

ILLINOIS SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Question:

Our officer attended the NASRO course, will this get him or her a waiver?

Answer:

In short, no. The ILETSB SRO Certificate requires training in three specific areas: juvenile law, officer and youth interactions, and active threat response. Attendance of the basic NASRO course would meet the second area: “officer and youth interactions” but officers must also meet the other two requirements before a waiver will be issued. It’s important to note, the initial and or refresher courses in these respective areas must have been attended within the past 5 years to be considered.

Question:

What is the timeline for requiring certification?

Answer:

Under the change in law, any officer serving as a dedicated “school resource officer” pursuant to an agreement between a school district and a law enforcement agency, must meet the Board’s certification standard as of January 1, 2021.

Question:

Will any extensions be granted?

Answer:

Unfortunately, no. At this time there is no option to extend the statutory deadline. However, classes will continue to be offered into 2021 for those seeking certification during this current school year.

Question:

Once an officer is issued an ILETSB SRO Certificate, what are the in-service requirements?

Answer:

An ILETSB issued SRO Certificate will be good for two years from the date of issue. If an agency or officer wishes to renew this certificate, he or she must obtain update courses in three specific areas before the renewal will be granted. These areas

match the general requirements of juvenile law, adolescent communications in the school environment, and active threat response.

Question:

Our agency rotates officers through local schools regularly, do they need to get this certification?

Answer:

Likely, no. Only officers that are “primarily assigned” to serve at a school or within a school district pursuant to an agreement between the law enforcement agency and a local school district are required to obtain this certificate before assuming these duties. Please check with your local agency and school district authorities before reaching this conclusion. Nevertheless, officers who are not required to meet this certification requirement, but often serve within a school environment, are still encouraged to apply for a certificate and attend courses in the relevant subject areas.

Pertinent Statutes:

Illinois Police Training Act: 50 ILCS 705/10.22

Sec. 10.22. School resource officers.

(a) The Board shall develop or approve a course for school resource officers as defined in Section 10-20.68 of the School Code.

(b) The school resource officer course shall be developed within one year after January 1, 2019 (the effective date of Public Act 100-984) and shall be created in consultation with organizations demonstrating expertise and or experience in the areas of youth and adolescent developmental issues, educational administrative issues, prevention of child abuse and exploitation, youth mental health treatment, and juvenile advocacy.

(c) The Board shall develop a process allowing law enforcement agencies to request a waiver of this training requirement for any specific individual assigned as a school resource officer. Applications for these waivers may be submitted by a local law enforcement agency chief administrator for any officer whose prior training and experience may qualify for a waiver of the training requirement of this subsection (c). The Board may issue a waiver at its discretion, based solely on the prior training and experience of an officer.

(d) Upon completion, the employing agency shall be issued a certificate attesting to a specific officer's completion of the school resource officer training. Additionally, a letter of approval shall be issued to the employing agency for any officer who is approved for a training waiver under this subsection (d).

(Source: P.A. 100-984, eff. 1-1-19; 101-81, eff. 7-12-19.)

Illinois School Code: 105 ILCS 5/10-20.68

Sec. 10-20.68. School resource officer.

(a) In this Section, "school resource officer" means a law enforcement officer who has been primarily assigned to a school or school district under an agreement with a local law enforcement agency.

(b) Beginning January 1, 2021, any law enforcement agency that provides a school resource officer under this Section shall provide to the school district a certificate of completion, or approved waiver, issued by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board under Section 10.22 of the Illinois Police Training Act indicating that the subject officer has completed the requisite course of instruction in the applicable subject areas within one year of assignment, or has prior experience and training which satisfies this requirement.

(c) In an effort to defray the related costs, any law enforcement agency that provides a school resource officer should apply for grant funding through the federal Community Oriented Policing Services grant program.

(Source: P.A. 100-984, eff. 1-1-19; 101-81, eff. 7-12-19.)