School / Police Partnerships:
Best Practices and Lessons Learned

Innovative Practices from the Charles E. Shannon Jr.
Community Safety Initiative Series

December 2008

Authors:

Russell Wolff
Jack McDevitt
College of Criminal Justice
Northeastern University

Introduction

Concerns about gang violence, school shootings, bullying, bias- or hate-related threats or violence, and vandalism have led schools to focus increasingly on school safety. Schools bring children and teenagers together with various risk factors, providing opportunities for conflicts to erupt. But, for the same reason, schools provide a centralized location to engage students at-risk for involvement in gangs and violence in prevention and intervention programming (Gottfredson, 1997). Research shows that gang membership and delinquency more generally have largely the same causes (Sherman, 1997) and that schools cannot be separated from the community context (Gottfredson, 1997). It is therefore vital to include schools in anti-gang efforts.

There are numerous risk factors for gang membership and delinquency in schools. Research indicates that victims of bullying are more likely to be truant, be involved in fights, carry weapons to school, and have lower academic achievement (Bauer et al., 2008; DeVoe et al., 2005). Association with delinquent peers is linked with involvement in gangs and violence (Thornberry, 1998). Even the perception of school safety is a risk factor (Crooks et al., 2007). On the other hand, a strong school bond has been found to be protective against involvement in violence across a number of risk factors (Sprott et al., 2005).

Many municipalities in the United States have established partnerships between schools and law enforcement as a strategy to enhance school safety and reduce gang violence in schools. The vast majority of sites that are part of the Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative (CSI)[1] include some form of school-based law enforcement effort. The purpose of this resource guide is to describe the history and best practices associated with school/police partnerships in the United States, discuss the recent partnerships within the Shannon CSI communities, present lessons learned, identify some common challenges, and offer recommendations about how Shannon CSI communities might enhance their current initiatives.

---

[1] The Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative encourages Shannon grantees to use the Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Comprehensive Gang Model. The model includes five components: suppression, social intervention, opportunities provision, community mobilization, and organizational change and development. For more information the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model, please visit http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/. For more information on the Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative, please visit http://www.shannoncsi.neu.edu/.

Methodology for Report

To assist Shannon CSI sites, Northeastern University (NU) and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) periodically develop resource guides to provide information on topics that communities have expressed an interest in learning more about. One such topic is strategies to address violence and gang activity in and around schools. While many school districts forged relationships between law enforcement agencies prior to the inception of the Shannon CSI grant using various programs to combat these problems, Shannon CSI grant funds have allowed them to increase or modify their relationships with law enforcement. To further understand these partnerships and how Shannon CSI sites use them to address gang and youth violence, NU and EOPSS researched school/police partnership programs across the United States, created and disseminated a survey to Shannon CSI sites, and conducted follow-up interviews with several Shannon CSI sites.

History of School/Police Partnerships in the United States

Early efforts to address juvenile delinquency emerged from the desire for social reform and to improve the public image of the police, goals that continue to motivate these partnerships today. Police have served in schools as early as the 1930s in Atlanta and Indianapolis (and possibly in New York City in 1918) (Brown, 2006; Morrison, 1968; Myers, 1972). The first publicized school liaison program started in Flint, Michigan in 1958. Liaison responsibilities for police entailed observing student behavior, identifying delinquent or "pre-delinquent" behavior, and serving in a counseling capacity. The Tucson, Arizona, Police Department School Resource Officer Program, developed in 1963, was based on the Flint initiative but with officers working in full uniform and taking on greater responsibility for referral decisions (Morrison, 1968). These two efforts served as models for many subsequent programs (Myers, 1972).

The early SRO and liaison programs were informal in nature. A journalist writing about law enforcement officers in schools in the early 1970s found "only a handful" of cities and states with published written guidelines between schools and police (Myers, 1972). In the late 1970s there were still fewer than 100 school police officers reported to be working in U.S. schools. By the mid-1990s, however, the figure had risen to more

than 2,000 (Brady et al., 2007). This number has since grown exponentially, with the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) claiming 9,000 members (NASRO, nd). Moreover, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported in 2003 that more than two-thirds of police departments serving populations of 10,000 or more had full-time sworn personnel assigned as SROs (Hickman & Reaves, 2006).

This growth is a result of many factors, including gang and youth violence taking place in schools, the school shootings of the late 1990s, fear of terrorist attack following September 11, 2001, and three-quarters of a billion dollars in funding provided by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) through the COPS in Schools program (CIS) (COPS, 2005). In Fiscal Years 1998 and 1999, the COPS Office also funded the School-Based Partnerships (SBP) program, awarding $30 million to law enforcement agencies to partner with schools on crime and disorder in and around schools (Uchida et al., 2006).

Throughout this guide, examples of school-based programs that involve law enforcement personnel in integral ways are provided: the Gang Resistance Education and Training program (G.R.E.A.T.), the Community Outreach through Police in Schools program, and truancy prevention and intervention programs. These are offered to illustrate a number of different types of relationships that schools and police have formed across the U.S. that have been shown to exhibit some effectiveness.

Partnership Example #1:
Gang Resistance Education and Training Program (G.R.E.A.T.)

Developed in 1991 by law enforcement in the Phoenix, Arizona area, the Gang Resistance Education and Training program (G.R.E.A.T.) is a primary prevention education curriculum delivered to 8th graders. The program's goals are to reduce gang activity and educate youth about the consequences of gang involvement. The program takes place over 9 weeks, with meetings once a week to cover lessons on the impact of crime, cultural sensitivity, conflict resolution, how to meet basic needs without joining a gang, the consequences of drug use, and how to set goals.

A widely popular program from its inception, by 2000 more than 3,500 officers from all 50 states and Washington, D.C. had completed G.R.E.A.T. training (Esbensen, 2000, 2006). Evaluations of G.R.E.A.T. have typically found small but measurable benefits for students who have completed the program versus those who have not (Esbensen et al., 2001). Students completing the program are more likely to have a more positive view of law enforcement officers, more negative perceptions of gangs, and more prosocial friends. The evidence is less supportive of the program reducing gang membership or self-reported delinquency. Additionally, it is important to note that the positive effects were generally found only after a number of years had passed (Esbensen et al., 2001).

Functions and Characteristics of School/Police Partnerships

The main goal of school/police partnerships is to maintain a safe environment for students, school personnel, and other people using school facilities. Having a safe place to learn supports student academic achievement and overall well-being. In the previous section, we discussed the origins and development of school-based partnerships with law enforcement. We now examine in more detail the functions these relationships serve and what a more effective partnership looks like, keeping in mind the Shannon CSI context, with its comprehensive approach to prevention, intervention, and suppression of gang and youth violence. In this context, school/police partnerships have several possible functions on different levels:

- **School safety**
  - o Enhancing physical safety in school and on school grounds through prevention and intervention strategies and suppression of violent incidents as needed
  - o Establishing and maintaining an environment in which students feel safe from threats and injury from gang and other violence

- o   Training teachers and administrators to identify signs of gang involvement
- **Student well-being**
  - o   Working as part of a collaboration to identify at-risk students and provide support such as counseling and referral to social services to students and their families
- **Parental engagement**
  - o   Engaging parents to inform them of their child's behavior and work with them to provide guidance
  - o   Training parents to identify signs of gang involvement
- **Community engagement**
  - o   Building relationships with youth to improve youth/police relations
  - o   Collaborating with community members and groups to develop programming, improve coordination of service provision, and support school-based efforts
  - o   Striving to demonstrate the value of law enforcement in schools and enhance positive perceptions of law enforcement in the community
- **Improved communication and intelligence**
  - o   Increasing information sharing among criminal justice and social service agencies regarding conflicts in the community that may continue in the schools or that start in school and are likely to have implications for the broader community

Since the beginning of school/police partnerships, school-based programs have shared many of the same goals and practices. School-based law enforcement strategies range from explicitly reactive security to comprehensive efforts in which law enforcement plays an integral role in the educational process. Many partnerships employ a combination of strategies such as the following:

- Private security personnel or contracted law enforcement to patrol school facilities and grounds
- One-time violence or gang prevention programs presented by law enforcement officers
- Ongoing violence or gang prevention curricula or other programs taught by law enforcement officers
- Engagement with parents and other stakeholders through home visits, training and education programs, participation in PTA/PTO meetings, etc.

- School resource officer (SRO) programs in which officers' responsibilities can similarly range from security-focused to a more comprehensive set of activities

While focusing on gangs themselves is obviously important to the prevention of gang violence and reducing gang involvement, research in the field suggests a broader set of indicators that requires attention. As noted above, addressing general risk factors for delinquency and perceptions of school safety is vital as these factors and a perception that school is unsafe have been shown to increase the likelihood of youth gang involvement (Gottfredson, 1997; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2001). In fact, of the 781,800 gang prevention and 159,700 gang intervention activities (not necessarily partnerships with police) based in U.S. schools during the early 2000s, most do not focus exclusively on gang prevention but include a variety of problem behaviors (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2001). At times, law enforcement officers in school must provide suppression, however, research indicates that the most successful programs will be interdisciplinary and comprehensive:

> The most successful [school safety] approaches are those that see the school within their community. They focus not just on aggressive or violent incidents but also on health, use a range of policies and programs, and consider not only the roles and needs of individual pupils but also those of teachers, support staff, administrators, school operations, families, and the community around the school. They use a community based approach to promoting school safety (Shaw, 2001: 2).

Partnership Example #2:
Community Outreach through Police in Schools

Developed at the Yale University Child Study Center in New Haven, Connecticut, the Community Outreach through Police in Schools Program seeks to have police, school, and community mental health professionals better understand individual students' perceptions of danger and the larger community context. It is described as "a short term, prevention-oriented, school-based group intervention that brings together community police officers and child clinicians as group of co-leaders to provide weekly sessions for middle school students who are at risk of being exposed to violence in the community" (OVC, 2003: 1).

Paired with mental health professionals to co-lead the sessions, officers complete a special training component to familiarize themselves with basics on child development, violence, and trauma and are instructed by the clinical staff

---

on group process theory and the specific intervention being used. The officer also participates in weekly clinical supervision meetings with the program's head clinician.

The program is a voluntary, 10-week intervention (eight 50-minute weekly sessions plus pretest and posttest survey sessions). The curriculum includes "drawing, sharing ideas, observation, learning, role playing, and group activities" (OVC, 2003: 3). At the end of programming, parent and school personnel are provided general feedback, and students with continuing needs are referred to services in the community.

Results of pretest/posttest evaluations showed positive changes in students' emotional and psychological functioning (e.g., being less nervous, less worried about things happening to them, less bothered by thoughts of death, less likely to have feelings hurt easily). Often, but not always, results have shown improved attitudes about the police.

This is a particularly important insight because of the popularity of "zero-tolerance" policies following the passage of the 1994 Federal Gun-Free Schools Act (Brady et al., 2007). The Federal Gun-Free Schools Act mandated that all states receiving federal education funds enact legislation requiring local educational agencies to expel any student in possession of a firearm in school for at least one year. Although bringing weapons into school must be treated seriously, a zero-tolerance policy alone will do little to address the reasons why students choose to bring weapons to school. More effective programming will deal with understanding the fears that motivate students to arm themselves, educating students about alternatives to the use of weapons, and holding students accountable for continued violation of school policy. Increasing law enforcement presence in "hotspot" areas may also be necessary to protect students in addition to educating them.

Research on delinquency prevention and intervention programs indicates better results are achieved when programming is targeted to higher risk youth rather than programming with a more general audience. Any changes in lower-risk youth and their subsequent behavior will be typically be much smaller because there are fewer problems to overcome. As a result, focusing resources on the highest-risk youths will tend to have a greater effect on reductions in delinquent behavior.

Many Shannon CSI models embrace a community approach and focus on the highest risk youth. The results of the survey of Shannon CSI sites' school/police partnerships, discussed in the following section, demonstrate that many communities have recognized that the school is not a separate entity from the community and reflect this through their school/police partnerships.

Partnership Example #3:
Truancy Prevention Programs

Truancy is a major concern of many schools and is associated with numerous problems, including as a predictor of delinquent and criminal activity and a risk factor for involvement with drugs, alcohol, and violence (Garry, 1996). Moreover, truancy is associated with poor academic performance (White et al., 2001). The survey conducted by NU and EOPSS found that in almost two-thirds (64%) of Shannon CSI sites, law enforcement personnel assist the schools enforce truancy laws and policies.

An Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention bulletin highlights seven truancy prevention and intervention programs in Arizona, California, Kansas, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Oklahoma (Garry, 1996). The following are components common to many of these programs.

- **Diversion programs:** in communities where chronic truants would otherwise be placed in the custody of social services or their parents formally charged in criminal court, the truant student and his or her family participate in a program providing risk assessment, intensive supervision, support services (e.g., counseling, therapy, education) for the student and/or parents, and follow-up student monitoring.
- **Operation of truancy centers:**
  - Activities: interview truants, contact parents, provide referrals, serve as location for service provision
  - Staffing: school counselors, police department personnel, public school personnel, district attorney's office staff
- **Referrals and service provision for students:** risk assessment, counseling and therapy, tutoring, and other support
- **Intensive monitoring and supervision of students:** including post-intervention follow-up
- **Referrals and service provision for parents and families:** programs for housing, food stamps, day care, medical conditions, substance abuse, psychiatric issues, parent support, single-parents
- **Contact with parents and families:** calls, home visits, in-person meetings, involvement in developing attendance plans, providing parents with

> information on school procedures
> - **Changes to local ordinances and state law:** these allow police to transport truant students, enable filing of misdemeanor charges against parents of chronically truant youth
>
> What many of these programs have in common is their attempt to increase parental involvement, identify larger problems in students' lives, and connect students and their families to needed services. Shannon CSI sites interested in these programs should keep in mind that a community's individual context and needs should dictate the nature of its efforts.

School/Police Partnerships in Shannon CSI Sites

A recent survey of Shannon communities provided valuable information about how police and schools are working together within Shannon CSI sites.[2] The survey asked communities about how the Shannon CSI influenced these partnerships and programs as well as their broader range of efforts, including those not affected by the Shannon CSI. All but one Shannon community responding to the survey established some relationship between the schools and police that involves officers being based in the schools on a full or part-time basis. The following section provides key findings of the school/law enforcement relationship survey.[3]

Law enforcement partners

The vast majority of Shannon CSI school/police partnerships involve the use of SROs.[4] In addition to SROs, over half of the communities (56%) use patrol officers in the schools, and almost half (44%) use gang unit officers. One-third (36%) involve probation or parole officers. Very few, however, have sheriff's office deputies in the schools (8%).[5] A majority of departments reported that their SROs work in multiple schools while only 16% of communities responding[6] reported that their SROs work in a single school.

---

[2] There were 37 responses from the 39 Shannon CSI communities for a response rate of 95%.

[3] The full survey results can be found in Appendix A. Summaries of in-depth interviews with Fitchburg, Framingham, and Lowell about their school/police partnerships can be found in Appendix B.

[4] There were 31 survey respondents who indicated using SROs, but 33 communities responded to survey items that asked about SROs' activities. Therefore, between 86% and 92% of communities with school-based law enforcement officers are using SROs.

[5] Boston differs from other jurisdictions in that the city police department has a School Police Unit in addition to SROs.

[6] Percentages are based on the number of respondents answering a particular question. As a result, the number of total communities a percentage is based on will often differ from item to item (i.e., percentages
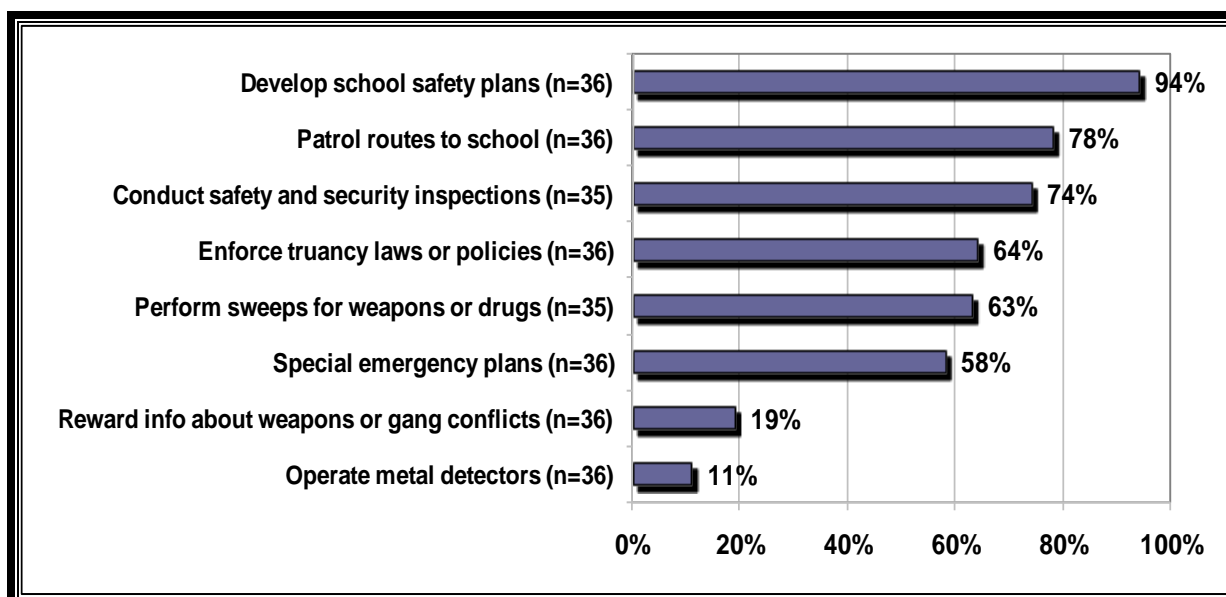
School safety

Students and teachers need a safe environment in which to learn and teach. Particularly in schools within higher crime areas, it is important to have adequate security policies and procedures in place to ensure everyone's physical safety and maintain an environment perceived to be safe. Not surprisingly, all communities with school/police partnerships engage in at least one security or suppression-related activity. The most common are developing school safety plans (94%), patrolling routes to school (78%), conducting safety and security inspections (74%), and performing sweeps for weapons or drugs (63%). Generally, about one-third of the sites conducting these activities indicated that they were able to expand or modify these programs as a result of the Shannon CSI, including 39% of those conducting safety and security inspections, 36% of those patrolling routes to school, and 32% of those doing sweeps for weapons or drugs.

More than half (58%) of the sites have specific plans that go into effect in response to or in anticipation of gang conflicts or other youth violence at school. Of these 21 communities, 43% increase the number of officers in the school, 24% have lock-down plans, 19% conduct intelligence gathering, 19% have some kind of response team or task force to respond to incidents, and 10% involve peer conflict resolution or outreach workers. See Figure 1 for a list of suppression-related activities performed by law enforcement officers at Shannon CSI sites.

are not always based on a total of 36 communities with school/police partnerships). Please refer to the survey results in Appendix A for the specific denominator used to calculate a given result.

Figure 1. Percentage of Sites with Law Enforcement Officers Performing Suppression-Related Activities

In addition to traditional security-focused school safety measures, SROs and other law enforcement officers helped empower teachers. For example, in 74% of the sites officers provide training to teachers on identifying signs of gang involvement. There are also 71% of sites in which officers engage in conflict resolution activities.

Student well-being

While school safety and student well-being overlap considerably, there are several distinctions allowing us to focus this section on the individual student rather than the security of school environment per se. This is where many SRO programs or other school-based law enforcement efforts demonstrate their utility above and beyond a basic security-centered approach. Even a practice like enforcing truancy laws or policies (performed by 64% of the sites responding) that could be used as a very traditional law enforcement activity, can also be part of a comprehensive service provision mechanism as described in Example #3 above. Officers frequently conduct classes that teach students how to avoid gang involvement and the harms of bullying. Anti-bullying classes are taught by officers in 69% of sites and 40% have Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) programs taught by officers.

Having officers based in the schools affords officers the opportunity to get to know students and interact with them on a daily basis. Sometimes a student with few

close relationships will turn to an officer to discuss important problems. As an SRO in Framingham explained, it is important to get to know the students so that they understand the officer is there as a resource rather than as "Robocop." Officers can serve not only as an excellent resource for students in need, but in the best cases will be seen as a positive constant in the lives of some students without a stable, responsible adult. Officers in all 36 communities build relationships with youth, advise youth, and refer students to other sources of help as part of their efforts. Almost all (89%) also help students who are court involved. Nearly half of these communities either initiated (8%) or expanded/modified (39%) their role talking with and advising students and over half initiated (11%) or expanded/modified (42%) efforts to make student referrals. Of the 89% of communities in which officers help students with court involvement issues, 39% initiated (7%) or expanded/modified (32%) this practice because of Shannon CSI support. Figure 2 shows the percentage of Shannon CSI sites with law enforcement officers conducting education- or advising related activities.

Figure 2. Percentage of Sites with Law Enforcement Performing Education- or Advising-Related Activities
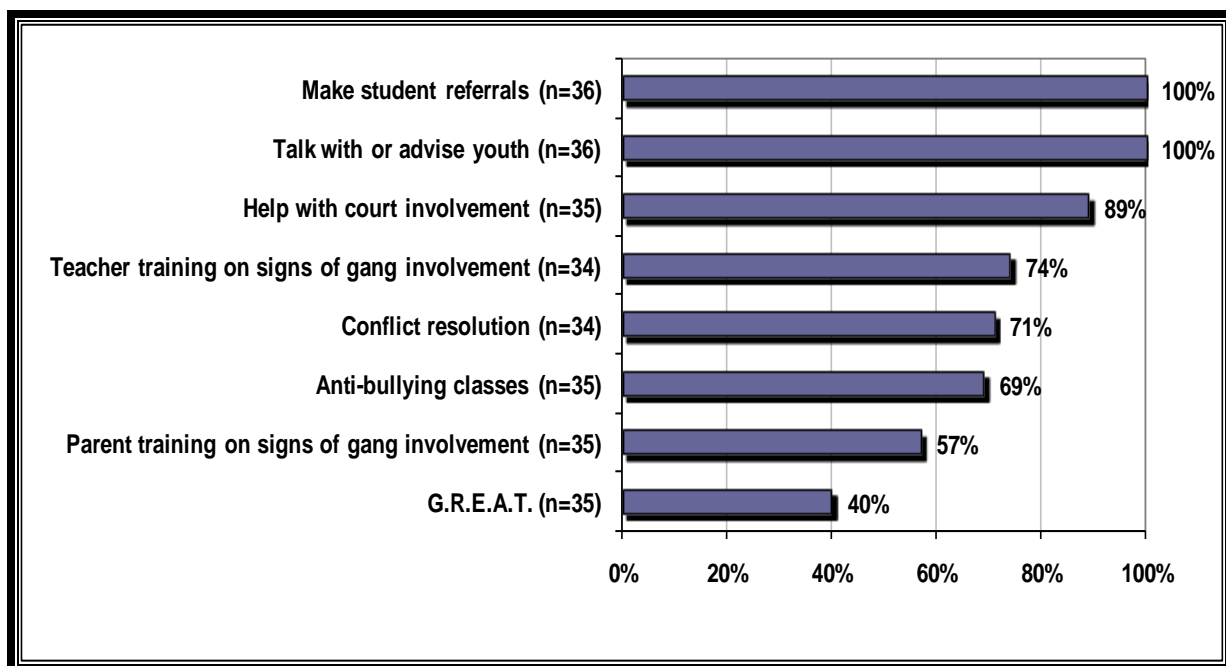
In over half (56%) of the responding communities, officers are part of a case management team that works to develop plans to help at-risk students. Some teams

are more social service-oriented or while others are more oriented toward suppression efforts as in the case of Community Based Justice (CBJ) groups. For the communities who are using case management teams, Figure 3 shows the make up of these teams.

Figure 3. Percent of Sites with Case Management Teams with these Participants[7]
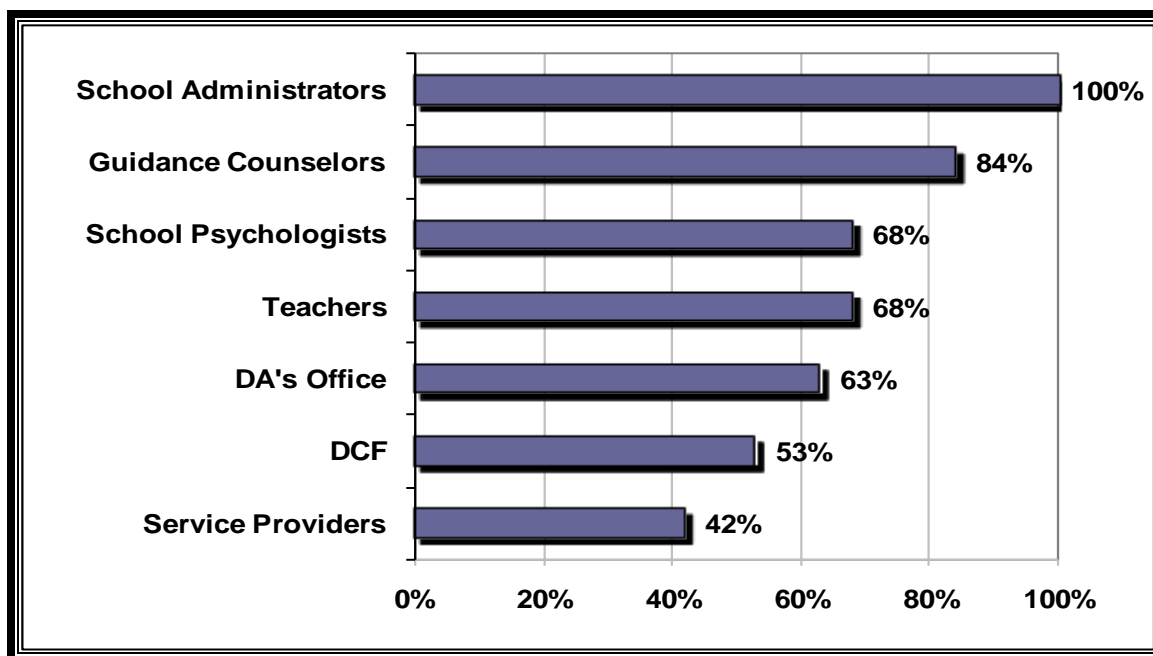
Parental engagement

Although it goes without saying that parental participation in a student's education is important, the reality is that parents' involvement will vary widely. Parents will not always know what their child is doing, but some parents may not realize the extent to which their child is becoming involved with gangs or otherwise getting into trouble. Most Shannon CSI sites (86%) are conducting home visits during which an officer and often a school administrator or community member will go to a student's family's residence to alert the parents to concerns about the student and to discuss possible solutions to these problems. These visits are typically connected to truancy prevention, behavioral or disciplinary problems such as gang involvement, or concerns over academic performance. In fact, 40% have expanded these efforts and 17% began

---

[7] Please note that officers are not listed as a type of participant, since the survey question asked "In addition to the law enforcement officers…"

doing the visits as a result of Shannon CSI funding. In addition, more than half of sites (57%) provide training to parents on identifying signs of gang involvement

Community engagement

Some communities have had a contentious relationship with their local law enforcement agency and may be wary of their presence in the schools. Some communities used the start of an SRO program as an opportunity to meet with community members and explain what their role and function will be in the school. Fitchburg, for example, conducted a media campaign and held discussions with community members to explain the purpose of having police in the schools and respond to community concerns. Officers in more than half (57%) of the Shannon CSI sites make presentations to the school committee, city council, or other municipal agency on gang issues as part of their responsibilities.

Improved communication and intelligence

As discussed above, schools bring a large number of youths together for a substantial part of the day, which means that conflicts occurring outside of school will likely continue inside the school building, and arguments or other altercations starting in school will spill out into the community. As a result, officers need to gather information on gang activity involving students and the school itself. In the last few years in particular, the Internet has become a valuable resource for law enforcement intelligence gathering. Students and other youths often post videos and narrative information on sites like MySpace.com highlighting their role in a fight, plans for a retaliatory attack, or the details about an upcoming gang party. Officers in almost all Shannon CSI communities (94%) check Internet sites to gather intelligence.

Having their ear to the ground allows police to be proactive in responding to potential violent incidents in and around school grounds by sharing information with their superior officers, school officials, and community service providers. All Shannon CSI sites with SROs indicated they communicate with their superior officers and school officials, and nearly all do so on a daily basis (88% and 91%, respectively). A significant majority also share information with the Probation Department (88%), although less frequently. Half (50%) of these communities' SROs communicate with Probation Department personnel on a weekly basis, and 32% on a monthly basis. Nearly three-

quarters (72%) share information with their department's gang unit, with 83% doing so on a daily or weekly basis. Members of the Lawrence partnership noted that the SROs have a great relationship with the Lawrence Police Department's gang unit, including not just frequent information sharing but having the gang unit work with the SROs during student dismissal time to prevent problems from occurring. It was noted that once the gang members in school saw that the gang officers are consistently at the school and know who the gang members are, these youth altered their behavior as a result.

Parents and the PTA can also provide valuable information. Of the 72% of responding sites in which law enforcement officers share information with parents or the PTA, 44% are in contact on a daily or weekly basis. Particularly with a case management model, information gathering efforts can be translated into referrals for youth law enforcement officers see with risk factors for future gang involvement and not solely as a security enhancement mechanism.

Effectiveness

Sites generally perceive the involvement of law enforcement officers in addressing gang violence in the schools as being quite effective. In fact, half of the communities (50%) indicated that the involvement of law enforcement officers in addressing gang violence in the schools is "very effective" while no communities said they were "not at all effective." Most respondents indicated that this judgment is based on personal experience (89%).[8] In addition, 44% cited reductions in the number of gangs observed in the schools, 39% saw changes in the frequency or severity of disciplinary action against students, and 36% noted reductions in the level of violence in school and in the number of gang members recruited in school.

Challenges

The survey also asked communities about the challenges associated with a school/police partnership. By far, the most challenging issue involved with school-based law enforcement anti-gang efforts is the lack of funding for SROs or other law enforcement personnel. A total of 89% of the respondents thought funding was either

---

[8] The personal experience cited is almost exclusively that of law enforcement personnel, who represented 89% of survey respondents.

"somewhat challenging" or "very challenging." Almost two-thirds of the communities said that differing philosophies about working with at-risk youth (64%), privacy concerns over student information (64%), and providing training for officers in how to work in a school environment (58%) were somewhat challenging. About half (47%) said resistance from parents was somewhat challenging, but as many (47%) said this was not at all challenging.

Challenges of School/Police Partnerships and Recommendations for Success

This section draws on the information NU and EOPSS learned from the Shannon CSI survey results and detailed interviews to identify some lessons learned and several common challenges. Recommendations for each challenge are provided based on the experience of the Shannon CSI communities and research literature on school/police partnerships.

Lessons Learned

1. *Obtaining early buy-in*

Along with other important goals, police departments have historically used partnerships with the schools as an opportunity to enhance the community's perceptions of the police. Based on our interviews the police and schools often undertook significant effort to reach out to parents and the community to discuss why it was beneficial to bring officers into the school. Fitchburg, for example, met with community members and parents, conducted a media campaign, and conducted home visits. Engaging the community by soliciting their opinions and taking their input seriously can help improve community/police relations.

2. *Home Visits*

An encouraging observation was the high percentage of communities (86%) in which law enforcement personnel conduct home visits to meet with parents of at-risk youths. Of these communities, over one-third (38%) indicated they expanded or modified the practice with support from the Shannon CSI. This strategy has been used

in Shannon CSI sites in conjunction with truancy intervention efforts and has also been targeted to families of students who are experiencing disciplinary or other types of problems. Communities described receiving positive feedback from many of the families. In Lowell, members of the school/police partnership stated that while some parents are tough to engage, in most cases parents love the visits. They appreciate the help in keeping their child's behavior from continuing to get worse and often can't believe the police are coming out to see them for this reason. This is good community-oriented and problem-solving policing and should be encouraged to continue or be expanded.

3. Communication and Information Sharing

Survey results show SROs communicate frequently with many important stakeholders, particularly with their superior officers and school officials. It is also encouraging to see that 44% of the 23 communities in which SROs share information with parents or the PTA do so on a daily or weekly basis. Similarly, there appears to be daily or weekly communication with the department's gang unit in 83% of the 23 communities where SROs share information with this unit. It would likely be helpful for more communities overall to share information and to share it more frequently with these and other stakeholders, such as police departments in other jurisdictions, various community constituencies, and the Shannon CSI steering committee. This is not meant to imply that confidential student information should be more widely communicated. The information shared more widely should in most cases concern ongoing gang and violence-related issues that affect the community, strategies to address them, activities going on in the schools, and other topics germane to school and community safety.

Challenges

1. Role of SROs

As the survey results in particular show, SROs can possess responsibility for a wide range of activities. There are explicit enforcement-related tasks, such as patrolling school grounds or responding to incidents of violence, but a large portion of their work is non-enforcement based, such as engaging and advising students and providing

classroom support to teachers. These activities are quite different in many ways from the tasks performed on patrol. Some SROs come to the schools after having completed certification training conducted by the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), but others may not have any specialized training to prepare officers for working in a school environment. Even with training, the nature of the school (e.g., size of the student population and the severity of gang problems) and the orientations of police and school departments will influence what an SRO will prioritize.

Recommendations:

- **Clarify SRO mission and job description.** Departments are encouraged to work with school administrators and police and school unions to identify the mission of the SRO program and discuss qualifications a successful candidate should possess. In addition to better structuring the program and bringing these important stakeholders to the table, this process should communicate the seriousness with which the SRO program is taken by the police department.

- **Select officers based on substantive criteria.** Police departments vary as to the criteria used to select officers for SRO positions. While some have rigorous application processes that prioritize the likelihood of an officer's effectiveness in the role, other departments appear to use seniority as a major or primary selection criterion. Before taking seniority into account, departments should consider other important qualifications, including an officer's experience working with youth, disposition, level of education, creativity, and problem-solving skills (especially mediation) that are more likely to be associated with an effective SRO.

- **Train new SROs on working in school environment.** As noted above, many departments send their new SROs to become NASRO certified. While this is not required in Massachusetts, the NASRO program or similar training can provide officers with the specialized knowledge in working with youth in an educational environment and familiarize them with legislation pertinent to operating within the schools. This should also communicate the seriousness of the position to officers thinking of applying for the assignment.

- **Consider the effects on students of reassigning an SRO.** If officers with seniority or other overriding characteristics have an opportunity to bump a current SRO, assess whether the current SRO's effectiveness in accomplishing agreed upon goals and objectives, in particular the relationships built with at-risk students.

2. Funding

The most frequently cited challenge indicated in the survey and during interviews with communities was being able to staff and maintain SRO programs after budget cuts and funding constraints. While Shannon CSI funding has helped bring back SROs and add additional SROs in Shannon CSI sites, this challenge will surface again during challenging economic times. SRO programs are often cited as being indispensable by various stakeholders, but they are often the first to go or at least sustain cuts when budgets are strained. One community noted that given the need for patrol officers to move constantly from call to call, their SRO program was their primary opportunity for the department to engage in any kind of proactive, preventative policing.

Recommendation:

- **Promote programs to policy makers and share costs.** In addition to seeking out external funding, parents, community members, school personnel, police officers, and other stakeholders should articulate their support for the SRO program to the school and police leadership. Also, communities should strive to institutionalize SRO programs. Consider having the school and police split the cost of the SROs.

3. Protecting Students' Privacy

Information sharing among school staff, law enforcement officers, and others is an important part of efforts to prevent gang violence in the schools and to help students who are struggling with serious challenges. It is critical to protect students' confidentiality both ethically and legally. Although all communities understand the necessity to address this issue, it can be challenging to establish and coordinate comprehensive policies and procedures. As the National Forum on Education

Statistics[9] (2004: 1) states: "Many federal and state laws and regulations related to maintaining and releasing student information must be followed; however, school districts and schools need additional policies and procedures to guide everyday operations. Since schools and districts vary in how they collect and maintain information about students, the types of policies and procedures also vary."

Recommendation:

- **Develop plans for protecting confidential information.**

  Agencies that plan to share private student information should work together to identify the salient issues in play and develop specific plans that address these concerns. It may be helpful to have an MOU or confidentiality agreement and to work in conjunction with the municipality's legal office. Communities are strongly encouraged to consult the National Forum on Education Statistics' *Forum Guide to Protecting the Privacy of Student Information: State and Local Education Agencies*[10] to better understand the issues involved and ways to effectively address them.

---

[9] "The Forum is sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education and is committed to improving the quality, comparability, and usefulness of elementary and secondary education data, while remaining sensitive to data burden concerns. Forum members include representatives from state education agencies, local education agencies, the federal government, and other organizations with an interest in education data. Our purpose is to plan, recommend, and implement strategies for building an education data system that will support local, state, and national efforts to improve public and private education throughout the United States" http://nces.ed.gov/forum/index.asp.
[10] http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/2004330.pdf

References

Bauer, L., P. Guerino, K. Nolle, S. Tang, & K. Chandler. (2008). *Student Victimization in U.S. Schools Results From the 2005 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009306.pdf

Brady, K., S. Balmer, & D. Phenix. (2007). School-police partnership effectiveness in urban schools: An analysis of New York City's Impact Schools Initiative. *Education and Urban Society*, 39(4): 455-78.

Brown, B. (2006). Understanding and assessing school police officers: A conceptual and methodological comment. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 34: 591-604.

Crooks, C., K. Scott, D. Wolfe. (2007). Understanding the link between childhood maltreatment and violent delinquency: What do schools have to add? *Child Maltreatment*, 12(3): 269-280.

DeVoe, J. & S. Kaffenberger, S. (2005). *Student Reports of Bullying: Results from the 2001 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/2005310.pdf

Ellement, J. (2007). Officials say vow kept with arrests – 22 gang members now in custody. *The Boston Globe*. May 25: B4.

Esbensen, F. (2006). The National Evaluation of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Program, in A. Egley, C. Maxson, J. Miller, & M. Klein, (eds.) *The Modern Gang Reader*. Los Angeles: Roxbury.

Esbensen., F., E. Osgood, T. Taylor, D. Peterson, & A. Freng. (2001). How great is G.R.E.A.T.? Results from a longitudinal quasi-experimental design. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 1(1): 87-118.

Gottfredson, D. (1997). School-based crime prevention. In Sherman, L.W., Gottfredson, D., MacKenzie, D., Eck, J., Reuter, P., and Bushway, S. 1997. *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice. http://www.ncjrs.gov/works/index.htm

Gottfredson, G & D. Gottfredson. (2001). *Gang Problems and Gang Programs in a National Sample of Schools*. Ellicott City, Maryland: Gottfredson Associates, Inc. http://www.gottfredson.com/gang.htm

Kenney, D. & S. Watson. (1999). *Crime in the Schools: Reducing Conflict with Student Problem Solving.* Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice. http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/177618.pdf

Morrison, J. (1968). The controversial police-school liaison programs. *Police*, November-December: 60-64.

Myers, P. (1972). Police in the schools: two troubled institutions meet. *City,* January-February: 27-31.

National Association of School Resource Officers. http://www.nasro.org/about_nasro.asp

National Forum on Education Statistics. (2004). *Forum Guide to Protecting the Privacy of Student Information: State and Local Education Agencies*, NCES 2004–330. Washington, D.C. http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/2004330.pdf

National Forum on Education Statistics. (nd). http://nces.ed.gov/forum/

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. (2005). *COPS in Schools: The COPS Commitment to School Safety (Fact Sheet).* http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/RIC/Publications/e09042494.pdf

Shaw, M. (2001). *Promoting Safety in Schools: International Experience and Action.* Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Assistance. http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/bja/186937.pdf

Sherman, L. (1997). Communities and crime prevention. In Sherman, L.W., Gottfredson, D., MacKenzie, D., Eck, J., Reuter, P., and Bushway, S. 1997. *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice. http://www.ncjrs.gov/works/index.htm

Sprott, J., J. Jenkins, & A. Doob. (2005). The importance of school: Protecting at-risk youth from early offending. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 3(1): 59-77

Thornberry, T. (1998). Membership in youth gangs and involvement in serious and violent offending. In R. Loeber & D. P. Farrington (Eds.), *Serious and violent juvenile offenders: Risk factors and successful interventions* (pp. 147-166). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Uchida, C., S. Solomon, C. Katz, & C. Pappas. (2006). *School-Based Partnerships: A Problem-Solving Strategy.* Washington, D.C.: Office of

Community Oriented Policing Services.
http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/RIC/CDROMs/SchoolSafety/Related_Res
ources/SchoolBasedPartnerships.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. (2007). *Report on the Implementation of the Gun-Free Schools Act in the States and Outlying Areas, School Year 2003-04*. http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/gfsa/index.html

Valencia, M. (2008). Youth no longer a refuge: More of Boston's shooting victims are under age 17. *The Boston Globe*, September 18: A1.

White, M., J. Fyfe, S. Campbell, & J. Goldkamp. (2001). The school-police partnership: Identifying at-risk youth through a truant recovery program. *Evaluation Review*, 25(5): 507-532.

School/Police Partnership Survey Results[11]

Item	Question	#	%
	Does at least one school in this school district work with a local law enforcement agency to address gang involvement? (n=31)		
	Yes	30	96.8%
	No	1	3.2%
Q1	**Which of the following types of law enforcement officers are involved in the partnership with this municipality's school district? (n=36)**		
	School Resource Officers (SROs)	31	86.1%
	Patrol officers (not SROs)	20	55.6%
	Gang unit officers (not SROs)	16	44.4%
	Probation/Parole officers	13	36.1%
	Sheriff's deputies (not SROs)	3	8.3%
	Other:	6	16.7%
	Detective drug/gang, Family Services Unit detectives, G.R.E.A.T. Officers, Juvenile detectives, State police, Transit police		
Q5	**To what degree do School Resource Officers in your municipality split their time between schools? (n=31)**		
	Some SROs work in multiple schools, some work in one school only	16	51.6%
	All SROs work in multiple schools	10	32.3%
	All SROs work in a single school	5	16.1%
Q6	**How often do SROs share information they collect with the following individuals or agencies?**		
	Total respondents indicating individual or agency:		
	Superior Officer	33/33	100%
	School Officials	33/33	100%
	Probation	28/32	87.5%
	Gang Unit	23/32	71.9%
	Parents/PTA	23/32	71.9%
	Other police jurisdictions	20/28	71.4%
	District Attorney	20/31	64.5%
	Shannon CSI Steering Committee	16/28	57.1%
	Parole	11/29	37.9%
	Other	1/3	33.3%

---

[11] Results for items 2-4, which addressed the number of schools with SROs and the number of SROs in schools, are not included because of the difficulty in interpreting the responses overall. In part, this was because it was unclear in many cases how many SROs were being discussed.

	Superior Officer		
	Daily	29	87.9%
	Weekly	3	9.1%
	Monthly	1	3.0%
	Quarterly	0	-
	School Officials		
	Daily	30	90.9%
	Weekly	3	10.0%
	Monthly	0	-
	Quarterly	0	-
	Probation		
	Daily	2	7.1%
	Weekly	14	50.0%
	Monthly	9	32.1%
	Quarterly	1	3.6%
	Gang Unit		
	Daily	11	47.8%
	Weekly	8	34.8%
	Monthly	3	13.0%
	Quarterly	0	-
	Parents/PTA		
	Daily	6	26.1%
	Weekly	4	17.4%
	Monthly	9	39.1%
	Quarterly	2	8.7%
	Other police jurisdictions		
	Daily	4	20.0%
	Weekly	8	40.0%
	Monthly	4	20.0%
	Quarterly	3	15.0%
	District Attorney		
	Daily	0	-
	Weekly	8	40.0%
	Monthly	7	35.0%
	Quarterly	2	10.0%
	Shannon CSI Steering Committee		
	Daily	0	-
	Weekly	2	12.5%
	Monthly	6	37.5%
	Quarterly	7	43.8%
	Parole		
	Daily	1	9.1%
	Weekly	5	45.5%
	Monthly	3	27.3%
	Quarterly	0	-
Q7	**To what degree is the partnership between the school district and police formalized? (n=35)**		
	Formalized MOU or other contract indicates how the school district and police will work together	23	68.6%
	Informal agreement between the school district and police	11	31.4%

Q8	**Which of the following _suppression_ activities are conducted by law enforcement officers as part of school anti-gang efforts in your jurisdiction?** (n=36 unless otherwise specified)		
	Total respondents indicating activity:		
	Develop school safety plans	34	94.4%
	Check Internet sites to gather intelligence	33/35	94.3%
	Conduct home visits	30/35	85.7%
	Patrol routes to school	28	77.8%
	Serve as liaison between school and probation depts.	27	75.0%
	Conduct safety and security inspections	26/35	74.3%
	Enforce truancy laws or policies	23	63.9%
	Perform sweeps for weapons or drugs	22/35	62.9%
	Reward information about weapons or gang conflicts	7	19.4%
	Operate metal detectors	4	11.1%
	Other		
	Develop school safety plans		
	Initiated by Shannon	1	2.9%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	6	17.6%
	Unchanged by Shannon	26	75.5%
	Check Internet sites to gather intelligence		
	Initiated by Shannon	2	6.1%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	12	36.4%
	Unchanged by Shannon	17	51.5%
	Conduct home visits		
	Initiated by Shannon	5	16.7%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	12	40.0%
	Unchanged by Shannon	12	40.0%
	Patrol routes to school		
	Initiated by Shannon	1	3.6%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	9	32.1%
	Unchanged by Shannon	17	60.7%
	Serve as liaison between school and probation depts.		
	Initiated by Shannon	2	7.4%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	10	37.0%
	Unchanged by Shannon	15	55.6%
	Conduct safety and security inspections		
	Initiated by Shannon	0	-
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	10	38.5%
	Unchanged by Shannon	16	61.5%
	Enforce truancy laws or policies		
	Initiated by Shannon	1	4.3%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	6	26.1%
	Unchanged by Shannon	16	70.0%

	Perform sweeps for weapons or drugs		
	Initiated by Shannon	1	4.5%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	7	31.8%
	Unchanged by Shannon	13	59.1%
	Reward information about weapons or gang conflicts		
	Initiated by Shannon	0	-
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	2	28.6%
	Unchanged by Shannon	4	57.1%
	Operate metal detectors		
	Initiated by Shannon	1	25.0%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	0	-
	Unchanged by Shannon	3	75.0%
Q9	**Which of the following _educational_ activities are conducted by law enforcement officers as part of school anti-gang efforts in your jurisdiction?** (n=35 unless otherwise indicated)		
	Total respondents indicating activity:		
	Provide training for teachers on signs of gang involvement	25/34	73.5%
	Conflict resolution	24/34	70.6%
	Anti-bullying classes	24	68.6%
	Provide training to parents on signs of gang involvement	20	57.1%
	Make presentations to school committee, city council, or other municipal agency on gang issues	20	57.1%
	G.R.E.A.T.	14	40.0%
	Provide training for teachers on signs of gang involvement		
	Initiated by Shannon	3	12.0%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	14	56.0%
	Unchanged by Shannon	6	24.0%
	Conflict resolution		
	Initiated by Shannon	2	8.3%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	6	25.5%
	Unchanged by Shannon	14	58.3%
	Anti-bullying classes		
	Initiated by Shannon	0	-
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	10	41.7%
	Unchanged by Shannon	12	50.0%
	Provide training to parents on signs of gang involvement		
	Initiated by Shannon	1	5.0%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	11	55.0%
	Unchanged by Shannon	6	30.0%
	Make presentations to school committee, city council, or other municipal agency on gang issues		
	Initiated by Shannon	1	5.0%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	9	45.0%
	Unchanged by Shannon	9	45.0%

	G.R.E.A.T.		
	Initiated by Shannon	0	-
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	3	21.4%
	Unchanged by Shannon	10	71.4%
Q10	**Which of the following _advising/mentoring_ activities are conducted by law enforcement officers as part of school anti-gang efforts in your jurisdiction? (n=36 unless otherwise indicated)**		
	Total respondents indicating activity:		
	Talk with/advise youth	36	100%
	Refer students to other sources of help	36	100%
	Help students with court involvement or intervention	31/35	88.6%
	Other		
	Talk with/advise youth		
	Initiated by Shannon	3	8.3%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	14	38.9%
	Unchanged by Shannon	16	44.4%
	Refer students to other sources of help		
	Initiated by Shannon	4	11.1%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	15	41.7%
	Unchanged by Shannon	14	38.9%
	Help students with court involvement or intervention		
	Initiated by Shannon	2	6.5%
	Expanded/modified by Shannon	10	32.3%
	Unchanged by Shannon	17	56.7%
Q11	**Which of the following school levels have one or more of the above (suppression, education, advising) activities performed by law enforcement officers? (n=36)**		
	High school	33	91.7%
	Middle/Junior high school	31	86.1%
	Elementary school	26	72.2%
	Alternative School	18	50.0%
Q12	**To what degree are law enforcement officers' activities supervised by school personnel? (n=35)**		
	All activities must be approved by school administrators	13	37.1%
	Activities are periodically reviewed by school administrators	10	28.6%
	Approval of law enforcement activities by school administrators is not required	10	28.6%
	Other:	2	5.7%
	Activities are outlined in MOU; Initial approval required but supervision is not required		
Q13	**Are law enforcement officers part of a case management team that works to develop plans to help at-risk students? (n=36)**		
	Yes	20	55.6%
	No	16	44.4%

Q14	**In addition to the law enforcement officer(s), which of the following are members of the case management team?** (n=19)		
	School administrator	19	100%
	Guidance counselor	16	84.2%
	Teacher	13	68.4%
	School psychologist	13	68.4%
	District Attorney's Office attorney	12	63.2%
	DSS personnel	10	52.6%
	Community social service provider	8	42.1%
	Other:	6	31.6%
	Probation, DYS, parents, mentors, outreach workers, therapists/counselors		
Q15	**Has your community participated in youth/police dialogues?** (n=35)		
	Yes	24	68.6%
	No	11	31.4%
Q16	**Does your school district have specific plans in place that go into effect in response to or in anticipation of gang conflicts/youth violence that may involve students at the school?** (n=36)		
	Yes	21	58.3%
	No	15	41.7%
Q17	**In your opinion, how effective is the involvement of law enforcement officers in addressing gang violence in the schools?** (n=36)		
	Very effective	18	50.0%
	Somewhat effective	17	47.2%
	Not at all effective	0	-
	Unsure	1	2.8%
Q18	**On which of the following are you basing this judgment?** (n=36)		
	Personal experience	32	88.9%
	Changes in number of gangs observed in school	16	44.4%
	Changes in frequency or severity of disciplinary action against students	14	38.9%
	Changes in level of violence in school	13	36.1%
	Changes in number of gang members recruited in school	13	36.1%
	Other:	3	8.3%
	Faculty input, intelligence gathering/incidents prevented		
Q19	**How challenging is each of the following issues to law enforcement anti-gang efforts in schools?** (n=36 unless otherwise indicated) **Funding of SRO or other law enforcement personnel (n=35)**		
	Very challenging	21	60.0%
	Somewhat challenging	10	28.6%
	Not at all challenging	3	8.6%
	Unsure	1	2.9%

	School and law enforcement representatives have different philosophies about working with at-risk youth		
	Very challenging	3	8.3%
	Somewhat challenging	23	63.9%
	Not at all challenging	10	27.8%
	Unsure	0	-
	Privacy concerns over student information		
	Very challenging	3	8.3%
	Somewhat challenging	23	63.9%
	Not at all challenging	10	27.8%
	Unsure	0	-
	Providing training for law enforcement officers in how to work in a school environment		
	Very challenging	1	2.8%
	Somewhat challenging	21	58.3%
	Not at all challenging	14	38.9%
	Unsure	0	-
	Identifying appropriate officers to work in schools (n=35)		
	Very challenging	3	8.6%
	Somewhat challenging	17	48.6%
	Not at all challenging	13	37.1%
	Unsure	2	5.7%
	Resistance from parents		
	Very challenging	2	5.6%
	Somewhat challenging	17	47.2%
	Not at all challenging	17	47.2%
	Unsure	0	-
Q20	**In your opinion, what would make your municipality's school/police partnership more effective in decreasing student involvement in gangs and violence? (n=36)**		
	Additional law enforcement officers in the schools	27	75.0%
	Better training of law enforcement on working in a school environment	22	61.1%
	Having law enforcement officers in the schools for more hours in the day	19	52.8%
	Better communication in schools between law enforcement officers, school officials, and teachers	19	52.8%
	Law enforcement officers having more access to students in a classroom setting	16	44.4%
	Other:	4	11.1%
	Intercity law enforcement trainings and meetings, law enforcement participation in after-school activities, more positive interactions (e.g., youth/police dialogues, building relationships with youth, mentoring		

Appendix B
Examples of Shannon CSI School/Police Partnerships

Fitchburg Partnership

Origins
Fitchburg High School first had police officers in the school for the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program in the early to mid 1990s. A series of bomb threats to the middle schools in 2000 also led to police details being assigned to the schools. The D.A.R.E. program changed to an SRO program about 6 to 7 years ago.

Early resistance
Prior to the SRO program, schools were hesitant about calling the police, but the increasing number of incidents and resulting calls for service to the schools made them open to stationing officers on school grounds. These were patrol officers, not trained SROs, and it was an open detail for any available officer.

Parents and teachers were initially hesitant to have police in the schools because of the strained relationship between the police and community. In addition, at that time officers' role in the schools was not clearly defined. The schools and police initiated a campaign was initiated to promote the importance of having officers in the schools. This included specifically talking about goals and outcomes. Moreover, the school and police departments held break-out sessions with community members and parents to discuss the role of officers in schools and conducted a media campaign. The partnership also overcame resistance to officers carrying firearms in the schools by explaining that when an incident occurs, it is useful to have the officer on site immediately ready to address it.

Selection and Training of SROs
When the police department posts SRO positions, seniority is a major factor as a result of collective bargaining stipulations. A requirement of all SROs is training in handling sexual assault incidents so the SRO does not have to refer a case to someone else. This has also had the effect of likely weeding out officers who are most concerned with the regular hours of the position compared to patrol officers' shifts.

Role of SROs
The high school SRO's main goal is building relationships with students and teachers. He only does hall monitoring during high traffic times and attends all lunch periods in order to get to know students better. This also allows him to provide extra security. In addition, the SRO has an office in the guidance area of the administrative office suite. This new placement allows for more interaction with guidance counselors and other support staff, as well as placing the SRO

closer to students who want to talk. The SRO and school administration, typically the assistant principal, have daily contact to discuss the events of the previous day.

The SRO, the director of student services, and often a member of the community center do home visits on Tuesday nights to families of students having problems with gangs or other concerns. Concerns that people would perceive the school administrator and community member as being an adjunct of law enforcement proved unfounded once word of the purpose of the visits spread in the community. In the past, SROs participated in truancy runs and conducted youth/police dialogues, but budget cuts have limited these activities.

Interactions with Teachers and Community
Teachers have involved SROs in class activities, generally when lessons have to do with an area of the officer's expertise or training. Teachers are required to go through the vice principal's office to involve the SRO in class activities. Teachers understand that the SROs are not in the school to run interference for ordinary classroom problems/disruptions.

Information Sharing
There are monthly support services meetings attended by community-based organizations to share information, including which students appear to need services. The SRO reports out and inquires about programming for targeted students, approximately 20-25 per month.

Successes
Although it is difficult to parse out the direct impact of the SROs, the dropout rate has fallen from 8% to 4.2% over the last 3 years, which is attributed in part to home visits and other contact with families. Numerous parents have requested home visits so that the SRO can talk with their child.

Lowell Partnership

Origins
The SRO program in Lowell High School started with Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) officers in 1994, and was based out of the high school. D.A.R.E. expanded into an SRO program in the high school and several middle schools in the late 90s. Federal government grants helped cover the costs of the SRO program, and since its inception, there has been a reduction in officers because of budget cuts. In addition to SROs, Lowell has two Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) officers in the high school.

Early resistance
Some initial resistance from teachers and parents to officers being based in the schools was overcome by taking steps to talk with teachers and explain their role in the school. School administrators also held meetings with parents to emphasize the importance of having officers in the schools.

Selection and Training of SROs
Seniority takes precedence in terms of who is eligible for the SRO assignment. New SROs attend National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) certification training.

Role of SROs
The primary goal of the SROs is to ensure a safe environment for student learning. Although there is a zero-tolerance policy for violence, the SROs try to take a proactive approach in part through building relationships with students. SROs are also involved with truancy monitoring. A high school housemaster compiles a list of students in danger of having excessive absences, and SROs school administrators conduct home visits as needed after school hours. These visits have been generally well-received by parents and have served as excellent public relations tools.

In the middle and elementary schools there is more of a focus on teaching and coaching. The goal is to have students accustomed to officers in the school by the time they reach high school.

Interactions with Teachers and the Community
SROs also conduct training for teachers and parents at PTO meetings. Meetings sometimes feature presentations by gang unit detectives.

Information Sharing
Information sharing with the police takes place when there is a potential for danger in the community or school.

Framingham Partnership

Origins
The chief of police in Framingham during the 1980s was an early supporter of basing officers in schools. School-based police activities started with the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program. There were also several juvenile officers responsible for all schools across town. In the wake of highly publicized incidents of school violence nationally, Framingham made the transition to a full SRO program. SRO assignments are decided based upon needs identified by the police and schools.

Selection and Training of SROs
The police department posts SRO positions when they become available. Officers who apply for the assignment are first interviewed by a deputy chief and lieutenant. If the interview is successful, the applicant is then interviewed by the Framingham Superintendant of Schools and the principal of the particular school seeking an SRO. Although the police department has ultimate responsibility for deciding which officer gets the assignment, the department recognizes the importance of the school being involved in the selection process. SROs attend the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) certification training and an SRO supervisor has also received specialized training by NASRO for the supervisory position.

Information Sharing
School and police have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to facilitate the sharing of student information.

Role of SROs
The SROs perform different activities depending on the level of school. In the elementary and middle schools, the SROs conduct age-appropriate classroom programs (e.g., anti-bullying and cyber-bullying curriculum), are visible in the hallway, communicate with the community and police, and participate in school safety planning. In the high school, the SRO's duties include providing building security, meeting with parents, and working with probation set up community service.

The Keefe Technical School was able to obtain a full-time SRO two years ago because of the Shannon SCI. Among his numerous responsibilities, the SRO works to establish a presence in the hallways and cafeteria to develop positive relationships with the students, mediates conflicts, provides an extra layer of security, and addresses student issues concerning jail, mental health, Department of Children and Families (DCF), and court. He participates in drivers' education classes to discuss juvenile license restrictions, DUI, school safety, and health decision making. Participation in other classes occurs on an infrequently basis. The SRO in Keefe is invited to all professional development trainings and a daily meeting with school personnel