




STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

October 6, 2015

TO: The Honorable Patricia Halagao
Chairperson, Board of Education Student Achievement Committee

FROM: 
Kathryn S. Matayoshi
Superintendent

SUBJECT: **V. B. Committee Action on Board Policy 305.3, Safe Schools,
Including Consideration of Issues Regarding School Resource
Officers**

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Department recommends that it continue gathering and analyzing school and community feedback on School Resource Officer (SRO) provisions, and the Department provide a recommendation for action at the November 2015 Student Achievement Committee meeting.

2. RECOMMENDED EFFECTIVE DATE

Immediately

3. RECOMMENDED COMPLIANCE DATE (if different from the effective date)

N/A

4. DISCUSSION (if different from the effective date)

a. Conditions leading to the recommendation

Through the SRO program, schools partner with local law enforcement to assign officers to schools as school-based resources. Twelve secondary schools on the Neighbor Islands currently have SROs assigned to their schools, and the Department has agreements with each of the respective

counties regarding the arrangements. The SROs establish positive relationships with students, families, and school administrators, support positive student behavior, and support school safety. Principals are very supportive of the program. Many have stated that SROs are a positive presence on campus, help streamline work for administrators, and engage in constructive community engagement work on campus. In addition, principals have indicated that SROs have provided law-related guidance and counseling for students and that their visibility is a helpful preventative measure. Many principals have indicated that their SROs help contribute to a positive school climate.

The Department has been gathering feedback from school-level administrators who have SROs on their campuses to inform the Department's recommendation to provide clarity of roles and expectations in order to advance student safety and school climate, including protection of student rights and positive relationships between schools and law enforcement.

Initially, the Board's Permitted Interaction Group recommended SROs be included as part of draft Policy 101.7, School Climate and Discipline. Initial feedback indicated that draft language pertaining to SROs did not allow principals and complex area superintendents the discretion to best meet the safety needs of their students. Additionally, the administrator and community feedback suggested that the draft policy language could create confusion and conflict with existing agreements with county police departments and provisions of the Hawaii Administrative Rules.

At the direction of the Board on September 1, 2015 at the General Business Meeting, the Department identified revising Board Policy 305.3 about Safe Schools to include policy regarding SROs. Based on initial feedback from administrators, testimony about SROs in response to proposed Board Policy 101.7, and review of the existing Memorandum of Agreement between the Department and counties regarding current arrangements for SROs in our schools (currently 18 Neighbor Island secondary schools), the Department has been developing revised language to adequately address the safety and climate needs of schools.

- b. Previous action of the Board on the same or similar matter. The Board adopted Policy 305.3, Safe Schools on February 17, 2015.

Provisions relating to SROs were originally included in draft Board Policy No. 101.7. At the September 1, 2015, General Business Meeting, the Board approved Board Policy 101.7 while directing the Department to remove policy language regarding SROs from Board Policy 101.7 and place such language in another appropriate policy addressing related matters.

- c. Other policies affected

N/A

d. Arguments in support of the recommendation

The Department is in the process of collecting and analyzing feedback from administrators and community stakeholders on draft amendments to Board Policy 305.3, Safe Schools, to include SROs. The current draft (Exhibit A) is based on prior feedback, discussions with principals who have SROs at their schools, and review of current agreements.

Since there are current agreements in place and there are no current concerns identified about the SRO program, the Department requests additional time to finalize the recommendation for the policy proposal. Currently, the principals are responding to a Department request for feedback to the draft policy. Based on prior understanding about the timeline and the Department's deadline for feedback, the deadline for principals' feedback is October 15, 2015..

e. Arguments against the recommendation

N/A

f. Other agencies or departments of the State of Hawaii involved in the action

This policy affects counties that have partnerships with the Department for SROs. The current draft language (Exhibit A) is consistent with current agreements between the Department and the counties.

g. Possible reaction of the public, professional organizations, unions, DOE staff and/or others to the recommendation

The Department expects a positive response toward efforts to continue finalizing the policy recommendation based on feedback that has been solicited.

h. Educational implications

N/A

i. Personnel implications

N/A

j. Facilities implications

N/A

k. Financial implications

As it is currently presented, the policy will require regular evaluation of the SRO program. Depending upon the complexity and depth of an evaluation appropriate for the purpose, there may be additional cost to accommodate this evaluation requirement.

KSM:TOC:scn

Attachments: Safe Schools Policy 305.3- red line version (Exhibit A)

c: Office of Strategy, Innovation, and Performance

EXHIBIT A

**POLICY 305.3
SAFE SCHOOLS**

(RED LINE DRAFT 9/27/2015 – Includes Policy on School Resource Officers)

The Department shall establish procedures for ensuring the safety and security of students, employees and facilities in the event of threats to safety, including, but not limited to, bomb threats and demonstrations.

~~The use of school resource officers or other police presence on school campuses shall be primarily used for such purposes and in accordance with Policy 101.7.~~

The Department may enter into agreements with government entities to assign law enforcement officers to a school campus or campuses as school resource officers. Prior to any such assignment for an extended period of time, the Department and the appropriate entity representing the law enforcement officers shall establish a written agreement, approved by the Superintendent, defining the roles and responsibilities of the parties to the agreement and of the officers. The agreement shall affirm the principal's role as the administrative and operational head of the school campus and shall require appropriate orientation or training for the school resource officers. Furthermore, the Department shall ensure a regular evaluation of any school resource officer program.

Rationale: The Board of Education recognizes the benefits of school partnerships that involve law enforcement officers to facilitate school learning environments that are safe and have positive school climates.