SRO Performance Evaluation: A Guide to Getting Results

July 27th, 2006
Research Purpose: Innovation in Action

- Implement a innovative process whereby schools and police departments create and use outcome-oriented performance evaluation
- Learn whether SROs and others involved perceive the outcome measures as reflective of expectations for SROs
- Draw tentative conclusions about the utility of the process for other law enforcement agencies and schools
Context and Conceptual Framework

- COPS funding dramatically increased number of SROs in U.S. schools
- SROs expected to implement CP in schools
  - Liaison to community resources
  - Problem solving
  - Law enforcement/safety specialist
- Explore how to use performance evaluation to support new expectations of officers
Research Questions

- How does the process work?
- Is it feasible to implement?
- Is the process a workable alternative for SROs to traditional performance evaluation?
Guiding Principles

- Holding SROs accountable for results rather than activities leads to more effective policing.

- SROs have different objectives and functions than patrol officers and so should be evaluated differently.

- Involving customers in setting goals allows SROs to understand and better satisfy expectations of the customers.
So What is this Process?

- Engage customers in establishing expectations (outcome-oriented) for SRO
- Identify activities which would lead to outcomes
- Collect baseline data
- Implement and track activities
- Conduct supervisor/SRO meetings
- Collect follow-up data
- Report back to customers and reflect
- (Integrate into performance structure)
Research Demonstration Sites

- Boise, ID
- Naperville, IL
- Port St. Lucie, FL
- Rochester, NY
- St. Lucie County, FL
## Site Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National Average</th>
<th>Naperville, IL</th>
<th>Boise, ID</th>
<th>Rochester, NY</th>
<th>Port St. Lucie, FL</th>
<th>Fort Pierce, FL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent Crimes/100,000</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>2,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crimes/100,000</td>
<td>3,618</td>
<td>1,746</td>
<td>4,414</td>
<td>6,983</td>
<td>2,547</td>
<td>8,497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$41,994</td>
<td>$88,771</td>
<td>$42,434</td>
<td>$27,123</td>
<td>$40,509</td>
<td>$25,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 Population</td>
<td>128,358</td>
<td>185,787</td>
<td>219,773</td>
<td>88,769</td>
<td>37,516</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School District Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indian Prairie (Naperville, IL)</th>
<th>Boise, ID</th>
<th>Rochester City, NY</th>
<th>St. Lucie County, FL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schools (02/03)</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
<td>25,795</td>
<td>26,266</td>
<td>35,659</td>
<td>31,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student/Teacher Ratio</strong></td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Children in Poverty</strong></td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 01/02 Expenditures</strong></td>
<td>$148,398</td>
<td>$177,704</td>
<td>$438,002</td>
<td>$179,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditure per Student</strong></td>
<td>$6,404</td>
<td>$6,681</td>
<td>$12,068</td>
<td>$6,064</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methods

Phase 1: Logistics
- Cultivate sites
- Literature review
- Orientation meeting and school site selection
- Establish website communication tool

Phase 2: Decision
- Focus group 1
- Data collection and analysis
- Focus group 2
- Baseline data collection

Phase 3: Action
- SRO implementation, activity tracking, & SRO/Supervisor interviews

Phase 4: Results
- Follow-up data collection
- Interviews, SRO shadowing, final focus group

Phase 5: Reflection
- Final meeting of sites
Collaboration: Local Teams

- SRO(s)
- School administrator(s)
- SRO supervisor
- Union representative
- Students
- Other school personnel
- Other police personnel
- Parents
- Local business or neighborhood representatives
- Others (school board personnel, youth gang coordinators, juvenile probation, city administrators)
SRO Expectations/Outcomes Identified

- Reduce fights (4/6)
- Reduce bullying (3/6)
- Reduce gang problems (3/6)
- Improve/maintain trust, rapport or collaboration between SRO & students/school personnel (3/6)
- Improve student/staff/community understanding of SRO role (2/6)
- Reduce drug related incidents (2/6)
- Increase student awareness of drug use consequences (2/6)
- Reduce weapons, truancy, thefts, sexual behavior at school, neighborhood offenses by students, and repeat offending. Increase student reports of serious offenses & increasing role of SRO in crisis planning. (1/6)
Recommended Activities

- Mentor/counsel students
- Classroom or faculty presentations
- Parent conferences
- Increase visibility (patrol, cafeteria, e-mails)
- Create info materials
- Participate in faculty committees/mtgs
- Programs (Crime Stoppers, Police Explorers, peer mediation, conflict resolution, GREAT, bullying prevention)
- Participate in extracurricular activities
- Creating student good behavior incentive initiatives
- Keep office hours
- Problem solving projects
- Monitor cameras
Data Sources

- School data (incident, referral, suspension, attendance, disciplinary)
- Police data (calls for service, crime reports, arrest reports)
- SRO activity log
- Student, school staff, and parent surveys
- Observation of SRO/Supervisor Meetings
- Observations of SROs
Some Baseline Data Findings Found Across Sites

- Students feel safe at school
- At least 30% of students know at least 1 SRO at their school
- Student interaction w/SROs varied widely from daily to never
- Students reported being at least moderately comfortable seeking help from SROs
- Students reported being somewhat comfortable reporting a school crime to an SRO
- Less than 11% of students surveyed were involved in fights at school
- Students reported that they perceived gangs as an occasional problem
Baseline Data Substantiated Customers’ Concerns

- 10% of students surveyed reported belonging to a gang.
- 30% of students surveyed reported being threatened by another student.
- Nearly a quarter of students surveyed reported that another student had exposed himself/herself to the student while on campus.
- 29% of students surveyed reported that when they were bullied at school and they did not report it to school authorities.
Promising Results at Some Schools, Although Not Conclusive

- Disorderly conduct referrals decreased 40%
- Police crime reports for assault or battery involving students on campus decreased 47%
- Crime reports for simple assault on campus decreased 29% while school pop decreased 9%
- 55% of students reported learning something new about how to handle bullying
- The proportion of students reporting having never witnessed a gang fight during the school year increased from 16% to 40%
Most Successful Outcomes

- Maintaining high levels of trust/rapport/collaboration between SRO and students/staff
- Improving student understanding of SRO role
- Raising student awareness of consequences of drug use/sales
- Reducing neighborhood offenses by students during school hours
- Reducing inappropriate sexual behaviors on campus
- Strengthening SRO role in crisis planning
General Findings Learned Along the Way

- The SROs we worked with desired different benchmark than patrol counterparts
- SROs in these agencies do not routinely receive training or orientation to the job
- Customers enjoyed being a part of the process & appreciated having a voice
- Everyone involved came to better understand the SRO role
- SRO supervisors generally did not know what the SROs do—but process helped enlighten them
Reflecting on the Process

- Need vocal support from law enforcement & school execs
- Works best when there is collaboration between school & law enforcement agency
- Need a motivated leader to coordinate project
- Customers must be direct stakeholders at school
- Number & composition of people in focus groups is critical to creating appropriate outcome goals
- Easy to set too many priorities to be effective—3 or 4 at most is preferable
- Setting priorities too broadly or ambitiously for timeframe is a problem
Reflecting on the Process Continued…

- Must have access to school and law enforcement data and be able to conduct analyses
- Tracking activities is time consuming and burdensome for SROs
- Staff turnover makes the process more difficult
- Communication w/customers at 3 focus groups is insufficient—need some intermediate and informal communication as well.
- Outcome measures overlooked “small successes.” At school, anecdotal or individual assistance is valuable, in addition to changing a negative crime trend
Perspectives on the Process

SROs

- Liked customer involvement—knowing expectations, partnering w/them
- Using data and statistics grounded everyone and got them on the same page
- Liked being evaluated by people work w/daily, rather than supervisor who doesn’t know what SRO really does
- Project provided direction and clearly delineated the priorities and expected activities. SROs valued the clarity of this mission.
- Resulting measures, generally were reflective of SRO role
Perspectives on the Process

SRO Supervisors

- Realized importance of an evaluation system that “means something” & is grounded in needs of school community & SRO role
- Supervisors benefited from activity reports—learning more about what SROs do & specific accomplishments
- Process helps inform future SRO recruitment decisions b/c better understand necessary qualifications
Perspectives on the Process

School Administration

- Statistics revealed safety issues that had been overlooked
- Process is strategic approach to using statistics to help inform & make decisions about how SRO to spend his/her time
- Valued opportunity to provide input on SRO priorities, activities, & performance evaluation
- Clarified role of SRO
- Improved working relations between SRO & SA
Revisiting the Research Questions

- How does the process work? YES
- Is it feasible to implement? YES
- Is the process a workable alternative to traditional performance evaluation? YES
- This leads to the policy question: can outcomes be used instead of activities for SRO performance evaluation? MAYBE
Things to consider when moving forward

- Is your organization ready to implement an outcome oriented performance system?
- Is your organization ready to use an outcome oriented performance system to coach and mentor to change behavior?
- Can your organization use evaluation to make personnel decisions.
Future Research and Technical Assistance

- Continue to replicate and study the process
- Better understand the uses of performance evaluations in law enforcement organizations
- Develop assessment tools that can be used in addition to the law enforcement evaluation to allow for the unique SRO role.
- Consider implementing this model for similar specialized units in the department.
For Technical Assistance

- For free assistance in implementing a similar process, or components of this process, please contact:
  
  Josh Brownstein
  703.738.4913
  jbrownstein@circlesolutions.com
For Further Information

CD-ROM available at [www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov) or 800-421-6770 DOJ Response Center

Thanks!