De-escalation in the classroom

Deputy Daniel Sperry
Goals

• Reduce the number of school related arrest
• Reduce use of force by SRO
• If an arrest or force is needed create the strongest case possible
Objectives

• Students will have a knowledge of five steps used to engage in de-escalation conversation.
• Students will understand the difference in roles of administrator and SRO.
• Students will have an understanding of the difference between school rules and state statute.
Why de-escalate

• Want to avoid excessive use of force claims.
• Avoid bad media.
• Civil law suits.
• Maintain a positive relationship with students and SRO.
• Maintain a positive SRO/School relationship.
• Maintain a positive SRO/community relationship.
• Build strong cases incase force is used.
• Not get fired
Spring Valley High School
South Carolina
Case history

• Student is using a cell phone during class.
• Continues to use the phone after teacher requests she stop.
• Student is asked to leave the classroom.
• Student refuses to leave the classroom.
• Administration is called to the room.
• Student refuses to stop using cellphone and refuses to leave the classroom.
• SRO is called in to assist.
• SRO gives orders for the student to leave the classroom
• Student refuses
• SRO arrest student
• Student resist
• Teacher and school admin support SRO
• Principal is placed on administrative leave
• SRO is fired
In the News

- "I can't imagine any justification for treating a child like that in a classroom," Victoria Middleton, the head of South Carolina's ACLU chapter, told CNN's "New Day"

- “Officer slams a lot”

- "That's supposed to be somebody that's going to protect us. Not somebody that we need to be scared of, or afraid."

- "I've never seen anything so nasty looking, so sick to the point that you know, other students are turning away, don't know what to do, and are just scared for their lives,"
YRBS

• 5% of students did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school on at least 1 day during the last 30 days.

• What are we doing to make them feel safe?
School to Prison Pipeline

• The "school-to-prison pipeline" refers to the policies and practices that push our nation's schoolchildren, especially our most at-risk children, out of classrooms and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. This pipeline reflects the prioritization of incarceration over education.

• ACLU.org
The problem

• Failing Public Schools
• Inadequate resources in public schools
• Zero-Tolerance and other school discipline
• Overly harsh disciplinary policies push students down the pipeline and into the juvenile justice system.

• ACLU.org
Policing School Hallways

• Schools are placing increased reliance on police rather than teachers and administrators to maintain discipline.

• Growing numbers of districts employ school resource officers to patrol school hallways, often with little or no training in working with youth. As a result, children are far more likely to be subject to school-based arrests—the majority of which are for non-violent offenses, such as disruptive behavior—than they were a generation ago.

• ACLU.org
Judith A Brown “Derailed the Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track!”

• Written in 2003
• Used Data from 1995 and older from 2 Florida School Districts, Baltimore and Huston
•Acknowledged schools were following Federal Mandates to comply with school-safety laws
• 2008-2010 Baltimore had a decrease of 15.7% of Juvenile referrals
• 2010 Texas had a 8% decrease from 2009.
• NASRO.org
NASRO recommendation in MOU

• Require that all school resource officers (SROs) be carefully selected law enforcement officers who have received specialized SRO training in the use of police powers and authority in a school environment.

• Clearly define the roles of the SRO to include those of:
  • Law enforcement officer
  • Teacher
  • Informal counselor

• Prohibit SROs from becoming involved in formal school discipline situations that are the responsibility of school administrators.

• NASRO.org
YRBS

• 71% of students reported there is at least one teacher or other adult in their school they can talk to if they have a problem.

• What are you doing to make yourself approachable by students?
Law vs. School Policy
Reason for SRO involvement

• Why are you here?
• Has this student broken a law or is this a school discipline issue?
• If I have to use force what law has been broken?

• Is somebody in danger?
• Are they just disrupting a class?
Plan ahead

• Plan ahead for this event.
• Have discussion with school administration, counselor, and SRO?
• SRO’s what is your MOU for school discipline.
• Who’s job is it to provide and administer school discipline?
Build a strong case
What Idaho Laws were violated?
Governance of Schools 33-512(11)

- (11) To prohibit entrance to each schoolhouse or school grounds, to prohibit loitering in schoolhouses or on school grounds and to provide for the removal from each schoolhouse or school grounds of any individual or individuals who disrupt the educational processes or whose presence is detrimental to the morals, health, safety, academic learning or discipline of the pupils. A person who disrupts the educational process or whose presence is detrimental to the morals, health, safety, academic learning or discipline of the pupils or who loiters in schoolhouses or on school grounds, is guilty of a misdemeanor;
Disturbing the Peace
18-6409

18-6409. DISTURBING THE PEACE. (1) Every person who maliciously and willfully disturbs the peace or quiet of any neighborhood, family or person, by loud or unusual noise, or by tumultuous or offensive conduct, or by threatening, traducing, quarreling, challenging to fight or fighting, or fires any gun or pistol, or uses any vulgar, profane or indecent language within the presence or hearing of children, in a loud and boisterous manner, is guilty of a misdemeanor.
Analyze the Situation
What is going on right now

• What is going on now?
Factors to consider

• Mental illness
• Policy violation or law violation.
• Totality of the circumstance.
• Is there a physical threat to somebody?
Is this a power struggle
Who is in charge?

- Student?
- Teacher?
- Administrator?
- Who needs to save face?
Clearing the room changes the dynamic.
• Creates a command presence.
• Removes audience.
• Eliminates the need to “save face”.
• Provides a solid foundation for discipline or criminal charges.
5 steps to de-escalate

- Ask
- Ask for compliance, cooperation or collaboration
- Get them talking
- Give them the opportunity to state their side of the story
Set context

• Explain the rule or law
• Explain the reason for the rule or law
• Ask if they understand the rule or law
Present Options

• Present positive options
• Present negative options
• Allow room for them to “save face”
Confirm non-compliance

• Is there anything I can say to get you to...
Take action

- What are options for action?
- Call parents
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Criminal charges