



POSITION PAPER

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING

An innovative leader never stops looking for ways to get better. One might wish for a big discovery — a “silver bullet” that solves all problems and increases performance for all time — but the reality is that people come and go, technology evolves, new laws are enacted, and new social issues arise. Every law enforcement agency has to adapt to changing internal and external conditions. Merely surviving can be quite a challenge for some organizations in turbulent environments, but the real objective should be to improve, not just survive.

As Sheriff of Wake County, I will implement evidence-based policing as the main driver of continuous improvement in my office. The Sheriff’s Office will keep getting better if it focuses on the multiple bottom-line outcomes of law enforcement, such as crime, disorder, fear, discrimination, homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse, morale, stress, burnout, and injustice by relying on data to systematically measure how things are going, analyze problems that are encountered, evaluate current practices and test new ones, and look for evidence throughout the law enforcement profession about what works best. Nothing is guaranteed, but adding data, analysis, research, and evidence to law enforcement experience and professional knowledge is most likely to produce positive results in the face of ever-changing conditions.

The Deputies and Detention Officers who do the work of the organization are most aware of any inefficiencies and reasons for weak performance. I want to inspire and reward them for identifying problems and creating solutions to take full advantage of this talented workforce and enjoy sustained achievement across the spectrum to provide the best possible service to our community.

I intend to keep the Sheriff’s Office focused on what matters, learning from errors to prevent them from happening again so that we can offer the best service possible to the public. Otherwise, mistakes are bound to be repeated, which cuts into effectiveness, continuous improvement, and customer satisfaction.
