
Minnesota's schools may use School Resource Officers (SROs) to provide safety services in schools but may not use them to discipline students for violating school policy. Both statutory requirements and contracts between law enforcement agencies and school districts or charter schools determine the role of individual SROs.

SROs are peace officers assigned and trained to work in schools.

Municipal police departments and sheriff's offices have long worked with school districts and charter schools to station peace officers at schools. These officers have most often been known as School Resource Officers, or sometimes School Liaison Officers. The role was first defined in statute in 2024, when the legislature enacted [Minnesota Statutes, section 626.8482](#). Under the new law, an SRO must be a licensed peace officer, and an officer only qualifies as an SRO if the officer is assigned to work in a school during the instructional day as one of the officer's regular duties. An SRO is not an employee or agent of a district or charter school.

Because SROs are licensed peace officers, they must comply with the Minnesota Peace Officers Standards and Training Board (POST Board) requirements in rule for all licensed peace officers ([Minn. Rules, part 6700.0700](#)). They are also subject to the same authorizations and limits on the use of force that apply to all officers. Thus, they can use force in some circumstances where school officials cannot use force, such as to make an arrest, and they are subject to prohibitions and limits on using holds that limit or impair a person's ability to breathe.

In addition to these standard requirements, SROs in schools after September 1, 2025, must complete a training course that covers 14 specific topics. The training must be approved by the POST Board and include de-escalation techniques for handling conflicts in schools, how to respond to persons experiencing a mental health crisis in a school setting, how to work with students with disabilities, information on juvenile brain development, and how to detect the exploitation of juveniles.

Local contracts and policies that meet state standards define the role of individual SROs.

State law requires that an officer's employer and the district or charter school where the officer will serve enter into a contract describing the role of the SRO.¹ The contract must include specific requirements and prohibitions. For example, contracts must include seven specific duties such as fostering a positive school climate, protecting students, serving as a liaison between law enforcement and the school, and helping to identify vulnerabilities in school facilities. The contract must also prohibit SROs from using force or their authority as officers to enforce school policies or rules or participating in the enforcement of discipline for violating school rules.

In addition to a contract, a law enforcement agency that places SROs in schools must have a policy that governs officer conduct. In November 2024, the POST Board adopted a model policy, and law enforcement agencies must adopt the model policy or one that is substantially similar by September 1,

¹ The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) also recommends schools and law enforcement agencies use a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to define SRO roles and responsibilities in schools.

2025. The model policy must provide guidance on the proper use of force on school grounds, including the use of de-escalation techniques and the duty to render aid to a person held or restrained by an SRO.

There is no official count of the number of public schools that have SROs.

Schools are not required to report when they choose to have SROs. A 2014 DPS survey, *Law Enforcement in Minnesota Schools: A Statewide Survey of School Resource Officers*, showed Minnesota had about 315 full- or part-time SROs who generally are assigned to two or more public schools. Since then, some districts have stopped using SROs while others have added them.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in the 2021-22 school year, about 45 percent of public schools across the nation reported having sworn law enforcement officers who routinely carried a firearm.² This percentage was higher for secondary schools than elementary or other schools, and schools in rural areas and towns than suburban areas and cities. The percentage was lower for schools where 76 percent or more of students were students of color than for schools with lower percentages of students of color.

Most funding for SROs is local, but the state pays for a free training program.

There are generally three ways to pay for an SRO: (1) the district pays the cost; (2) the law enforcement agency pays the cost; or (3) the district and law enforcement agency share the cost. Federal or state grants are sometimes available to districts or law enforcement agencies to pay the cost of SROs. A school district may use its general education revenue or safe schools levy to pay for school resource officers. A district also uses its general education revenue to pay for teachers and staff, instructional materials, and other operating costs. The safe schools levy under [Minnesota Statutes, section 126C.44](#), allows districts to levy a limited amount for many types of student and staff safety costs, including SRO costs. School violence prevention program providers under [Minnesota Statutes, section 145.958](#), may also develop initiatives with police liaison officers to reduce and prevent violence among at-risk youth.

The School Safety Center at the Department of Public Safety provides SRO training and works with schools on facility security assessments, emergency plan reviews, active shooter procedures, and other school safety issues. In 2019, the legislature increased funding for the School Safety Center to increase staffing from three to five full-time employees, and in 2024, the legislature created an ongoing appropriation of \$490,000 per year to further increase staffing and provide free training that meets the new requirements for SROs.

Districts may use other staff as an alternative to SROs.

Districts are not required to use SROs and some districts opt to use other types of staffing to provide security services, whether in conjunction with SROs or instead of SROs, or to shift funding to student support services. Some districts contract with or hire security guards, safety coaches, or public safety support specialists. The School Safety Center has provided training to district staff who are not peace officers but provide safety services. The training requirements and the authorization to use force in certain situations that apply to SROs do not apply to security guards or other staff that a district hires, contracts with, or assigns to perform those duties.



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² National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, "Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools," July 2019, <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2019/2019061.pdf>.