

Del Norte keeping school resource officer

August 20, 2021



Teacher, principal, police officer.

The Del Norte Unified School District will continue a partnership with the Crescent City Police Department to maintain a school resource officer position for the schools within city limits: Del Norte High School, Crescent Elk Middle School and Joe Hamilton Elementary.

During a Monday city council meeting, Police Chief Richard Griffin said school resource officers provide services such as crime prevention, substance abuse education and maintaining a safe environment in schools.

At a school board board meeting last week, the board approved the continuation of the SRO contract. Superintendent Jeff Harris said the district's relationship with the current SRO — Yeng Lo — has been positive.

"It's not about a punitive police presence. It's about developing relationships, it's about positive interactions with, and it's about letting students know that law enforcement is there to help," said Harris. "We've seen students open up to ask for help, both in the community as a whole, as well as in schools."

However, school resource officers are not as popular in other places. In the wake of the police shooting of George Floyd, many students throughout the country called for the removal of police officers from their schools.

In fact, student-led protests in Oakland led to the disintegration of an entire department, the Oakland School Police Department, which was a 53-member department solely dedicated to policing schools in Oakland.

While the position is not new, the person filling the position will be, as Officer Lo will be stepping down from the role. Griffin said two officers have applied, and he plans to select one this week.