

Bethlehem Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative



SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

Advisory Committee December 17, 2020

Sergeant Michael Whiteley
(DARE Officer and Bethlehem Central Middle School SRO 2006-2019)

Which school districts work with the Bethlehem Police Dept?

Bethlehem Central

- Has partnered with our Police Dept for more than 20 years
- 1989 – Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) started
- 1996 – School Resource Officers (SROs) assigned to middle and high schools

Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk

- DARE classes were provided at same time as Bethlehem Central
- SROs are provided by Albany County Sheriff's Dept

Guilderland

- DARE and SROs provided by Guilderland Police Dept

What is D.A.R.E.?

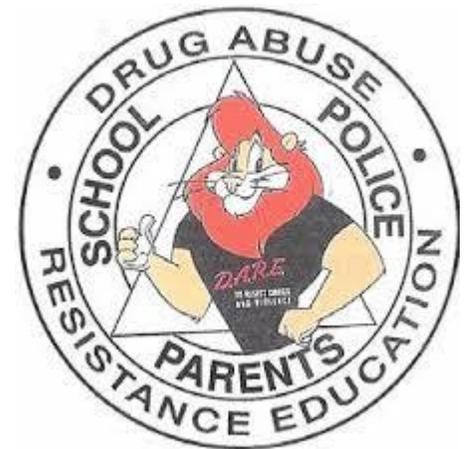
Drug Abuse Resistance Education

10 – 45 minute lessons presented to 5th graders at:

- all 5 Bethlehem Central elementary schools
- AW Becker Elementary
- St Thomas the Apostle School

Uses interactive lessons and stories give kids tools for making smart decisions

- Program has evolved from telling children to say no to drugs to giving them the tools and knowledge so they will want to say no on their own choice



Do School Resource Officers receive special training?

- D.A.R.E. instructor certification
- Basic and Advanced SRO certification
- Juvenile Officer & Advanced Juvenile Officer certification
- Further certifications available:
 - School violence and safety
 - Child physical and sexual abuse investigations
 - School and police partnership
 - Diffuse and manage problem students and confrontational parents
 - Diversity training
 - Domestic violence awareness
 - Policing the teen brain
 - School safety planning
 - Social networking
 - Youth violence reduction
 - Interview and interrogation adult / juvenile
 - Disability awareness training for law enforcement
 - Prescription drug abuse

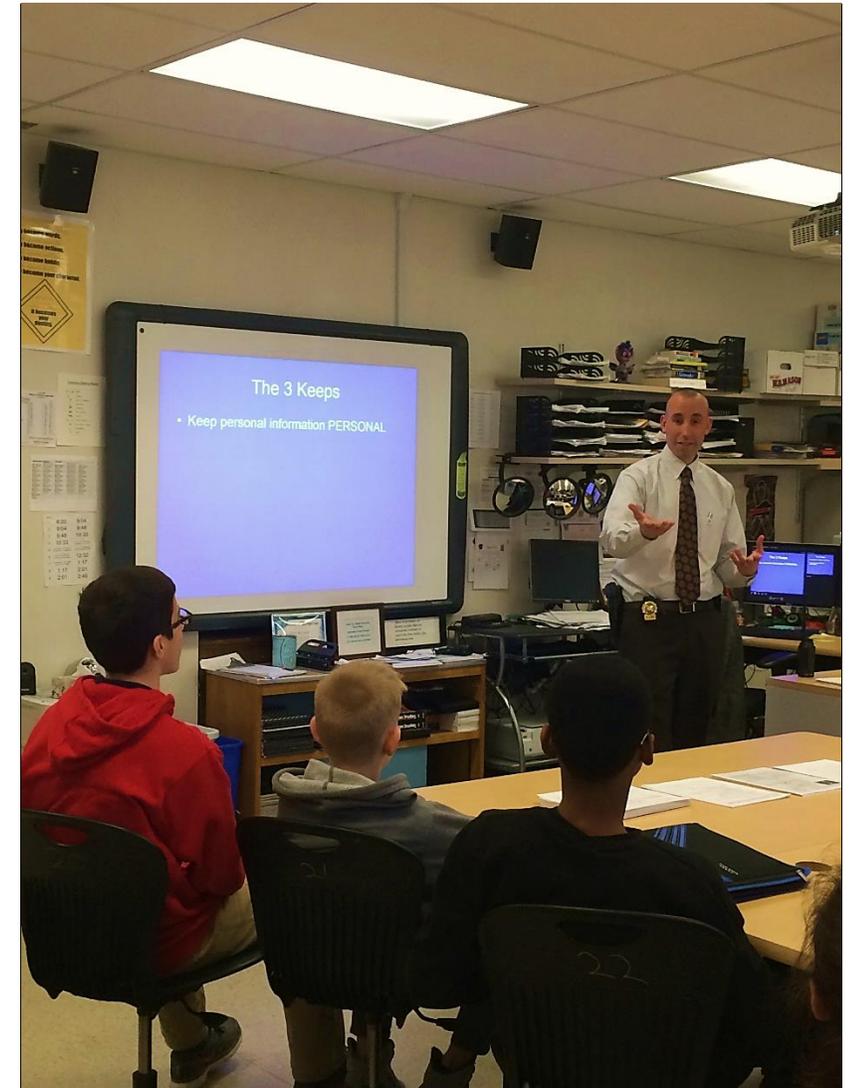
SROs are resources for students, parents, & staff

Are NOT involved in school discipline

- The school administration only brings in an SRO when a crime is alleged (e.g., drug possession, weapons possession, child pornography, sexual misconduct, etc.)
- SRO's do not patrol halls looking for legal violations. We walk the halls to ensure that doors are locked and that the educational environment is safe for learning.

Are sworn police officers

- SROs wear business attire, D.A.R.E. officers wear patrol uniforms
- NYS Law and BPD general orders require all officers to possess the necessary equipment to protect and serve the public at all times, which includes sidearms



What are the roles of SROs?

Resource for Students

- Opportunity for students to see and interact with a Police Officer as a person, not just as a uniform who only arrests people
- A trusted adult who students can safely talk to about problems at home or in the community
- A role model of good citizenship
- A member of the school community who shares real life knowledge and experiences on a variety of topics in classroom presentations

What are the roles of SROs?

Resource for Parents

- A discreet and accessible person who they can talk to about issues at home
- Crime prevention professional who can help parents redirect children away from illegal activities

Resource for School Staff

- Information resource regarding incidents occurring in the community
- Ability to handle crisis incidents on school grounds
- More knowledgeable member of the building safety team
- Classroom presenter
- Support for counselors working with families off school grounds

Summary of SROs

Expert in Juvenile Justice System

- Person In Need of Supervision
- Bethlehem Youth Court / Probation / Albany County Family Court
- Youth Part Court
- Resource for Students, Parents, and School Staff

Thank You!

