



## Pittsfield Charter Township

### Department of Public Safety

6227 West Michigan Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Phone: (734) 822-4911 • Fax: (734) 944-0744

Website: [www.pittsfield-mi.gov](http://www.pittsfield-mi.gov)

**Mandy Grewal, Supervisor**

**Matthew E. Harshberger**

*Director of Public Safety*

*Chief of Police*

[harshbergerm@pittsfield-mi.gov](mailto:harshbergerm@pittsfield-mi.gov)

(734) 822-4921

**Sean Gleason**

*Fire Chief*

[gleasons@pittsfield-mi.gov](mailto:gleasons@pittsfield-mi.gov)

(734) 822-4926

## MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** August 17, 2020

**TO:** Director Harshberger

**FROM:** Cpl./SRO Shawn Booth

**SUBJECT:** SRO Position

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Sir, I wanted to inform you as to what I see as the SRO and benefits of the position.

First and foremost, the SRO is at the school for the safety of students, staff and visitors and available to take immediate action if a threat arises. The SRO works hand-in-hand with the administrative staff to evaluate any and all threats to the school (threats may come in via social media, student tips, OK to Say (State tip), or Handle with Care).

A few examples of actual threat situations handled: A student who was exhibiting stalking (girlfriend) behavior at a movie theater with a gun, a student with a storage unit near school storing guns, a social media threat to shoot up the school, and a direct threat of violence to a staff member by a former student via social media.

The SRO is in the school to promote a positive relationship between the students and all police officers. This gives young people a chance to interact with the SRO on a positive note, making the students feel safe to talk, get advice, and help if needed. The SRO provides young people many resources needed that they may not get elsewhere.

A few examples of fostering positive relationships and providing assistance: Finding resources to get an underprivileged autistic student a team jacket to prevent him from being singled out. Another involves treating a student with respect during a disciplinary incident and reinforcing a message that when the incident ends, the next day is a new day and the student should feel safe and free to interact with police again. Another example is explaining to students after school discipline that the incident could have been a criminal matter and the potential criminal consequences that could have occurred. Lastly, coaching or public service announcements are provided when a frequent problem arises that needs addressed.

Approximately 80% of the criminal or civil complaints come directly from the administrative team contacting the SRO when they believe a crime has been committed and it is serious enough to warrant police involvement. The SRO does not typically “patrol” or seek out criminal activity within the school. Approximately 10% of criminal complaints come directly from students reporting crimes against themselves (theft or assault). Additionally, most of these incidents are brought to the administrator’s attention by students that will not tolerate that type of behavior at their school.

A few examples of criminal complaints handled include: Arrests of two large volume drug dealers (tip from student), vaping in/during class, students passing nude photos, and a student exploiting other students for sexual favors (tip from student). Student encounters of a criminal nature are kept discreet to respect the student’s privacy and encourage others to report similar incidents.

A large part of an SRO’s day is spent making contact with students and staff throughout the building on a daily basis to make them feel secure. Watching for students that appear left out and just saying “hi” or listening to them in a non-judgmental way is also an important role of an SRO. Also, speaking or presenting to various classes (special needs, psychology, and government) upon the request of the teaching staff is also typical for an SRO.

The SRO works best with a supportive administrative staff, with daily meetings to discuss current events and situations that may need addressed. This results in strong support of the school board and the trust/respect of the students. Saline Schools have shown that support and provide a good example of the positive benefits of an SRO position within the school system.

Respectfully submitted,

Cpl./SRO Shawn Booth