differences between school policy and state law. This discretion is vital in eliminating unnecessary law enforcement contact with students. The SRO should not be involved in the enforcement of any school policy. Using discretion to either act or observe helps lessen any threat that might be felt by school administrators due to the SROs presence. It is also vital for school administrators to properly utilize the SRO. Schools and school systems generally deal with the delineation of authority through memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the law enforcement agencies providing the SRO support. These MOUs define the expectations of the role of an SRO within the school environment.

An assignment as a school resource officer may be a step in the professional development of a law enforcement officer. To achieve promotion through the departmental ranks, an officer might be required to serve time in many different agency roles—from patrol officer to SRO to investigator—to gain rank, senior status, and the salary that such rank provides. An officer who desires to continue as an SRO for more than a few years may lose the opportunity to move up in their agency ranks. This dilemma may prevent many
officers who are highly effective in the school setting from remaining as SROs. However, some agencies recognize the advantages of having professional officers that can remain in specific assignments for extended periods and allow for rank and command progression within those roles.

Based on the mapping of funding sources, this census highlights the impact of SRO grants, in supporting North Carolina Schools, as these funds are second only to funding provided by participating law enforcement agencies.

Research Methodology:

In December 2019, the Center for Safer Schools contacted North Carolina public school Superintendents/Charter school Directors as well as the school District Safety Directors in all local education agencies (LEAs) and charter schools advising of the School Resource Officer Census as legislated by the North Carolina General Assembly. Specifically, District Safety Directors were instructed to poll their respective SRO population in answering the specific areas referenced by House Bill 75. In February 2020, the survey was closed. To further enhance accuracy of the SRO population as well as associated funding sources, the Department of Public Instruction, School Business Division, conducted a funding survey, through district, charter and residential school financial officers to gather funding sources associated with SRO staffing supporting each school unit. The results of this census effort identified approximately 1550 SROs throughout the state of North Carolina.

In furtherance of adhering to House Bill 75, the following information was collected.

1. Age
2. Years of Law Enforcement Experience
3. What department they work for
4. Total number of SRO’s in state and in each public-school unit
5. Education levels
6. Years of SRO Experience
7. Funding Source
8. Location of SRO’s
9. Percent of SRO’s assigned to 1 school
10. Law Enforcement Affiliation
According to census results, School Resource Officers in North Carolina are on average 42 years of age. As seen in the graph for Q2, 39% of respondents reported being in the 40-49 age range. Of those that responded, 81% are male while 19.5% are female.
YEARS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCE

Census results indicate Sheriffs and Police Chiefs are very cognizant that they should place an SRO with extensive experience in schools. Over 25% of survey respondents reported having been an officer for 13-20 years, while 24% of respondents reported having been a sworn law enforcement officer for more than 20 years.
EDUCATION LEVELS

While it is a requirement that every law enforcement officer have a high school diploma for hiring purposes in any law enforcement agency, not all officers have college degrees or higher. According to Census results, 45% had high school diplomas while nearly the other half of respondents had either a 2-year or 4-year Degree. Only 7% had a Masters Degree.
YEARS OF SRO EXPERIENCE

While indications are most SRO’s have served in the position for 1-3 years, it is important to understand that many SRO’s are not able to be promoted while in a specialty position. SROs commonly return to other departmental assignments in furtherance of career advancement. This usually occurs when the SRO is on the job 4-7 years. The Center for Safer Schools believes it is important to place officers that want to serve in...
this role and have a passion for making the difference in the lives of children and young adults.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How many years have you served as an SRO?</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>20.23%</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 to 3 years</td>
<td>32.85%</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 to 7 years</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8 to 12 years</td>
<td>12.32%</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>More than 12 years</td>
<td>8.62%</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FUNDING SOURCES**

In 2013, the NC General Assembly provided a $7 million grant to fund elementary and middle school SRO positions throughout the state. There were 210 SROs employed under this recurring grant at that time. In 2018, the General Assembly added an additional $5 million to the original grant for distribution throughout the state. A separate survey was sent to all districts so that we could better track the funding source per
officer per school. This breakdown is a result of Session law 2019-222 (HB 75) Section 3.1 which amends the general statute and requires DPI to conduct an annual census of school resource officers (SROs). The requirements include the following data as it pertains to funding. Although it is extremely difficult to ascertain which officers share schools, because that may change daily based on several different law enforcement functions, the following data strongly represents where the SRO’s in the state are assigned. The below data accounts for a total of 1550.81 School Resource Officers funded throughout the state of North Carolina.

SEE APPENDIX A

Full-time employed by Law Enforcement Agency = 688.32

Full-time employee contracted by LEA (State funding, CFSS grants) = 429.8 state funded / 253.2 local funded / 3.97 federal funded

Full-time employed by LEA (School Districts) = 94.6 state funded / 7.33 local funded / 14.7 federal funded

Traditional schools have a total of 1492.34 School Resource Officers.
SEE APPENDIX B

Full-time employee by LEA (School Districts) = 5.82 state / .08 local / 0 Fed

Full-time employee contracted by LEA (State funding, CFSS grants) = 19.47 state / 10.70 local / 2 fed

Full-time employee by Law Enforcement Agency = 18.4

Charter Schools have a total of 56.48 School Resource Officers

APPENDIX C represents SRO funding associated with Residential schools Eastern NC School for the Deaf NC School for the Deaf and are classified as follows:

FTE contracted by LEA (State Funding, CFSS grants) = 1 state / 1 local

Residential Schools account for 2 School Resource Officers
LOCATIONS OF SRO’s

While the majority of SRO’s work in traditional schools throughout the state, Charter schools are seeing the benefit of having an SRO on campus as well. As previously referenced Traditional schools account for **1492.34** SROs and Charter schools account for **56.48** SROs. Additionally, as indicated below, the types of schools these SRO’s are assigned to can vary. While most of the SROs work at high schools, middle and elementary schools are well represented.

This graph illustrates what type of school SROs are assigned to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-12 School</td>
<td>5.19% 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>30.45% 370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>31.93% 388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>32.43% 394</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**PERCENTAGE OF SRO’s ASSIGNED TO 1 SCHOOL**

Although it is optimum to be able to assign an SRO to only one school, an SRO assignment is often dependent on departmental staffing. While the high majority of SRO’s are assigned to high schools, they are also assigned to schools as determined by community trends and need. Middle and elementary SRO’s generally share multiple schools as illustrated.
As stated above, the below illustrates how many SRO’s are assigned to a particular school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How many SROs are assigned to your school?</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>916</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Only 1 SRO</td>
<td>89.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 SROs</td>
<td>8.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 SROs</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>More than 3 SROs</td>
<td>1.31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LAW ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT AFFILIATION

While Sheriff’s Offices staff many schools throughout the state, local police departments provide staffing as well. The below illustrates those statistics and also identifies other categories such as School System Police Agencies, Private Contractors and others which include 3 individuals. These are:

1. 2 individuals that are employed through the school system but a sworn Sheriff’s Deputy.
2. A safety officer for the school system.