



Date: 09/01/2023
Nature of Incident: Suspension of School Resource Officer (SRO) Program with ISD# 742
Case #: N/A
Incident Date: 09/01/2023
Incident Time: 5:00 p.m.
Location: City of Saint Cloud
By: Chief Jeff Oxtan

Due to the recent legislative changes to Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.58 and 121A.582 regarding School Resources Officers (SROs) and other contracted Police Officers, the City of St. Cloud is indefinitely suspending the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) and other contracted Police Officer services with District 742. This JPA established the current SRO program and the contracting of St. Cloud Police Officers to work security at school related games/events. The suspension of the JPA will effectively eliminate the SRO position within the St. Cloud Police Department along with in-school programming and services provided by those positions. Ultimately the reason for the indefinite suspension is that the amended provisions of the above listed statutes are contrary to the use of force standards for Police Officers contained within Minn. Stat. §§ 609.06 and 609.066. This decision has been made after much legal consultation and recommendations with the League of Minnesota Cities and other legal entities that provide legal direction for policing in our state.

The City of St. Cloud and the St. Cloud Police Department have an outstanding working relationship with District 742 Administration and staff. We are proud of the collaborative work our SRO's and school staff have historically accomplished in the schools and look forward to the day we can return to this level of service. The SRO program dates back at least three decades and has grown from one SRO to the current staffing levels of six SROs and a Sergeant. We look forward to re-implementing this program as soon as the law has been changed to eliminate the ambiguity and conflict with other governing laws and policies, all of which were created when the new legislation went into effect.

Public safety in the schools remains a priority to the City of St. Cloud and District 742. As other agencies have done throughout the state, Police Officers will be assigned to cover calls for service in the schools and will work proactively to provide safety and security to all who attend and work in our public schools. We will also assign police officers to work school related special events where a public safety need exists. However, these Police Officer services will not be under contract or paid for by any other entity.

We are hopeful that the Legislature can take corrective steps to remedy the problematic language of the newly amended statutes as soon as possible.