

**City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2022 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers**

April 30, 2021

Question: Please provide a response to the follow up questions from City Council regarding the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program in the April 27, 2021 preliminary add/delete worksession. *(In the interest of keeping all of the responses together, the specific questions asked are listed below)*

Question 1: If the SRO program is not funded, what would happen to the current six officers who fill these SRO positions:

The SRO program is funded (\$789,909 in salaries and benefits) in the APD budget and the resources currently in the proposed budget are primarily for six (6) total FTEs. This includes one sergeant position and five (5) officer positions. The funds proposed in the budget are principally the resources required to fund these 6 FTEs. Moving the funds to other areas of the budget will eliminate these FTEs within the APD, but not the officers in those positions. APD currently has an authorized strength of 311 uniformed personnel and removing these six will reduce the authorized staffing of the Department to 305.

Should this budget decision be made, the individuals assigned to these FTEs would not be terminated but would be assigned to other vacant positions that either already exist or may become open during the course of FY 2022. With an authorized strength of 305 officers, and with the number of positions that usually come open during the year because of retirements or officers leaving City employment for other reasons, these six personnel will be able to be absorbed during the course of the fiscal year. Temporary reassignment to a civilian opening is also a possibility.

Question 2: How many criminal and administrative cases are the SROs involved in at the schools?

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which was created in 2018 clarified the SROs would not be used to enforce administrative actions at the schools. The subsequent MOU offers even more clarification regarding SRO involvement in such actions. Since these changes were made, the SROs have been involved in no administrative actions.

The SROs have been tasked with investigating criminal matters at the schools. The attached report is a breakdown of these cases during the 2019-2020 school year that APD created an incident report for which will give you some understanding of the type of reported criminal activity. There is also a breakdown of SRO arrests by school which also illustrates the adjudication of the arrest. Interestingly, only adults have been arrested by SROs. There is no current information for this current school year as the schools have virtually learning for most of it and the SROs were not at their school assignments.

Attachment: ACPS SRO Arrests Data

Question 3: What is involved in SRO training?

Commonwealth law/regulations and the MOU with the ACPS require that SROs receive specialized training approved by the Commonwealth's Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). This training is focused on the SROs specific role and how to work within the school setting. The SROs receive specific training such as Students with Disabilities & Mental Health needs, Juvenile Intake Diversion, School Active Attack Program and Mediation and Conflict Resolution. A copy of the course syllabus is attached.

It should be noted that all APD officers receive training in laws and practices in dealing with juveniles as part of their basic academy training using a curriculum approved by DCJS as well. However, this training does not address the nuances of working within a school setting.

Question 4: Are one or more of the six SROs necessary to implement the proposed increased Community Policing activities and presence in North Old Town (i.e., west of Washington Street and north of Oronoco Street including areas sometimes referred to as Old Town West and Braddock West) and in Arlandria/Chiriluaga?

No. The Police Department has already planned for those initiatives utilizing existing APD personnel. During the work session discussion of SROs, Chief Brown outlined a community engagement plan which APD was moving forward with to address community concerns. The issue of North Old Town and Arlandria/Chiriluaga got mixed in with the issue of how the SRO funding might be redirected. This is a product of the ongoing discussions at re-imagining policing and, specifically, APD's community policing efforts. The discussion of this community policing effort as an option was noted in the response to Budget Question #2 some time ago in response to how the SRO FTEs could be used if they were redirected within the department. While Community Policing could be expanded further than what exists and what is planned in the two cited neighborhoods, the City Manager is not requesting additional Community Policing positions at this time be added to the FY22 operating budget.