

## **CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM**

### **SUBJECT**

Drug and Alcohol Resistance Education (DARE) Program Review

### **STAFF CONTACT**

Police Chief Jim Montgomery, 452-6059

### **POLICY ISSUES**

DARE officer Bob Oliver has submitted his letter of intent to retire from service effective September 15, 2006. He has been the Bellevue School District DARE officer for the past sixteen years.

To teach the DARE curriculum, an Officer must attend a certified training course, gather course materials, and coordinate his/her class schedule with the area elementary school principals. Because of this time commitment, the Police Department is unable to get the program in operation before Spring 2007 at the earliest. In addition, the School District is waiting to purchase and incorporate specialized materials for its elementary school curriculum to replace DARE once it receives confirmation from the City of Bellevue that the DARE program will be eliminated.

### **DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**

Action  
 Discussion  
 Information

The Council is requested to recommend that the DARE program be discontinued, and to provide a statement of support for the School District to incorporate a life skills curriculum to include drug and alcohol awareness and resistance.

### **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**

The DARE program was initiated more than twenty years ago by the Los Angeles Police Department. Numerous cities and counties across the country began similar programs in the early 80's. About seventeen years ago, Bellevue's Police Department began teaching the program in the Bellevue School District and other private and parochial schools in the area that wished to participate.

Following numerous concerns about the length of the seventeen week program and the failure of the program to meet its objectives, the DARE curriculum was reduced to ten weeks. At that time, the Bellevue

Police Department transferred one of its two DARE officers to the high school - School Resource Officer (SRO) program in recognition of the reduced need for classroom instruction.

DARE purports to “integrate the latest science and research-based strategies into the world’s largest and most effective educational delivery network.” Unfortunately, research dating back to the early 1990’s strongly indicates DARE fails to achieve its program objectives by showing little or no correlation between those students that have been exposed to DARE and those that have not. In other words, the research could not detect any measurable difference in later adolescent and adult drug and excessive alcohol abuse.

As a result of these findings, both Dr. Mike Riley, Superintendent of Bellevue School District, and the Bellevue Police Department have recommended to the City Council the DARE program be eliminated and the full time equivalent staff be shifted to the middle school program in the form of a SRO.

**ALTERNATIVES**

Because of Officer Oliver’s retirement, and the District’s desire to move forward with alternative life skills curriculum, there is no practical alternative for the 2006/2007 school year.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Bellevue School District and the Bellevue Police Department recommends the DARE program be discontinued. The City Council is requested to provide a statement of support for the School District to incorporate a life skills curriculum to include drug and alcohol awareness and resistance. The Police Department will continue to be a presence in the elementary schools for various programs and special events to ensure a continued relationship-building environment, and the Department will assign an additional SRO to the middle schools in the Bellevue School District.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

None

**AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL OFFICE FOR REVIEW**

None