

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5052

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As of February 5, 2019

**Title:** An act relating to school resource officers to increase school safety.

**Brief Description:** Concerning school resource officers.

**Sponsors:** Senators O'Ban, Fortunato, Wilson, C. and Wagoner.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/30/19.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Defines school resource officer (SRO).
- Directs the Criminal Justice Training Commission, in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, to develop training for SROs.
- Requires school districts that have a SRO program to adopt an agreement with the employing police department or sheriff's office at a public meeting.
- Establishes a grant program to fund SROs.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Ailey Kato (786-7434)

**Background:** School Resource Officer. Current state law does not define SRO. The School Safety Center within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) defines a SRO as a commissioned law enforcement officer in the state of Washington with sworn authority to make arrests, deployed in community-oriented policing, and assigned by the employing police department or sheriff's office to work in school to address crime and disorder problems, gangs, and drug activities affecting or occurring in or around elementary or secondary schools. SRO funding can come solely from the school district or law enforcement agency, or from a combined funding source.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Mass Shootings Work Group. This work group was created in the 2018 supplemental operating budget and was staffed by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC). The work group was tasked with developing strategies for identification and intervention against potential perpetrators of mass shootings, with an emphasis on school safety, and recommendations for prevention.

The work group adopted 25 recommendations. Six of these recommendations addressed SROs. The recommendations were unanimously adopted except for the recommendation that funding should be made available for additional SROs in K-12 schools.

Criminal Justice Training Commission. The purpose of this state commission is to provide programs and standards for training criminal justice personnel.

**Summary of Bill:** SRO Definition. SRO means a commissioned law enforcement officer in the state of Washington with sworn authority to make arrests, deployed in community-oriented policing, and assigned by the employing police department or sheriff's office to work in schools to address crime and disorder problems, gangs, and drug activities affecting or occurring in or around K-12 schools. SROs should focus on keeping students out of the criminal justice system when possible and should not be used to attempt to impose criminal sanctions.

SRO Training. By December 31, 2019, the Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC), in collaboration with OSPI's School Safety Center, must develop training for SROs. The training curriculum must be based on best practices and include information about implicit bias and interacting with students with disabilities. CJTC must make the training available to all SROs. CJTC may charge a reasonable fee to defer the cost of making the training available.

SRO Agreements. By December 31, 2019, WASPC, in collaboration with the Washington State School Directors' Association, must develop and publish a model agreement for SRO programs for use by school districts and law enforcement agencies. The model agreement must:

- state the program's purpose, the roles and responsibilities of school districts and law enforcement agencies, requirements for information sharing, and terms for supervision of the SRO; and
- require SRO to receive the training developed by CJTC.

After August 1, 2020, school districts that have a SRO program must adopt an agreement with the employing police department or sheriff's office, at a public meeting, that at a minimum incorporates the model agreement within 30 days of the start of any program.

SRO Grant Program. Subject to appropriations, WASPC must establish and implement a grant program to fund SROs. Grants must be awarded to proposals submitted jointly between local law enforcement agencies and public school entities. Grant applications must be reviewed using peer review panels. WASPC may prioritize grant applications that include local matching funds.

By December 1st of each year the program is funded, WASPC must submit an annual report that includes information on grant recipients, use of grant funds, and feedback from grant recipients. WASPC may solicit or accept private funds to support the program.

**Appropriation:** The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: SROs help make schools safe and can identify risks. Some school districts are not able to have a SRO within their current budgets. A grant program would make it possible for more schools to have a SRO. The decision to have a SRO should be made at the local level. School districts and SROs want a clear definition for this role. Training of SROs is important because this position is unique and their effectiveness comes down to their relationships with students. Additional funding should be spent on training.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Steve O'Ban, Prime Sponsor; Mona Johnson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Jeff DeVere, Washington Council of Police and Sheriffs; Jessica Vavrus, Washington State School Directors' Association; Lynnette Buffington, Washington Fraternal Order of Police; James McMahan, Washington Association Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.