

SCHOOL SECURITY PERSONNEL TRAINING STANDARDS

Enacted in July of 2019, [Act 67](#) defines and delineates training requirements for School Resource Officers (SROs)¹, School Police Officers (SPOs)², and School Security Officers (SSOs)³. The legislation mandates that *"Prior to entering upon the duties of the office, [all school security personnel] shall successfully complete the Basic School Resource Officer Course of Instruction offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers [NASRO] or an equivalent course of instruction approved by the commission."*⁴

The following information provides an overview of the components of "an equivalent course of instruction" to be used in the formation of an alternate training option. For the purposes of this document, the term School Security Personnel (SSP) will be used to refer to SROs, SPOs, and SSOs unless specified otherwise.

The SSP Basic Course includes instruction in the following areas:

- School Law Enforcement
 - Differences in language and thought process between law enforcement and SSP
 - History of early SSP programs and their successes and failures
 - Elements of the SSP role in the context of school environments
 - The goals of SSP in the school, among the student body, and in the community
 - The importance and key elements of the SSP's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
 - Statutory responsibility, based on the SSP's role, for taking a student into custody on school grounds
- Ethics and the SSP
 - The importance and need for the SSP's high standard of ethics
 - Components of ethical behavior for SSP
 - Ethical considerations unique to the role of SSP
 - Relationships with students
 - Maintenance of appropriate boundaries
 - Communication and social media
 - Making appropriate referrals for students in need
 - The importance and need for discretion, foreseeability and flexibility in guiding ethical behavior
- The SSP in the School Setting
 - Law-Related Education (LRE) as it pertains to the SSP
 - Aspects of LRE
 - Connection with administration and other school personnel
 - The learning process, states of development and different kinds of learning styles
 - Effective presentation skills
 - Fundamentals of public speaking
 - Class management methods
- Understanding Special Needs Students
 - The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
 - Categories of disabilities and eligibility criteria

¹ [PA Public School Code of 1949, Section 1301-C \(Definitions\)](#)

² [PA Public School Code of 1949, Section 1301-C \(Definitions\)](#)

³ [PA Public School Code of 1949, Section 1301-C \(Definitions\)](#)

⁴ [PA Public School Code of 1949, Section 1313-C \(a.1\)\(1\)](#)

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- Requirements for educating individuals with disabilities
 - Individualized Educational Program (IEP) components
 - Parental involvement
 - Communication considerations
- The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and other legal restrictions
- Disciplinary considerations
 - Behavioral expectations and challenges
 - Alternative methods of discipline
- The SSP as a Role Model/Mentor
 - The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
 - Exceptions
 - Implications for the SSP
 - Communication and interactions strategies to foster relationships with students
 - Identifying student behavior that merits referral to community or professional services
 - Utilizing the Student Assistant Program (SAP) and other school-based programs
 - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
 - Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)
 - Connection with the Threat Assessment Team
 - Community and professional resources
 - Creating and maintaining a safe, positive, pro-social learning environment as a prevention strategy
- Social Media and Cyber Safety
 - Various forms of social media and internet outlets
 - Impact of social media and the internet on students and the school environment
 - Malicious use of social media and the internet
 - Cyber-bullying, threats and abuse
 - Online sexual crimes, including sexting
 - Reporting abuse to law enforcement
 - Cyber safety strategies
- Understanding the Teen Brain
 - The difference between puberty and adolescence
 - The relationship between brain development/growth and reckless and impulsive behavior common to adolescence
 - The differences between the “Thinking Brain” and the “Feeling Brain”, and how each one drives adolescent behavior
 - Aspects and values of youth culture
 - Effective strategies for working with adolescents
- Violence and Victimization
 - The different types of stress and impact on the body
 - Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and how it might impact the work of the SSP
 - Youth behavior
 - communication
 - Strategies for working with traumatized and victimized youth
 - Types and signs of bullying behavior in the school environment and the virtual world, including the role of social media

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- Signs, risk factors and pro-social interventions regarding anti-social behavior
- Sex Trafficking and Human Trafficking of Youth
 - Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)
 - Vulnerable populations
 - Recruitment and control process of victims
 - Management mechanisms and identifiers
 - Innocence Lost National Initiative
 - Strategies and practices to approach and engage victims and fight human/sexual trafficking
 - Need for a victim-centered approach
- Effects of Youth Trends and Drugs on the School Culture and Environment
 - Impact of youth trends, including drug use, on the school environment
 - Strategies and tools for staying current on youth trends and drugs affecting the school environment
 - Categories of drugs popular among adolescents
 - Responding to drug overdose
- School Law
 - Topics and fundamental points of federal and state case law pertinent to juvenile rights and offending
 - Balancing an understanding of juvenile law with the potential for liability
- Developing Cultural Awareness and Diversity Sensitivity
 - The impact of culture and diversity on law enforcement and community relations
 - Awareness of potential biases and how it can affect the work of the SSP
 - Strategies to counter identified barriers and build/strengthen individual and community relationships
- Threat Response: Preventing Violence in School Settings
 - The threat assessment process at the school
 - Referral and collaboration with the school's Threat Assessment Team
- School Safety and Emergency Operations Plans
 - Effective proactive school safety measures
 - School Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
 - Factors
 - Protocols and responsibilities
 - Scenario responses
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
 - Concepts and principles
 - How to adapt the environmental design of the school to reduce crime
 - Identifying soft targets in the environment of the school
 - Utilizing target hardening methods in areas of vulnerability
- Practicum in the Study of Case Scenarios
 - Authority and responsibilities delineated in statute
 - Fundamental points of related case law