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

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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

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Research Questions

- How does the process work?

- Is it feasible to implement?

- Is the process a workable alternative for SROs to traditional performance evaluation?

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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

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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)

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Research Demonstration Sites

- Boise, ID

- Naperville, IL

- Port St. Lucie, FL

- Rochester, NY

- St. Lucie County, FL

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Site Demographics

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

School District Demographics

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

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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

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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)

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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)

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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

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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

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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

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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.

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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%

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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

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General Findings Learned Along the Way

- The SROs we worked w/ 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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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.

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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:

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For Further Information

CD-ROM available at www.cops.usdoj.gov
or 800-421-6770 DOJ Response Center
Includes final report, companion document:
SRO Performance Evaluation: A Guide to Getting Results, and relevant supplemental materials.

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Thanks!