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National Association of School Safety and Law Enforcement Officials NASSLEO

NASSLEO NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2011

What does it take to be a professional?

Looking back at one of my first criminal justice classes taken at Miami Dade Community College with Professor Kent Journey (Journey and Associates), a professional was defined as being able to work in one part of the country, or even in another country under the same standards that are accepted. Basically, most people think of lawyers, doctors, nurses, and electricians when considering who are professionals because there are accepted standards for these industries and regulated by some entity either through licensure or certification. Over the years, the law enforcement arena has become a profession because of standards and acceptable licensures at local, state, national, and even international levels. Law enforcement executives have been employed by different agencies across the nation and internationally based on a set of acceptable standards. The most highly sought credentialing authority for law enforcement organizations is governed by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, (CALEA). In 1979, through the joint efforts of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), CALEA was created to improve the delivery of public safety services (CALEA, 2011).

As we look at the history of school safety and security evolvement, we must note the majority of personnel in our industry came from law enforcement agencies either out of need or necessity. With this in mind, we must ask ourselves "***What are the standards for school safety executives.***" More important, this question was proposed at our conference in Milwaukee by a number of school safety executives who attended an informal dinner session at Miller Baseball Park. The group sitting at our table pitched the idea that the National Association of School Safety and Law Enforcement Officials (NASSLEO) should develop appropriate standards for school safety directors. Additionally, they suggested, training centers, like the Miami Police Training Center, should offer this executive leadership course. These safety directors included law enforcement officers, school district personnel, and charter school personnel. They said they would be willing to spend the time taking such a program, but they were also willing to invest the monies to gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities.

For such a program to be established there needs to be a credentialing entity that will develop and endorse the course curriculum. NASSLEO certainly has the professionals who can provide guidance and best practices, but there needs to be a partnership with existing credentialing entities to move this program from theory to practice. Additionally, the employers must be able to understand the value of possessing a credentialed program.

So let's look at the value of this program for the employer. The immediate value of credentialing school safety leaders will be human resources considerations when seeking qualified job applicants, and followed up by lower risk management cost. For example, most law enforcement agencies seeking qualified executives require a bachelor's of science or even a master's degree. Then, they also look for years of experience within the industry and a command level school. The most popular command level schools are the FBI National Academy, University of Louisville Southern Police Institute, or Northwestern University Center for Public Safety. What these institutions bring to the table is the credentialing body and the legitimacy of the training environment and courses. Therein lies the most important factor in having standards for school safety leaders: ensuring liability is reduced by having applicable standards for the industry.

Standards are implemented to mandate and ensure people oblige by the industry best practices and in the end, reduce and mitigate liabilities. It will also provide for the best qualified applicants to manage and lead our school safety departments, whether it is part of their sworn law enforcement function, or in a civilian capacity. In order to get this from theory to practice, keep things simple and not re-invent the concept, we should partner with ASIS International. ASIS International is an organization for security professionals. The organization is dedicated to increasing the effectiveness and productivity of security professionals by developing educational programs and materials that address broad security interests (ASIS, 2011). ASIS already has a number of internationally recognized security courses such as the Certified Protection Professional (CPP), Professional Certified Investigator (PCI), and Physical Security Professional (PSP). In fact, this should be the foundation for our school safety leaders to have these certificate programs behind their names based on a set of standards. School safety personnel should visit the ASIS website, www.asisonline.org, for complete information on these current programs.

Over the past few months, as the director for the Miami Police Training Center, communications with ASIS personnel have been ongoing to establish a *Certified School Safety Professional (CSSP)*. This is the suggested scope of this course:

- To provide managers with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully manage and lead School Safety Departments.
- The CSSP will focus on the best practices for school safety personnel who are executives by applying applicable standards to the industry.
- The certification will target School Safety Directors, Executive Directors, and School Police Chiefs operating within the K-12 environment.

These are the suggested topics, areas to cover, and time frames:

- Developing the strategic direction of an organization, including the mission, values, and goals **24Hours**
- Understanding legal issues with educational environment regarding students, parents, and school staff/teachers **16 Hours**
- Demonstrate an understanding of the primary federal requirements associated with personnel issues (including recruitment, retention, discipline, termination, family leave, sick time, overtime, and compensation) **16 Hours**
- Demonstrate an understanding of public employee investigation and collective bargaining issues **12 Hours**
- Developing and implementing budgets, procurement, and finance systems **24Hours**

- Demonstrate Critical Infrastructure Planning and Emergency Operations Planning **40 Hours**
- Developing the effective use of Information Technology and Security Measures **8 Hours**
- Demonstrate and implement training and standards **8 Hours**
- Understanding staffing and deployment of personnel **12 Hours**

For this 160 hour certificate program to be successful, we must ensure stakeholders such as the ASIS School Safety Council, National School Board Administration, U. S. Department of Education, Council on Greater City Schools, American Association of School Administrators, National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, and the National Association of School Superintendents are contacted to create strong partnerships for the CSSP. These partnerships should be in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or a letter of support. Stakeholder buy in is essential to building a strong foundation for this leadership program.

NASSLEO is a major school safety association and has a duty to its members to set standards for the industry. A set of standards needs to be in place for managers that are expected to lead school safety departments. The K-12 environment is very complex and only a special person can operate in this environment. Security and law enforcement methods are essentially open ended systems, but they must also balance the mission of an educational environment. Currently, there is lack of formalized training for school safety executives. The majority of school safety executives come from a law enforcement background but need to have additional training to enhance their credentials. Thousands of school districts and charter schools across the nation and internationally will benefit from this program. More important, human resources and risk managers should embrace such credentialing as an industry requirement.

I look forward to providing more information on this topic and its progress at our 2012 NASSLEO conference in Miami “The Magic City.”

Major Ian Moffett, Director, Miami Police Training Center, Miami Police Department

Thought of the Month: “It takes courage to stand up and speak, but also to sit and listen.”
-Sir Winston Churchill

Did you know? According to a recent Consumer Reports survey, there are more than 7.5 million Facebook users younger than age 13 and 5 million of them are age 10 or less. Also consider that 92% of newborns are registered by their parents on Facebook, and other social media networks, and you can see that our world is changing rapidly and technology is driving this change. Are you ready? Are your schools ready? And, are our kids REALLY ready?

On behalf of President Larry Borland and the NASSLEO Board, Happy Thanksgiving to all!

Peter Pochowski
Secretary and Editor
NASSLEO

Education First – Safety Always™