

Regular Board Meeting – January 17, 2012

SUBJECT: SRO UPDATE AND STUDENT WELFARE REPORT**PART I: SRO UPDATE****Overview**

For the past three years, we have participated in an intergovernmental agreement with the Village of Skokie under which we pay 67% of the costs of a School Resource Officer at Old Orchard Junior High. In our first year of the agreement, we shared the SRO position with Skokie School District 69, resulting in a half-time SRO at each of our respective schools. We wanted to continue this half-time arrangement, but in the second year, District 69 requested a full-time SRO, requiring us to either abandon the SRO position at Old Orchard Junior High or expand our position to full-time, as the Skokie Police Department could only provide officers to fill an SRO position on a full-time basis. For the past two years, we maintained a full-time SRO at Old Orchard Junior High.

In April, 2011, the Board of Education voted to eliminate the SRO position based on a careful review of limited incidents at the junior high which have required on-site police intervention along with our need to reduce overall district expenditures. In May, 2011, the Board approved the reinstatement of a half-time SRO after the Skokie Police Department agreed to provide a half-time SRO officer for us on a rotating two-day, three-day per week schedule. In addition, the Board agreed to evaluate the impact of the SRO on the safety of students and staff at Old Orchard Junior High during the 2011-2012 school year in order to determine SRO staffing needs in the future.

Behavior Management

The SRO is one component of Old Orchard Junior High's behavior management program. The foundation of our positive behavior management program is the 3R philosophy (Be Ready, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible). This philosophy has been incorporated throughout our school culture to help foster good citizenship within our community. Descriptive posters were created by staff and displayed around the school building to guide students in understanding appropriate behaviors in all areas of the school, i.e., classroom, hallway and cafeteria.

Another positive component of our program is the Bow Wow Card. Teachers write post cards and mail them to students' homes when the students have been observed demonstrating the 3 R's. Grade level teams also nominate students to receive Stand Out Student awards for demonstrating the 3 R's. Many classrooms have adopted the Bulldog Buck system. Students earn Bulldog Bucks and can then purchase school supplies and treats from their teachers as rewards. The staff works diligently to recognize, promote, and reinforce positive student behaviors.

At the start of the current school year, we added the CHAMPS model as a new component to our positive behavior management program. Some teachers have been trained in the CHAMPS model and are piloting the activities in their classrooms. The CHAMPS model focuses on changing teacher behaviors to improve student behavior. This model provides tools for teachers to change their personal behavior management style in their classrooms. Along with this model we are also utilizing our NTDSE Behavior Specialist to work with our staff to help us improve our understanding of how teacher affects student behaviors.

Problem-Solving

When teachers notice a trend in the inappropriate behavior of a student, they will bring those concerns to a grade-level, problem-solving meeting. This meeting is attended by the team of teachers, psychologist, social worker, and the Dean and/or Assistant Principal. Each team member shares their observations of and interactions with the student. Teachers who have found ways to help the student succeed in class share their methods and the team brainstorms a plan to help the student have more success in school. The team monitors and evaluates the plan on a regular basis. If it is determined that the plan is not working, the Team Leader will call another problem-solving team meeting.

If the student continues to struggle with appropriate behavior in school, the team will often implement a formalized Behavior Plan. Often the school will call upon the services of the NTDSE behavior specialist to guide the formulation of the plan, especially if the behaviors being targeted are not commonly seen by the team. The plan is created by the team and then presented to the student as a tool to be used for the close monitoring of specific behaviors throughout the school day. Each teacher that interacts with the student during the day will give the student a numeric score in the targeted area, based on a specific rubric. At the end of the day, the scores are totaled to indicate whether or not the student reached a pre-determined goal. There are often both daily and weekly goals established. If the goal is reached, the student is presented with a reward. This reward is often decided by the team, in concert with the student, in order to ensure the reward is something for which the student is willing to strive. We have seen tremendous success when using behavior plans to help students monitor their own behavior.

Consequences

Within the Old Orchard Junior High Student Handbook, the expectations of student conduct are clearly stated to ensure a safe and supportive educational environment. When a student's conduct violates one of the expectations within the student handbook, school consequences are necessary. The goal of any student consequence is for that student to have an opportunity to reflect on their behavior and develop the skills to come up with an alternative option the next time they are faced with a similar challenge. We may alter school consequences on an individualized basis to help students modify their behavior and learn from past experiences.

Teachers are able to have students serve detention time, which is usually forty minutes in length, before or after school. A detention can be issued for infractions such as excessive tardiness to class, violation of the hands-off policy, and inappropriate classroom or hallway behavior. If a student is issued a detention, they are given a detention form documenting the infraction and their parent is contacted via phone and/or email. Students are required to have the detention form signed by a parent and returned to school.

We have recently instituted a school-wide detention system. The school-wide detention system was created this school year so that students could serve their detention time during their lunch/study hall period. One major motivation for this change was the fact that many of our at-risk students receive some type of academic intervention and/or support before or after school. We did not want our at-risk students missing out on these interventions/supports in order to serve a consequence for inappropriate behavior. Students report to a supervised classroom where they are given a Behavior Modification Form, which is a form they complete to help them reflect and brainstorm solutions to the problem.

For infractions which require a more intensive consequence, the school may issue a suspension. Students are issued either an in-school or out-of-school suspension for a given amount of days, dependent upon the specifics of the particular incident. Within the student handbook, Gross

Disobedience/Misconduct is defined as “conduct, behavior, or activity as defined by the Board of Education in its policies, which cause or may reasonably lead school officials to foresee injury, disruption, or material interference with school activities, the rights of other students, or school personnel.”

Some examples of behaviors which would constitute an in-school suspension include: insubordination to school personnel, bullying/threatening type behavior, and any minor physical altercation. Out-of-school suspensions are reserved for incidents which are more severe and may require the student to experience a “cooling off” period before they are ready to re-enter the educational setting. Any use or possession of weapons, alcohol, or illegal substances would result in an out-of-school suspension. Other examples include severe cases of bullying/threatening behavior, and major physical altercations. Depending on the specifics of each incident coupled with any past disciplinary actions for the student, the administrative team collaborates to determine what type of consequence is appropriate.

If a student displays a pattern of gross misconduct/insubordination and the school has exhausted the supports and interventions available, the administrative team, in consultation with the Director of Special Services, meets with the parents to discuss a more restrictive or therapeutic placement. At times, alternative placements are necessary for students who display a chronic pattern of at-risk behavior. Additionally, a single, serious infraction may also trigger an alternative placement, especially if illegal activity is present.

Role of the SRO

The SRO serves a dual role in the school. The SRO establishes positive relationships with students and families and works to prevent misbehavior both in and out of the school setting. The SRO, in collaboration with administration, may also engage in direct police work in the school for serious disciplinary incidents. The SRO maintains an active presence in the hallways during passing periods, in the lunchroom, and at dismissal time. He also attends some after school and PTA-sponsored events. The SRO works closely with the Health Education teacher and often co-teaches topics related to substance abuse and other student safety concerns. To support our problem-solving efforts, the SRO meets weekly with the social workers and Dean and attends team meetings when needed. The SRO also works to establish community relations by making presentations at PTA meetings as well as individual meetings with parents to help resolve student conflicts.

We maintain a positive relationship with the Skokie Police Department and have developed a flexible schedule for the SRO. Currently, the SRO works half-day afternoons at Old Orchard Junior High. He arrives at noon and stays through dismissal time. For the first half of the 2011-2012 school year, he has been at our school 43 half-days and 17 full days. The Principal and SRO work together to create any needed schedule changes each month. The Principal is able to anticipate the need for extra support and work with the SRO to shift his schedule so that he can be present for a full-day at school as needed.

The following student incidents, to date, have been referred to the SRO in 2011-2012:

- 8 instances where the SRO participated in an official capacity as part of an investigation
- 1 instance of investigation in conjunction with DCFS regarding student safety
- 1 instance of transporting a student to the hospital due to safety concerns
- 2 incidents where altercations between our students occurred outside of school
- 1 incident where an altercation between our students occurred outside of school and the SRO led both a peer and parent mediation at the police station

Additionally, two typical consequences for students are issued by the SRO, in consultation with school administrators: the Youth Call or the Peer Jury. The following chart indicates the use of these consequences to date during the 2011-2012 school year:

Student	Suspension	# of Days	Infraction Subtype	SRO Involvement
1	OSS	10	Illegal Substance	Youth Call
2	OSS	8	Illegal Substance	Youth Call
3	OSS	2	Property Damage	Youth Call
4	OSS	2	Physical Altercation	Peer Jury
5	OSS	2	Physical Altercation	Peer Jury

The Youth Offender Court Call, or Youth Call, addresses juveniles and young adults that are first-time offenders ticketed for violating various Village Ordinances. The Village of Skokie is unique in that it has implemented a Youth Outreach Program that works in conjunction with the Youth Offender Court Call. The youth and parent/guardian must appear at the Court Call with a judge to discuss the offense with the offender and any remedies that will best serve the child, their family, and the community as a whole. Services that are provided as part of the determined remedy may include individual assessments, family assessments, psychiatric evaluations, alcohol/drug evaluations, tobacco education programs, anger management programs, fire safety/prevention programs, and violence prevention programs. The fees for these intervention programs are on a sliding scale to assist families.

The Youth Peer Jury Program is a positive, alternative program used to divert non-violent first-time youth offenders from formal court action. Juvenile Officers take a more positive approach in challenging teen offenders to be held accountable for their actions. Additionally, offenders can avoid formal court convictions by choosing to participate in a teen court process and agreeing to comply with a sentence imposed by a jury of their peers. The purpose of the Peer Jury is not to determine the offender's guilt or innocence. The offender must admit guilt before he/she is allowed to appear before the Peer Jury. The Peer Jury's purpose is to provide a means for the young offender to account for his/her behavior to a group of his/her peers. Peer Jurors attempt to determine why the offender did what he/she did and how the offender can be helped to see that what he/she did was wrong. Peer jurors are student volunteers from the community who represent diverse backgrounds and different age groups. The jurors are trained in juvenile law and communication skills. The jury will deliberate on an appropriate community service punishment, based on the severity of the charges and the attitude of the offender.

Conclusion

After reviewing this year's data, we can confirm that we have limited incidents which have required on-site police intervention. We compared the August-January period from the 2010-2011 school year to the current school year. Last year, during the August-January period, there were 8 Youth Call citations and 7 Peer Jury citations. We have significantly less incidents to date this year that have required police intervention. Each year the complexity of the student body changes, which makes it difficult to determine whether the presence of the SRO actually deters inappropriate behaviors. However, the SRO is a valuable resource for Old Orchard Junior High. Due to the flexibility we have to schedule a part-time SRO, we anticipate maintaining the current allocation for the foreseeable future.

PART II: STUDENT WELFARE REPORT

Overview

District 68 provides various social/emotional supports to students based on individualized special education plans or to general education students based on their individual and/or group needs. There are five full-time social workers in District 68; one at each elementary school and two at Old Orchard Junior High School. Students can be referred for social work services by their classroom teacher, a parent and/or a private provider, or as an outcome of a special education evaluation. Our social workers work in teams with our school psychologists, speech pathologists, and general education staff. The expertise they bring to the school setting enriches supports for all students across school environments.

School Social Work Services

School social workers address a wide array of developmental issues. Our pre-school students are developing a sense of self while learning limits and boundaries. Elementary-aged students are continuing to expand their social interaction skills and individual/group social skills. Junior High students are seeking more autonomy while needing support to problem-solve peer issues. Common topics addressed by school social workers include specific social interaction skills, problem-solving strategies, managing anxiety, dealing with family stressors, and eating disorders.

If a student were to make either verbal or written statements suggesting harm to themselves or others, social workers complete a risk assessment to check for immediate, real-time safety and parents are called. If the risk assessment indicates immediate risk is present, a medical and psychiatric evaluation is warranted and the student is transported to an emergency room. Sometimes statements are made by students regarding incidents at home that have put the student at risk. By law, each District 68 staff member is a mandated reporter and in these cases a phone call to the Illinois Department for Children and Family Services (DCFS) is required. Occasionally, risky or dangerous behaviors paired with poor performance across school settings result in a special education evaluation.

Social work services are typically provided to students in small groups although individual services may be warranted for short periods of time. The number of students in each social work group varies depending on the age of the student, the issue(s) being addressed, and the daily school schedule. Initial services may involve checking in with individual students first thing in the morning before classes start. More involved services may include a lunch recess group to focus on initiating and sustaining friendships or generalizing strategies for conflict resolution outside of the classroom. When long-term, intense therapeutic services are required by a student, the family is referred for community-based services. Agencies or personnel that provide private services are posted on our social workers' blogs for ease of access. In addition, when a special education student requires a more intense therapeutic program to address their social/emotional needs, families are assisted through the process to secure the therapeutic placement.

The following charts indicate the level of direct service being provided during the current school year:

Special Education Students Receiving Social Work Services

	Early Childhood	Highland	Devonshire	Stenson	Old Orchard
Preschool	7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Kdg	n/a	3	0	0	n/a
1st	n/a	1	2	2	n/a
2nd	n/a	3	5	6	n/a
3rd	n/a	0	7	5	n/a
4th	n/a	2	2	6	n/a
5th	n/a	5	4	4	n/a
6th	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	13
7th	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	17
8th	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	17
Totals	7	14	20	23	47

General Education Students Receiving Social Work Services

	Early Childhood	Highland	Devonshire	Stenson	Old Orchard
Preschool	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Kdg	n/a	3	1	2	n/a
1st	n/a	4	3	2	n/a
2nd	n/a	4	4	6	n/a
3rd	n/a	12	2	3	n/a
4th	n/a	4	0	11	n/a
5th	n/a	2	7	3	n/a
6th	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	15
7th	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10
8th	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	16
Totals	0	29	17	27	41

Additional Student Welfare Supports

Our social workers also oversee and deliver the *Second Step* program at the K-6 grade levels. *Second Step* is a research-based, social skills program designed for presentation to groups of general education students. The aim of *Second Step* is to increase student’s school success and decrease problem behaviors by promoting social-emotional competence and self-regulation. Topics for younger students focus on learning basic school behaviors and listening skills. The elementary schools have access to lessons by grade level including such topics as: a) Identifying feelings; b) Managing emotions; c) Solving problems; and d) Getting along with others.

Junior High lessons specifically aim to prevent or reduce aggression, violence, and substance abuse by promoting positive attitudes and social and problem-solving skills that are linked to interpersonal and academic success. At Old Orchard Junior High, the program is offered during the 6th grade daily Activity period. Lesson topics include: a) Empathy and communication; b) Bullying prevention; c) Emotion management; d) Problem-solving; and e) Substance abuse prevention.

Social workers and school psychologists work closely together as their roles frequently overlap. Additionally, our special service personnel meet monthly to focus on a variety of school-based interventions and to share resources and information from township social work and school psychologist meetings. Frequently, the social worker and the school psychologist will collaborate to assist the teacher with completing a Functional Behavior Assessment and a Behavior Intervention Plan for individual students. This involves taking baseline data on interfering behaviors, prioritizing responses to those behaviors, and selecting replacement behaviors for the student. A behavior plan may be created for a general education student; however, it is most commonly integrated with a special education Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Once implemented, monitoring the student's response to the intervention plan with data continues over time. In addition, the Niles Township District for Special Education (NTDSE) Behavior Specialist can be utilized for more intense behaviors which chronically disrupt learning. The Behavior Specialist assists the team with developing, implementing, and monitoring more behavior plans.

Special service personnel maintain their expertise with the wide range of social/emotional issues that present in schools through frequent professional development activities. Our faculty has access to trainings out of district and within the township. In addition, District 68 trainings have been provided to address our unique need. Recently, Dr. Scott Sandage, Pediatric and Adolescent Psychiatrist, provided training on medications for various mental health disorders; Ms. Angel Knoverek, social worker from *The National Child Traumatic Stress Network*, provided training on the impact of trauma on students; and training was provided by Jac McBride, the district's Director of Special Services, on new policies and procedures to address ADHD in the school setting.

Conclusion

The Special Services Department is an integral component of the district's educational program. Its members work to ensure that students are productive and successful across all aspects of the school environment. Special service personnel work collaboratively with their professional colleagues in the district and throughout the township, with parents, and with community-based agencies to provide social/emotional support to students.