

School Resource Officer MOU Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 24, 2021
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Commission Members Present:

Angela Davis (Co-Chair), Anne Gilligan (Co-Chair), Angela Brooks, Melissa Threadgill, Glenn Daly, Paul Andrews, Michael Bradley, Matt Sonnabend, Robert Ferullo, Phillip Kassel, Leon Smith, Tammy Mello, Amanda Weber, Diana Boutwell, Ellen Holmes, Mechilia Salazar, and Amy Nechtem.

The meeting was called to order 9:01 a.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Commission Co-Chairs welcomed Commission members and acknowledged that there are additional members whose official appointment and confirmation are still pending.

Commission members introduced themselves and briefly described the entity they represent on the Commission.

2. Review current mandate and timetable

The Co-Chairs reviewed the mandate Section 79 of Chapter 253 of the Acts of 2020:

The model memorandum of understanding shall, at minimum, describe: (i) the mission statement, goals and objectives of the school resource officer program; (ii) the roles and responsibilities of the school resource officer, the police department and the school; (iii) the process for selecting school resource officers; (iv) the mechanisms to incorporate school resource officers into the school environment, including school safety meetings; (v) information sharing between school resource officers, school staff and other partners; (vi) the organizational structure of the school resource officer program, including supervision of school resource officers and the lines of communication between the school district and police department; (vii) training for school resource officers, including, but not limited to, continuing professional development in child and adolescent development, conflict resolution and diversion strategies, de-escalation tactics and any other training required by the municipal police training committee established in section 116 of chapter 6; and (viii) the manner and division of responsibility for collecting and reporting the school-based arrests, citations and court referrals of students to the department of elementary and secondary education in accordance with regulations promulgated by the department.

The Co-Chairs also stated the commission will be informed on the status of the data collection system being developed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Co-Chairs discussed the timeline by which the Model School Resource Officer Memorandum of Understanding Review Commission was established, pursuant to section 37P of chapter 71 of the General Laws. The timeline stated that the Commission convene no later than March 31, 2021 and shall develop its first model memorandum of understanding no later than February 1, 2022 for implementation starting in the 2022 school year. A standing monthly meeting will be held on the fourth Wednesday, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. with the acknowledgement that an additional meeting may need to be scheduled to complete work.

Discussions around how public comments would be collected and heard was raised by several commission members. The Co-Chairs will propose this structure and send it out in an email to the commission.

3. Review prior work and other state models

Commission members participated in conversation regarding the complexities of engaging all partners at the local level in the MOU development process including agreement of the language, gathering all signatures, and finalizing the approval process for MOU implementation. Chief Ferullo explained that this process is a series of different steps that is much more complex than simply signing a MOU. Chief Sonnabend added that the success of this development process also relies upon the types of relationships schools have with police departments as well as the importance of information sharing among police departments, schools, and the SRO.

Discussions around the development of the MOU included such topics as looking through a race/equity lens and allowing for flexibility of schools/districts to meet the needs of their students. Member Kassel emphasized that this development should be to prevent undo criminalization of children and youth. Member Weber suggested that the communication with SRO's is key when implementing a MOU, as well as the importance of establishing a clearly defined role for the SRO at each level. These statements were supported by multiple commission members.

The notion of required law enforcement training for SROs to address areas of concern and growth was discussed. Chief Bradley proposed setting a minimum number of training hours for SROs. Proposed themes for these trainings included race, equity, inclusion, child/adolescent development, and effective communication.

Commission members will be soliciting ongoing feedback from the respective stakeholder groups that they represent on the commission.

Chief Ferullo invited members of the commission to present at the upcoming Municipal Police Training Conference. Specific dates and details on the conference are still to be determined.

4. Open Session for Topics not Reasonably Anticipated within 48 Hours of the Meeting

No concerns or issues raised.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 11:01 a.m.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, **April 28, 2021, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.** via Zoom. A monthly standing invitation will be sent out to the Commission.