

AMENDED AND RESTATED  
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

TUPELO PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT  
AND  
TUPELO POLICE DEPARTMENT

REGARDING THE

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAM

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## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish a School Resource Officer Program and to set forth guidelines to ensure that officers of the Tupelo Police Department, Tupelo Public School District (TPSD) officials, and the communities they serve have a shared understanding of the goals of the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program and that SROs receive the necessary support and training to ensure a safe school environment while respecting the rights of students and improving the overall school climate;

**WHEREAS**, the parties agree that an effective SRO Program sets forth: the role of the SRO within the context of the educational mission of the school; distinctions between disciplinary misconduct to be handled by school officials and criminal offenses to be handled by law enforcement; respect for the rights of students; transparency and accountability; minimum SRO training requirements; and promotion of non-punitive approaches to student behavior;

**WHEREAS**, this agreement shall amend the previous MOU adopted June 18, 2020.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, by incorporating the prefatory findings contained herein, the parties agree as follows:

### **I. ROLE OF THE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION OF THE SCHOOL**

1. The mission of the SRO Program is to improve school safety and the educational climate at the school, not to enforce school discipline or punish students.
2. The School Resource Officer is a sworn TPD police officer employed by TPD and assigned to provide the law enforcement expertise and resources required to assist the school administrators in maintaining safety and order within the assigned school. TPD shall provide and assign nine SROs to TPSD schools.
3. The SRO will be considered an active member of the administrative team of his/her assigned school. As such, discipline normally imposed upon students for violations of law or school policy committed against a staff member, such as insubordination or assault, will be equally applied by school administrators to similar situations involving a student and an SRO.
4. The school buildings, grounds, and surroundings assigned to the SRO will be the equivalent of the SRO's police service area, and he/she assumes primary responsibility for handling all calls for service and coordinating the response of other police resources to the school.
  - a. Pursuant to MCA §43-21-261, certain types of criminal activity that comes to the attention of the principal or school staff shall be reported immediately to the police department.
  - b. In an emergency situation, the school shall call 911 and also notify the SRO.
  - c. In a non-emergency situation, the school should notify the SRO or call the non-emergency police department number. Information that is not of an emergency or urgent nature may be held for action by the SRO in the normal course of duty.
5. The SRO shall wear the regulation police uniform and operate a marked police cruiser while on duty unless otherwise authorized by a supervisor for a specific purpose. The SRO provides a visible deterrent to crime while bringing a positive impression of the TPD to students and staff in a non-confrontational setting.
6. The SRO shall also be responsible to assist with training for the school administration in law enforcement and related areas, such as disseminating pertinent information about crime trends and changes in law to the school administrative staff to assist them in effectively providing safe school environments.
  - a. SROs shall be integrated into the school community through participation in faculty and student meetings and assemblies as directed by school administration.
  - b. As coordinated through the administration, SROs may become involved in the school's curriculum and provide instruction that will enhance the student's understanding of the police mission. However,

responding to incidents or conducting investigations will always take precedence over instructing in the classroom. Lesson plans for all formal organized presentations shall be forwarded to the principal and approved prior to the presentation.

7. A critical element of the SRO Program is an open relationship and strong communication between the school principal and the SRO.

a. Each SRO shall meet weekly, or more frequently, if necessary, with the assigned school principals for the purpose of exchanging information about current crime trends, problem areas, cultural conflicts, or other areas of concern that may cause disruption at the school(s), or within the community.

b. SROs shall meet with building-level school administrators, teachers, parents, and student representatives at least annually to discuss issues of school safety.

8. SROs shall be responsible for monitoring cultural and social influences and activities in an effort to identify emerging youth gangs. All information concerning gangs shall be provided to the TPD Criminal Investigation Division.

9. Building-level school administrators shall participate in periodic performance reviews of the SRO.

10. SROs shall maintain daily activity reports and prepare summaries of these reports every nine weeks.

a. The summaries shall include, for each SRO, the numbers and descriptions of all incidents or calls for service; names of school officials involved (referring teachers, principals, etc.); student searches; student questioning; tickets, citations, or summonses; filing of delinquency petitions; referrals to a probation officer; actual arrests; and other referrals to the juvenile justice system.

b. The summaries shall be provided to building-level school administrators, District-level school administrators, and the relevant law enforcement agency within 10 days after the end of each nine-weeks term.

11. Absent a real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or school/public safety, and absent the situations described herein where formal law enforcement intervention is deemed appropriate, building-level school administrators shall have final authority in the building.

12. School Liaison Supervisor. The TPD will designate one SRO to serve as the School Liaison Supervisor (SLS).

a. The SLS will ensure coordination of resources, responses and effective information sharing between the TPSD Director of Security, the building administrators and the SROs.

b. The SLS will establish and maintain a working knowledge of and adhere to all laws, ordinances and regulations of city, state and federal governments as well as the written policies and procedures of the TPSD and laws regarding student safety and conduct.

c. The SLS will be a sworn Tupelo Police Department officer assigned to and tasked to work in coordination with the TPSD Superintendent or designee and Director of Security. As a sworn TPD police officer, the SLS reports to the Chief of Police through the TPD chain of command, and the SLS's reporting authority will be the Chief of Police or designee. However, for day-to-day operations, directives and general duties and responsibilities, the SLS's reporting authority will be the superintendent or designee.

d. The SLS will be the direct point of contact between the TPD and TPSD for operational and administrative school safety and security issues that are outside the established scope of control of the TPD structure. The SLS will manage and coordinate school security and safety issues and attempt to anticipate problems before they occur by providing research, analyses and recommendations to the TPSD Superintendent or designee.

e. The SLS will establish and maintain effective relationships with school personnel and law enforcement agencies to ensure a continued commitment to keep schools safe for all students to reach their learning potential in an environment that leaves teachers free to help accomplish this goal.

f. The SLS will assist the TPSD in developing policies, procedures and training programs to enhance the professional development of the SROs and school personnel.

g. Upon request, the school shall provide information to the station commander and the SLS to assist in preparing the annual personnel evaluation of the assigned SRO.

## **II. DISTINGUISHING DISCIPLINARY MISCONDUCT TO BE HANDLED BY SCHOOL OFFICIALS FROM CRIMINAL OFFENSES TO BE HANDLED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT**

13. SROs are responsible for criminal law issues, not school discipline issues.

14. Typically, incidents involving students that relate to minor public order offenses shall be considered school discipline issues to be handled by school officials, rather than criminal law issues warranting formal law enforcement intervention. However, SROs may be called to enforce criminal law violations just as they would for crimes that occur off campus (e.g., issuance of criminal citation, ticket, or summons, filing of delinquency petition, referral to a probation officer, or actual arrest).

### III. RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF STUDENTS

15. SRO Search. Absent a real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or school/public safety, an SRO may conduct or participate in a search of a student's person, possessions, locker and/or car only where there is probable cause to believe that the search will turn up evidence that the child has committed or is committing a criminal offense.

a. The SRO shall inform school administrators prior to conducting a probable cause search where practicable.

b. The SRO shall not ask school officials to search a student's person, possessions, locker or car in an effort to circumvent these protections.

16. School Official Search. School officials may conduct searches of a student's person, possessions, locker or car when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or District / school policy, procedures or rules. The standard for the search is reasonable suspicion and the search must be justified in scope given such suspicion.

a. The SRO shall not become involved in school related searches unless specifically requested by the school official to provide security, protection or for the handling of contraband.

b. These searches must be at the direction and control of the school official.

17. Strip searches of students by either school officials or SROs is prohibited.

18. Absent a real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or school/public safety, other physically invasive searches by a school official or SRO shall not be conducted on a student.

19. Absent a real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or school/public safety, an SRO shall not use physical force (including but not limited to Tasers, Mace, or other physical or chemical restraints) on a student. However, in all cases, SROs will follow Tupelo Police Department standard procedures when making an arrest, including the use of handcuffs.

20. Police Investigation and Questioning.

a. While an SRO has the authority to stop, question, interview and take police action without the prior authorization of the principal or contacting parents, the investigation and questioning of students during school hours or at school should be limited to situations where the investigation is related to the school. Investigations and questioning of students for offenses not related to the operation of, or occurring at the school, should occur only in such situations where, for example, delay might result in danger to any person, flight from the jurisdiction by a person suspected of a crime, or destruction of evidence.

b. The SRO shall inform school administrators prior to questioning the student where practicable, SROs should coordinate their activities so that action between the TPD and TPSD is cooperative and in the best interest of the school and public safety.

c. Absent a real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or school/public safety, an SRO may question or participate in the questioning of a student about conduct that could expose the student to court-involvement or arrest only after informing the student of his or her Miranda rights and only in the presence of the student's parent or guardian.

d. The SRO shall not ask a school official to question a student in an effort to circumvent these protections.

e. Absent a real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or public safety, a school official shall not ask an SRO to be present or participate in the questioning of a student that could expose the student to court-involvement or arrest.

### IV. RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION

21. The release of student education records is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). "School officials" may access and disclose education records only as authorized by FERPA. SROs

will be familiar with TPSD policies and applicable laws and regulations concerning the confidentiality of student records.

a. For purposes of access to student records, the SROs are considered "school officials" and may be provided student information as needed to carry out their duties related to the school environment. On a routine basis, the SRO's access to student records shall be limited to a system-wide TPSD look-up of directory information (defined on the TPSD notice attached hereto), that will include information on all students in the school system who have not opted-out of the disclosure of directory information.

b. Relative to students attending the school at which the SRO works, the SRO may access additional items of information, such as class schedule, that an SRO may need to perform his/her duties, but which are not designated as directory information. The SROs may have access to other student records only when needed to carry out his/her duties in the school environment and only as approved by the school principal.

c. SROs, as "school officials" may not disclose student records protected under FERPA, except as provided by FERPA.

**22. "Law enforcement records"** are those records, files, documents and other materials that are created and maintained by the SROs for the purpose of ensuring the physical safety and security of people and property in TPSD and/or the enforcement of any local, state or federal law, even if such records also serve the dual purpose of investigating and enforcing school disciplinary rules.

a. Because "law enforcement records" are not "education records" under FERPA, they are not subject to the disclosure restrictions of FERPA.

b. Law enforcement records shall not be comingled with education records maintained by the schools.

c. Copies of law enforcement records that are provided to school administrators for the purpose of school discipline become the education records of that student, and thus are subject to the disclosure restrictions of FERPA.

NOTE: The original law enforcement record maintained by the SRO, however, remains exempt from the disclosure restrictions of FERPA.

d. Any record that is created and maintained by the SRO exclusively for the purpose of a possible school disciplinary action against the student would fall outside the definition of "law enforcement records." Such records would be subject to FERPA restrictions.

**23. TPD officials who are not assigned to the schools as part of the SRO Program and other law enforcement officials may have access to education records without parent consent only if:**

a. TPSD has designated the information as directory information; or

b. the knowledge of the education record is needed to protect the health and safety of a student or other person in an emergency situation; or

c. TPSD is presented with a search warrant, subpoena or other valid court order requiring the release of education records to the law enforcement official or agency.

**24. Health and Safety Emergency.** Law enforcement officials seeking access to education records under the health and safety emergency exception should contact the student's principal and must present sufficient information for the principal to make the determination that a health and safety emergency, within the requirements of FERPA, exists. If an education record is disclosed under this exception, the student's file must contain a record of the basis for the disclosure (the "articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals") and the parties to whom the information was disclosed.

**25. Court Orders, Subpoenas, and Search Warrants.** FERPA requires that school officials take reasonable steps to notify the parent(s) or student (if he/she is 18 or older) before any records are disclosed pursuant to a court order, subpoena or search warrant.

a. Such notice will not be provided if the court order, subpoena or search warrant indicates that it has been issued *ex parte*, or if it contains direction that the subject of the records should not be notified.

b. School officials will retain original education records and will provide copies in response to any court order, subpoena or search warrant.

c. Except where the court order, subpoena or search warrant indicates that it has been issued *ex parte* or if it contains direction that the subject of the records should not be notified, a record of any disclosure under this exception will be made in the student's file.

## **V. ARREST PROCEDURES**

**26.** SROs are expected to be familiar with school policies/rules and their application within the school system. Routinely, policy/rule infractions will not be handled as violations of law, but rather referred to the principal or designee for action. Any questions related to the enforcement of policies/rules versus laws within schools should be discussed with the principal. The specifically applies to general standards of conduct.

**27.** Students shall not be arrested at school, except where (a) the student poses a real and immediate threat to another student, teacher, or public safety; or (b) a judicial warrant specifically directs the arrest of the student in a school. In all other instances, the execution of an arrest warrant shall be undertaken at a location other than a school.

**28.** When an arrest of a student must occur at school, it should be done in a manner that minimizes disruption to the school and embarrassment to the student. Upon the arrest of a student, the SRO should immediately make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent/guardian of the arrest and the location to which the student will be taken. The following procedures will be followed where arrests of students or staff become necessary:

- \* The arrest of a student or employee of the TPSD with a warrant should be coordinated through the principal and accomplished after school hours, whenever practical.

- \* Persons whose presence on school grounds has been restricted or forbidden or whose presence is in violation of the Mississippi Code should be arrested for trespassing.

- \* Arrest of students or staff during school hours or on school grounds shall be reported fully to the principal as soon as practical.

## **VI. ACCOUNTABILITY**

**29.** The SRO Program shall set forth a simple and straightforward mechanism for any student, parent, teacher, principal, or other school administrator to submit a complaint, orally or in writing, of abuses or misconduct by an SRO. Any such complaint shall be made to the Tupelo Police Department in accordance with TPD SOP 4.04 Professional Compliance.

- a. Parents and students shall be permitted to submit a complaint in their native language.

- b. The complaint system shall be confidential only in accordance with the Tupelo Police Department Internal Affairs Division and consistent with the SRO's due process rights.

- c. Complaints shall be promptly investigated and resolved, and complainants shall be furnished with a written explanation of the investigation and resolution in accordance with TPD SOP 4.04 Professional Compliance.

- d. Where serious allegations of abuse or misconduct are raised, the SRO shall be temporarily removed from having contact with students as appropriate.

- e. Where allegations of abuse or misconduct are substantiated, the SRO shall be suspended or permanently removed from school assignments or receive additional training as appropriate.

**30.** Every student, parent, and guardian in the school system shall be informed of the complaint procedure.

## **VII. MINIMUM SRO TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

**31.** It is the intention of the parties that SRO officers be of the rank of PO III or above, but it is the understanding of the parties that staffing availabilities may necessitate the utilization of officers of senior PO II rank or officers with at least five (5) years law enforcement experience. Every SRO shall complete the required School Resource Officer training as required by, and in accordance with, state law and regulation prior to working on a TPSD campus. In addition, every SRO will complete annual in-service training offered at the Mississippi Association of School Resource Officers ("MASRO") annual meeting on relevant topics including the following topics:

- a. Child and adolescent development and psychology;

- b. Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBS), conflict resolution, peer mediation, or other restorative justice techniques;

- c. Children with disabilities or other special needs; and

- d. Cultural competency.

32. TPSD will reimburse TPD for the cost of annual MASRO training for SROs, including paying for travel expenses incurred in accordance with TPSD policies, and will provide in-service training to the SROs, when available, in areas that will increase the effectiveness of the officers and their ability to accomplish their respective duties and responsibilities.

#### **VIII. PROMOTING NON-PUNITIVE APPROACHES TO STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

33. The SROs shall be familiar with and trained in programs adopting non-punitive approaches to discipline available in the TPSD. If a school has implemented a specific program designed to improve the overall school climate or respond to student behaviors in specific ways, the SROs shall participate in trainings associated with that program.

#### **IX. STRUCTURE AND FUNDING FOR SRO PROGRAM**

34. The selection of the SRO is the most critical aspect of the SRO Program. The TPD Police Chief shall select officers who have demonstrated the ability, interest, and skills necessary to work with youth, school staff, and the public. The following criteria should be considered when selecting officers for the Program:

- \* Ability to work with diverse groups
- \* Ability to work cooperatively in a non-law enforcement environment with little supervision
- \* Knowledge of departmental resources
- \* Creative problem-solver
- \* Conflict resolution skills
- \* Knowledge of the Juvenile Code and Juvenile Court procedures
- \* Ability to effectively provide instruction to youths
- \* Organization and communication skills
- \* Completion of required training before or after selection
- \* Supervisory recommendation

35. All SROs are employees of the Tupelo Police Department. No SRO is an employee of TPSD. It is agreed by both parties in this MOU that the TPD will bear the cost of salary, overtime and fringe benefits for the SROs (including the SLS), including their equipment and training. Additional SRO officers, their salary, overtime, fringe benefits, equipment and training may be provided by supplemental/amended, written agreement of TPD and TPSD. However, TPSD will also provide training as mutually agreed upon, and appropriate. SROs will be paid in accordance with the TPD salary structure and are subject to all Human Resources policies of the TPD. This MOU shall not be construed to create a relationship of employer and employee, principal and agent, or partnership or joint venture between the TPSD and the SROs. This agreement or any supplemental/amended agreements shall not alter the practice by which TPSD applies for MCOPs grants and provides the proceeds to TPD.

36. The SRO's duty schedule will be determined by the SLS, but generally will be arranged to provide coverage throughout the school day including peak arrival and departure times before and after school. Whenever possible, SROs will be visible patrolling the exterior and interior grounds, particularly during the opening or closing of school and during the lunch periods.

37. TPSD will provide at each school a work area for the SRO that is equipped with a telephone and computer. It is recommended that the area accommodate seating for a minimum of three people in privacy for interviewing purposes. The school shall also provide the SRO a locked storage area for securing contraband recovered in the school by staff.

38. During summer break and school term vacations, SROs will not have any responsibilities to TPSD; they will report for duties as assigned by the TPD.

39. TPD currently provides eight (8) SRO officers and the SLS to TPSD. To help defray the costs to TPD of the SRO program, TPSD will provide annually the sum of \$205,966.37, one-half payable beginning July 1, 2022 and one-half payable December 31, 2022, and thereafter on said dates. This provision will be reviewed annually by the parties and may upon written agreement be adjusted to eliminate, reduce, or expand the parties' obligations.



#### **X. CERTIFICATION REGARDING CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS**


**40.** By the signature of its authorized official on this MOU, the TPD certifies that none of the TPD employees who will have direct contact with students has been convicted of a felony or any offense involving the sexual molestation or physical or sexual abuse or rape of a child. The TPD agrees to remove from this Program any employee who has been determined by TPSD to be disqualified from service due to such convictions or the failure to truthfully report such convictions.


#### **XL. DURATION OF MOU**

**41.** This MOU shall become effective immediately upon execution by the parties and remain effective until such time as either party withdraws from the agreement by delivering ninety (90) days written notification of such termination to the other party. Termination by either party shall eliminate the presence of Tupelo Police Department SROs at the Tupelo Public School District.

**42.** The parties will review the MOU prior to July 1<sup>st</sup> annually and amend it as necessary to meet the needs of the parties.

Signed on this 15 of September, 2022.

  
Robert J. Picou, Ph.D.  
TPSD Superintendent

  
Todd Jordan  
Mayor of the City of Tupelo