

One of the overbearing problems that we face today in the high schools and middle schools across the State of Texas is the increase in crime that seems to be coming into our schools at an alarming rate. One of the primary ways that we must combat this problem is the Student Crime Stoppers program. To help me better understand what all goes into the program and how it directly impacts a school campus, I spoke with Officer Joseph Lopez with the Amarillo Police Department. Joseph has been with the Amarillo Police Department for 16 years and has spent the last 7 of those years of service working directly in the schools. When I sat down to talk with Officer Lopez, I had a series of questions that I was interested in addressing with him. First and foremost, I wanted to know if he felt the Student Crime Stoppers program was making a direct impact in the school. Officer Lopez was adamant in his response. He felt that the program gives students a voice in the safety of their schools and provides them with the avenue to report issues of concern and do so while staying anonymous. The fact that SCS is an anonymous program, is the key to the program's success, Officer Lopez stated. While on the subject of the program and its ability to remain anonymous, I asked Lopez if he had ever had issues with the program being unable to protect the identity of the person reporting. Another point of interest for me concerning the SCS program was, what exactly about it did the police and administration liked best. Officer Lopez informed me that the program freed up a lot of time for both himself and the administrators that he worked with. The program gives students a quick and easy way to report crimes through an application that in turn allows the administration and police to quickly address and deal with the problem before it gets further out of hand. Lopez quickly followed up with this by stating that they as a school stay proactive with the tips that come in and the second, they believe a tip to be spam, they report it as such and do the best they can to not inconvenience the student that is being falsely reported. Officer Lopez continued with our interview by telling me a lot of the positives that he has seen from the SCS program being in the schools. With the SCS app, he has seen those numbers continue to drop as the school is able to begin locating and removing these items from their campus and hold the parties in possession of them accountable. As crime nationally is on the rise, it is reassuring that Texas is continuing to be proactive to combat it with such programs as Student Crime Stoppers. My intent is to make sure that this program continues to thrive and serve the students that depend on it to keep them safe.