



# Lawrence Public Schools and the City of Lawrence

*PARTNERS IN PROMOTING SCHOOL SAFETY*



Working together as partners, Lawrence Public Schools and the City of Lawrence offer several successful programs to help provide a safe and secure learning environment for students in our community.

***Q: How are city resources being used to help improve school safety?***

A: The City of Lawrence provides more than \$1,000,000 annually to fund four successful prevention and intervention programs that help maintain safe schools:

**School Resource Officer (SRO) Program** – \$600,000 fully funds six police officers and all equipment including computers, cars, etc. stationed on secondary public school campuses

**Crossing Guard Program** – \$93,500 funds 14 crossing guards to direct pedestrians and traffic around local elementary schools.

**WRAP Program** – \$350,000 funds licensed, mental health professionals who work with students and families through the public schools.

**Football Coaching Program** – Lawrence Police officers volunteer as coaches for our seventh-grade football program.

***Q: Do we have a school safety problem?***

A: No – The City of Lawrence helps fund these programs as a way to work with the Lawrence Public Schools now to help keep our kids safe and to prevent serious safety issues from developing in the future.



SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER, JON BARTA, TEACHES JR. HIGH STUDENTS ABOUT SCHOOL SAFETY ISSUES.

## School Resource Officers:

### *Providing A Safe Learning Environment*

Specially trained police officers serve as School Resource Officers (SROs). Using up-to-date techniques and equipment, SROs assist school staff in developing and practicing effective discipline policies, safety assessments and emergency preparedness plans. The City of Lawrence spends more than \$600,000 annually to support six officers in our schools – one stationed at each of our junior and senior high school campuses.

Having a high-profile law enforcement officer on campus is an effective deterrent for common problems like theft, drug use and bullying, and dramatically improves response time in the event of an emergency. SROs serve as positive role models who help students develop early, positive relationships with law enforcement. A visible law enforcement presence discourages unwanted visitors at schools, and helps improve traffic and safety conditions near our schools.

Often seen in classrooms, SROs share information about substance abuse, drinking and driving, and constitutional law. Equipped with a unique range of tools to address school safety issues, they provide counseling, verbal caution, deterrence and intervention.

Each SRO completes advanced, school-safety training through the National Association of SROs. They spend summer months updating skills at specialized school safety programs, and supplementing police activities.

***"IF THERE IS TROUBLE, YOU KNOW OUR SRO IS HERE TO DEAL WITH IT RIGHT AWAY."  
~ A JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT***

## Goal #1: Ensuring Safe Learning Environments

*By School Resource Officer Jon Barta*

First and foremost, the SRO program is about the Kids. Our primary goal is to preserve a safe environment conducive to student learning. Each SRO is a Lawrence Police Officer, not a school employee. We work closely on a daily basis with school staff to prevent and resolve issues by providing advice, mediation and, if necessary, intervention. The program provides an important opportunity for officers to share information with students in a classroom setting, and to interact with them in a non-adversarial way, building positive relationships and rapport.



SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS: SERGEANT KIRK FULTZ; MATT SARNA – FSHS; ERIC BARKLEY – SWJHS; DON HICKS – CJHS; BRIAN KELLY – SJHS; JON BARTA – LHS; ROB MURRY – WJHS.

## Seventh-Grade Football Program

*Police Officers Volunteer as Youth Coaches*

When fall arrives, it's time for football. As teenagers enter the eighth grade, they can begin to join school football teams, but it's Lawrence Police officers who give seventh-grade students a chance to strap on their helmets and pads.

Lawrence Police officers partner with Lawrence Youth Football INC to offer a seventh-grade football program. The eleven-year program fosters positive relationships among law enforcement and young adults in a fun setting, the grid-iron. Twelve officers volunteer as coaches. In addition to the benefits of physical activity and participation in a safe, supervised activity after school, local seventh-graders practice teamwork and sportsmanship, skills that last their lifetimes.

## School Crossing Guards

*Improving Safety Before and After School*

Arrival and dismissal times at area schools are busy. School crossing guards improve safety conditions for young pedestrians by making sure they use marked crosswalks and do not cross streets against traffic lights. The City of Lawrence invests \$93,500 annually to improve student safety by funding 14 crossing guards at local elementary schools.



CITY OF LAWRENCE CROSSING GUARD MARILYN WIGGINS

## WRAP: A Partnership

*Supporting Mental Health Needs in Schools*

*If it weren't for her (Carice Riemann, WRAP clinician) my son would not be alive today.*

*~ Paula Kissinger, Lawrence parent.*

Lawrence Public Schools and the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center partner to offer a prevention and early intervention program called WRAP or Working to Recognize Alternative Possibilities. In 2006, The City of Lawrence invested \$350,000 and joined with Douglas County to fund the placement of licensed, master's-level mental health specialists in every Lawrence school.

Working closely with teachers, support staff, students and families, WRAP clinicians help provide screening, assessment, early intervention, prevention and referral services to students and their families in familiar, public school settings. WRAP specialists interact directly with students and families to help identify social and emotional issues early, before they may become serious challenges. In 2006, WRAP professionals worked with more than 2,750 students, resulting in over 30,000 contacts.

*Without financial support from the City of Lawrence...WRAP would not be able to place these critical intervention specialists in the Lawrence schools*

*~ Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center, 2006 Application*