



Rethinking School Policing: Round Rock ISD's District Police Force Creates a New Model for Collaboration with Mental Health Providers

With increasing rates of mental health concerns amongst students and new legislation requiring school districts to have an armed security officer at every campus, communities across Texas are grappling with how to keep students safe and healthy. [Round Rock Independent School District \(ISD\) Police Department](#) has developed a nationally recognized model for collaboration between mental health service providers and district police to support student success and create a more holistic approach to juvenile justice.

Round Rock ISD's Behavioral Health Services Department houses 14 Master's-level social workers who are dedicated to addressing the full range of behavioral health needs of every student in the district, by engaging with families and caregivers, campus professionals, and community providers. Their goal is to ensure that each student has all they need to be successful in the classroom.

Unique to this model is that police officers and social workers are in the same department, working together side-by-side. Collaboration starts at the top, with the director of behavioral health and the chief of police working together daily on everything from overall strategy to individual hiring decisions. The model also emphasizes mutual trust and relationship building between department staff, teachers and students. Officers and social workers are on campus every day, forming relationships and identifying opportunities to intervene and support students before anyone gets in trouble.

"Having teams of mental health and law enforcement professionals training and working together builds the trust between professions and individuals that allows us to optimize outcomes for our students," explained Dennis Weiner, Round Rock ISD's Chief of Police.

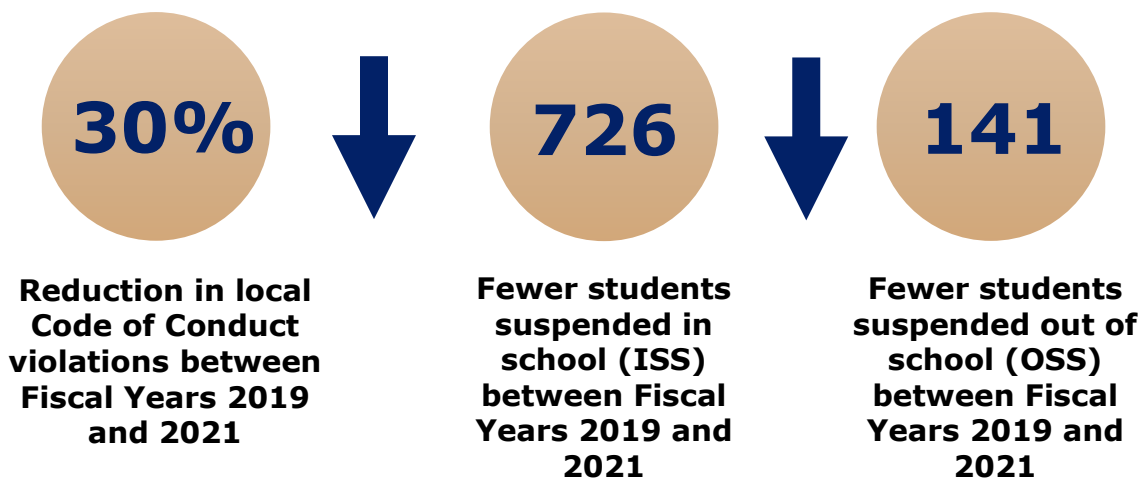
"In December 2021, the U.S. Surgeon General released an [advisory](#) on protecting youth mental health, emphasizing the crisis point the U.S. faces in caring for the mental health of students. Because of the prevalence of mental health concerns of students, it is critical that school-based police departments not only acknowledge this reality, but also take a proactive stance in the way to approach the topic."

[– Police Chief Magazine](#)

Organizational structure for Round Rock ISD's Police-Mental Health Collaboration



Early Outcomes from Round Rock ISD's Police-Mental Health Collaboration:



National Highlights on Round Rock ISD's Police-Mental Health Collaboration:

- [Rethinking School Policing, How Round Rock ISD Is Revolutionizing the Model](#), Police Chief Magazine

- [Rethinking School Policing: How Round Rock ISD is Changing the Model](#), South Southwest (HHS Region 6) Mental Health Technology Transfer Network
- [Voices from the Field: Alternatives to Arrest Keep Youth Out of the System](#), R Street Institute

Additional Resources:

- [Interactions between Youth and Law Enforcement](#)- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's literature review will discuss the research relevant to interactions between police and youth.
- [National Guidelines for Child and Youth Behavioral Health Crisis Care](#)- Provides guidance on how states and communities can address gaps in capacity to serve youth and families. It offers best practices, implementation strategies, and practical guidance for the design and development of services that meet the needs of American children and their families experiencing a behavioral health crisis.
- [Protecting Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory \(2021\)](#) is a public statement that calls the American people's attention to the urgent youth mental health issue and provides recommendations for how it should be addressed.