



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

ROBERT G. LUNA, SHERIFF



December 21, 2023

Sharmaine Moseley, Executive Director
Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission
World Trade Center
350 South Figueroa, Suite 288
Los Angeles, California 90071
Sent via Electronic Transmission

Dear Ms. Moseley:

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT RESPONSE TO
THE QUALITY-OF-LIFE COMMITTEE AD HOC REPORT ON
THE SCHOOL RESOURCE DEPUTY PROGRAM**

On October 19, 2023, the Civilian Oversight Commission (COC) through its Quality-of-Life Ad Hoc Committee issued a report on the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's (LASD) School Resource Deputy (SRD) program. After reviewing and analyzing data and documents, the Ad Hoc Committee requested the COC adopt several recommendations.

The LASD is dedicated to improving the SRD program and greatly appreciates the recent contributions and reports from the COC, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), other county departments, and the public. The LASD values these insights and suggestions for improvement.

The LASD aims to foster a collaborative environment that encourages open dialogue with the COC, OIG, and other relevant county departments. By leveraging this collective expertise, the LASD seeks to develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses the COC's recommendations and ensures the safety and well-being of the school community.

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The SRD program faces challenges, especially given the shortage of personnel and resources available. Given the breadth of responsibilities assigned to the SRD program coordinator, the program often grapples with the limitations of a single SRD staff member handling numerous roles simultaneously. The challenge of balancing meetings, community engagement, coordinating SRD training programs, monitoring the program, and updating information on the LASD's website, and many other obligations, underscores the crucial necessity for expanding the team. By bolstering the program's staffing, LASD can ensure the allocation of resources in a manner that optimally caters to the diverse needs of the school community. This expansion would not only alleviate the burdens associated with a single SRD coordinator assigned to such a large county, but also enable the program to function more efficiently to facilitate the implementation of the COC's recommendations.

We know you are aware of this issue, as a prior OIG report recommended:

The Sheriff's Department's Youth Services Unit (YSU) oversees the School Resource Deputy Program. YSU staffing should be increased to expand the Sheriff's Department's ability to coordinate, cooperate, and collaborate with the Board, Civilian Oversight Commission, CBOs, school districts, other County partners, and individual families within the community. In addition to the School Resource Officer program, the YSU oversees all Youth Activity Leagues, the Stop Hate and Respect Everyone (SHARE) Tolerance program, Sheriff Explorer programs, and Vital Interventions and the Directional Alternatives program, throughout Los Angeles County. The Sheriff's Department should strongly consider allocating a higher percentage of its funding to these programs to maximize their scope and impact.

The LASD agrees that expanding the SRD team represents a pivotal step in fortifying the program's efficacy, allowing for a more strategic allocation of resources to address the multifaceted challenges of the school setting. By augmenting the team, the program can better fulfill its mission of promoting a safe and supportive learning environment.

Staffing shortages throughout LASD, however, prohibit immediate expansion. While LASD will seek to expand the resources available to the program, the collaborative effort with the organizations noted below, including the Department of Youth Development and the Department of Public Health Office of Violence Prevention will help expand the efforts of the program and will contribute greatly to expanding the capabilities of LASD in servicing this

program. In addition, the LASD's Office of Constitutional Policing (OCP) has indicated a willingness to assist the program in compliance issues that are outlined below.

Recommendations to LASD:

Collaborate with the Department of Youth Development and the Department of Public Health Office of Violence Prevention to establish an SRD policy to promote restorative justice practices to minimize interactions and arrests for minor offenses in accordance with the Education Code Section 32282.1.

The LASD agrees.

LASD will nurture a stronger collaborative relationship with the Department of Youth Development (DYD) and the Department of Public Health's Office of Violence Prevention (OVP). The focus will be to facilitate the development of an enhanced training program for school resource officers (SROs) and the further implementation of best practices in youth engagement by SROs.

Through this collaboration, LASD aims to uphold the standard of SRO training and enforce departmental policies, thereby contributing to the holistic well-being and safety of the school community. LASD's goal is to ensure the training program aligns with the comprehensive school safety plans mandated by the State of California. DYD has previously participated in training for SRDs. OVP and DYD will be invited to participate in the 40-hour training course scheduled to be held twice in 2024.

The LASD will also emphasize the establishment of robust communication channels with both the schools and county organizations. By fostering these strong lines of communication, LASD intends to swiftly address any emerging concerns or adapt the program to meet the evolving needs of the school communities.

Collaborate with the OIG in the development of an SRD program portal on LASD's main public website to be effective in 2024 that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Name of SRDs
- b. SRD school assignments
- c. SRD contact information
- d. SRD policies with:

- i. Goals and objectives of the SRD program
- ii. Duties and responsibilities of deputies
- iii. Training requirements
- iv. Minimum assignment requirements
- v. Expectation for the decision to take enforcement action
- e. A link to LASD's complaint and commendations portal
- f. SRD annual reports

The LASD agrees.

The LASD will work with the OIG on the public website, which will assist the LASD in enhancing transparency and the accessibility of information. LASD will organize a meeting with the OIG, and other interested parties, during the first quarter of 2024, to explore viable options for including comprehensive information on the LASD's existing website portal. This information will encompass details related to SRDs, including the names of SRDs, their school assignments, their contact information, along with their duties and responsibilities. Other pertinent information, such as SRD training requirements and selection criteria can also be included.

Coordinate with each assigned school to develop and improve the relationships with parents and students, effective 2024, by:

- a. Providing schools with LASD developed brochures for distribution to parents that explains SRD:
 - i. Duties and responsibilities
 - ii. Training requirements
 - iii. Expectation for the decision to take enforcement actions
 - iv. How to file complaints or commendations

The LASD agrees.

The LASD will continue to coordinate with the assigned schools to further develop relationships with parents and students. For example, the Department will create an informational brochure in English and Spanish that informs parents and students about the roles and responsibilities of SRDs. The brochure, along with the public website, will focus on developing deeper understanding about the role of SRDs and how they contribute to the safety and well-being of the school community.

We anticipate that the brochure will: provide a brief overview of the SRD program, highlighting its significance in creating a safe and supportive school environment; detail the roles and responsibilities of SRDs and emphasize their crucial contributions to the overall well-being of the school community; discuss the importance of active SRD involvement in school events to establish open lines of communication and cultivate positive relationships with parents and the broader community; and clearly explain that while the SRD is not a school disciplinarian, they may, however, be required to take law enforcement action in certain instances.

To further support the needs of students, parents, and educators, the brochure will also highlight the accessibility of resources provided by the SRD program. It will detail how the SRD may make necessary referrals to support and resource agencies, when appropriate.

Lastly, the brochure will emphasize the significance of incorporating public feedback as an integral part of the ongoing evaluation process. To accomplish this, the brochure will provide information about filing a complaint, the process that is followed once a complaint is filed, and how to file a commendation.

- b. Making SRD quarterly reports available and receiving feedback from parents and students at:
 - i. Back to school night
 - ii. Open House
 - iii. Parent Teacher Association
 - iv. School Town Halls
 - v. Related school events

The LASD agrees.

The LASD is committed to making the SRD quarterly reports available at Back to School Nights, Open Houses, Parent Teacher Association events, School Town Halls, and other related school events. A representative from the SRD program will also be available at those events to receive feedback. The LASD will share all public reports prepared and approved for dissemination with students and parents at the above noted events and on the forthcoming public website.

By actively soliciting feedback from various stakeholders, including parents, educators, and students, LASD can also gain valuable insight to better inform and guide changes to the SRD program.

Furthermore, LASD acknowledges the dynamic nature of educational environments and the evolving needs of the school community. As a result, the commitment to ongoing community engagement and reporting is essential to ensuring that the SRD program remains adaptive and responsive to the ever-changing landscape of school safety and security. This dedication reflects the Department's commitment to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for students, educators, and the broader community.

Develop an annual LASD SRD report to post on the website and submit to the Commission by no later than the last week of July of each year, effective 2024. The report should include, but not be limited to:

- a. Overview of the SRD program
- b. Organizational chart for the operation
- c. Breakdown of the number of SRDs and their assignments
- d. Statistics on the SRD program services and operations
- e. Overview of efforts to develop and improve relationships with parents and students during the year
- f. Statistics on the number of SRD contacts with students, including demographic information, reason for contact, and outcome
- g. Statistics on complaints and commendations received related to the SRD program with:
 - i. Type (e.g., use of force, etc.)
 - ii. Number (e.g., monthly totals by school, etc.)

The LASD agrees.

The LASD is committed to producing an annual LASD SRD annual report documenting all the aspects of the SRD program. A comprehensive SRD report will foster stronger relationships between law enforcement and the school community. It will also nurture a culture of trust and collaboration among the SRDs, students, parents, community, and educators.

By way of background, the SRD program coordinator is a sergeant, assigned to Community Partnerships Bureau, who has the responsibility of administrative oversight of the entire program. The SRD sergeant is also responsible for developing and providing the curriculum for the 40-hour SRD course and to assist with the tracking of contacted SRDs daily activity. The deputies who are selected for assignment in the SRD program remain assigned at their respective stations, even though they are part of the SRD program.

The SRD program coordinator will coordinate with each individual station, who has personnel in the SRD program, to provide the data for their respective SRD personnel. All the data received will be compiled to create the final year-end report. The SRD annual report will receive final approval from the Division Chief of Countywide Services Division and then be disseminated. We anticipate that the annual reports build over time to have additional details as the program develops with greater community input and feedback. Nevertheless, we will strive to create a report that contains important information and can be enhanced in the years ahead.

Thank you for the opportunity to report on the SRD program and to respond to the COC recommendations.

Should you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at

Sincerely,

ROBERT G. LUNA, SHERIFF

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Holly A. Francisco".

HOLLY A. FRANCISCO
ASSISTANT SHERIFF