

HOW TO BE AN ADVOCATE FOR YOUR STUDENTS

1. Insist on being part of the hiring committee for your SRO
2. Get to know your SRO. Make sure s/he trusts you and value your judgment about how to intervene when there is a problem. Help the SRO understand your approach to discipline so that the SRO does not perceive that students are not getting “consequences”
3. Communicate to your principal and your SRO that you think the SRO’s job is to keep the school safe from outside threats and divert youth from the JJ system
4. Ask that SRO be required to be trained in PBIS and also attend DCJS SRO training.
5. If a student seems to be under suspicion by an SRO, offer to be the child’s mentor or to find the child a mentor, or at least be the child’s “safe place” to come when frustrated or angry.
6. Try to resolve things early. Don’t wait until a petition gets filed or the student gets suspended. Make the SRO or principal aware of any mitigating factors, help them understand manifestation of disability, etc.
7. If a student gets in trouble, write a letter of support and share it with the student, the student’s parent, and possibly the principal and SRO for the student to take to a suspension hearing or intake hearing.
8. Speak up at MDR (manifestation determination review hearings) for students with disabilities. Make sure team understands how disability affects behavior.
9. Advocate for school board to adopt model MOU with law enforcement (see link below)
10. Make sure there are feedback loops (e.g., anonymous complaints) for SROs.
11. Make sure parents know that JustChildren provides free legal advice and representation to low-income students at-risk of entering the juvenile justice system.



More info at: www.performingstatistics.org