UNH Survey Finds Teachers and Students Give School Resource Officers High Marks

Erika Mantz

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.unh.edu/news

Recommended Citation
https://scholars.unh.edu/news/2525

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Administrative Offices at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Media Relations by an authorized administrator of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact nicole.hentz@unh.edu.
UNH Survey Finds Teachers and Students Give School Resource Officers High Marks

By Erika Mantz
UNH News Bureau
603-862-1460

June 19, 2001

For additional comment, call John T. Kirkpatrick, director of UNH's Justiceworks, (603) 862-1957 or John Humphrey at 336-854-4090.

DURHAM, N.H. -- The School Resource Officer Program in nine Granite State high schools has been a success, according to a recent survey of students and teachers by Justiceworks at the University of New Hampshire. The study, one of the first in the nation, measured changes in attitudes and behavior over the first two years in which an SRO was present.

The School Resource Officer Program, an outgrowth of Community Oriented Policing, places a police officer in the school. The officer acts in both a law enforcement capacity and as a source of support for students in need. Many SROs report that they often act in a social service role as well, referring students to other support staff when needed.

"Justiceworks prides itself on providing balanced evaluations of programs designed to address crime and delinquency," says John T. Kirkpatrick, director of Justiceworks. "We were fully prepared to report that the program did not work if that was indeed the case. What is most remarkable about the study's findings is the SRO's positive effects on the learning environment."

John A. Humphrey, the lead researcher on the project and a professor of sociology at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, indicated that students and teachers felt much safer and less afraid once the SRO was placed in the school. Moreover, teachers reported fewer drug sales on school grounds, less marijuana
smoking, less bullying, less gang activity and less disruptive behavior in the classroom.

"Another revealing finding," says Humphrey, "is that virtually none of the students who reported carrying weapons to school prior to the SRO placement said that they carried weapons to school two years later."

Teachers in the nine schools reported overwhelmingly favorable attitudes toward the SRO officer, even those who had reported negative feelings at the outset. Most teachers believed the SRO officer improved the learning environment and helped students stay out of trouble.

"As the study began, we knew that the SRO Program was controversial," says Kirkpatrick. "I have rarely seen, however, such attitudinal and behavioral changes produced by a single delinquency prevention program. It certainly merits greater attention from other schools around the state and nation.

The study was conducted by Justiceworks through a grant from the state Department of Justice.

Justiceworks is a University of New Hampshire-based consortium dedicated to providing balanced, non-partisan research on issues of crime and justice.

Back to UNH News Bureau