

## **Armed School Security Officer (SSO) Frequently Asked Questions**

August 2019

### **Why is the Ellington Public Schools arming the School Security Officer (SSO)?**

The SSO carrying a firearm is one of many strategies the Ellington Public Schools employ to ensure the safety and security of students and staff. This is a preventative measure or deterrent and allows for a defensive safety action if necessary in a low probability high impact active shooter situation.

### **Is the School Security Officer (SSO) a police officer?**

No, the SSO is not a police officer. However, the SSO is required to be a retired law officer who is currently qualified to carry a firearm and to engage in ongoing training with the state police.

### **What are some of the qualifications for the SSO position?**

In addition to being a retired law officer and qualified to carry a firearm in the line of duty the SSO has other pertinent qualifications.

- Previous law enforcement or 5 years of relevant, practical experience in public safety/security required, and experience working in a K-12 school environment or with young adults ages 13 – 21 preferred.
- Strong background in behavior management and de-escalation techniques preferred.
- Demonstrated evidence of successful experience working with students preferred.
- Maintain pistol qualifications in accordance with State Police policies and procedures.
- Attend and participate, and if required, lead district and school based safety and security meetings.

### **What are some of the typical duties of the SSO?**

- Builds positive relationships with students, staff, and visitors to ensure safety and a productive learning environment.
- Monitors student behavior during and between assigned periods and at student events for the purpose of ensuring student compliance with established guidelines, maintaining a safe and positive learning environment, and securing a facility.
- Establish a visible and professional presence in school facilities and grounds to deter incidents and to detect situations requiring assistance.
- Responds to a variety of situations for the purpose of taking the appropriate action to resolve immediate safety and/or security concerns.
- Assist staff and first responders in handling emergency or disruptive situations.

**Where will the SSO be assigned?**

This position is already established at Ellington High School and will remain there for the foreseeable future.

**Will the SSO perform law enforcement or other investigative duties?**

No. The SSO is an established position which does not perform law enforcement duties. They may assist school investigations under direct supervision from school administrators.

**What training is required for the School Security Officer.**

The SSO is required to attend annual training with the State's certification authority law enforcement and armed SSOs. Further, the district, in collaboration with the local Resident Trooper's office, has required additional training and certification requirements for the SSO on an annual basis.

**Are School Resource Officers (police assigned to schools) and the SSO the only individuals allowed to carry a firearm in the schools?**

Yes, no other individuals are allowed to carry firearms on school grounds, excluding law enforcement agents as allowed by state statute.

**Is the school district interested in having teachers or administrators carry firearms?**

No, the school district has not discussed nor are there any plans to discuss the arming of school administrators or teachers. Moreover, Connecticut law does not allow for this to occur.