

## **School Resource Officer Program (SRO)**

The goal of the School Resource Officer (SRO) position is to bridge the gap between students, schools and police by becoming a liaison when problems arise. In addition, crime prevention and law enforcement both in and out of the schools are prime ingredients in making our schools a safer place to be. With students feeling safe at school it harbors a better learning environment for all who want to learn and teach.

I, Officer Zac Lauenstein, began my third year as the SRO in the beginning of the 2013-2014 school years, and am the SRO for the Beatrice High School and the Beatrice Middle School. I celebrated my 11<sup>th</sup> year as a police officer with the Beatrice Police Department this year. As this is my third year working with the schools, the school staff and students have come to know me well and trust in my ability and willingness to work on issues. With my training through NASRO (National Association of School Resource Officers), we take a “triad” approach with the responsibilities being a Teacher, Informal Counselor, and Law Enforcement Officer. Over the past year, there has been a large increase in counseling time with students, but as a preventative measure, or an intervention to assist them in de-escalating a situation.

With technology ever changing and new mobile applications being developed every day cyber bullying continues to be an issue at both the Beatrice Middle School and the Beatrice High School. Students are doing a pretty good job of keeping me and school officials advised of new trends as well as current bullying situations. The situations that can be addressed due to a school rule or law violation are dealt with strictly and swiftly; however, many do not fit into either of those categories. I enjoy working closely with the staff and students at both the high school and middle school to help solve, reduce, and prevent problems involving students and/or staff.

The most common crimes reported at BHS and BMS are Truancy and Thefts, with Truancy being the biggest number of them. Truancy is not age specific and affects both BHS and BMS, along with the SKILLS program, and Compass Learning Community, (alternative high school). There is a clear correlation between truancy and low proficiency scores, graduation rate, and lower life time earnings. Efforts are being taken to continue to foster the relationship between truant students and the schools.

Crimes such as theft, drug and alcohol violations are declining at the Beatrice High School. Students report that they feel that their property is more secure than before and ideas have been forwarded to administrators to further prevent thefts. The solvability rate for a theft case in the high school is high and some children are having second thoughts before committing this act. The drug and alcohol arrests are down due to both enforcement and treatment procedures as students report that they do not feel drugs are a problem at Beatrice High School.

The SRO program continues in its fifteenth year to be a great benefit to the Beatrice Public School District, as well as the Beatrice Police Department. It is my goal to continue to be a great resource for all students and staff at the Beatrice High School and the Beatrice Middle School and continue to further develop the program to its full potential.