Comprehensive Review of Beaverton School District's School Resource Officer Program

July 2022

SEECHANGE

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Acknowledgments

Data collection for this report, which included focus groups and surveys, had concluded by the time that the second deadliest school shooting in United States history occurred, resulting in the death of 19 elementary children and two teachers in Uvalde, Texas. Due to this timing, this report does not explore how the Uvalde mass school shooting impacts the perspectives of Beaverton School District students, parents, staff, and School Resource Officers shared just months prior as part of this review.

Appreciation is extended to the many students; parents/guardians; teachers; school administrators; school staff; School Resource Officers; leaders from the Beaverton Police, Hillsboro Police, and Washington County Sheriff's offices; district Central office staff and leaders; City of Beaverton; Beaverton Student Advisory Committee; Human Rights Advisory Commission; and community service providers who provided their expertise, experiences, and data to inform this report. We also appreciate the teachers, school leaders, and community partners who went above and beyond to broker connections with communities that are traditionally left out of community engagement processes.

Executive Summary

The Beaverton School District ("District"), in partnership with the City of Beaverton ("City"), commissioned an external "Comprehensive Review" of the District's School Resource Officer ("SRO") program. The Beaverton Police Department, Hillsboro Police Department, and Washington County Sheriff's Office each assign armed, uniformed law enforcement officers to serve as SROs in District schools.

Amidst national and local events particularly in the months and years following the murder of George Floyd and many other Black Americans by police, multiple public discussions on the topic of SROs have been held by the Beaverton City Council, the Beaverton School Board, the Beaverton Student Advisory Committee, and the Beaverton City Human Rights Advisory Commission, with the latter making a recommendation to the City Council to remove City SROs from District schools.[1]

WHAT IS AN SRO?

Oregon does not define what an SRO is in state legislation, unlike many other states. This leaves individual communities to determine for themselves what features and roles define SRO programs. SRO programs vary widely across the country, even within Oregon. Generally, SROs are armed, uniformed law enforcement officers who work in schools with the legal authority of any typical officer (including arrest).

This review follows a series of smaller studies[2][3] the District has conducted about the SRO program. It intends to provide additional information and evidence about the program, including District community members' perceptions and experiences, along with research and recommendations to help District and City leaders plan for the future of school security, student safety, and the SRO program.

SRO Program Review Process

- Researchers centered the review process on the experiences and perceptions of Beaverton School District middle and high school students, District parents (of students in any grade), administrators, teachers, and other school staff.[4] They were invited to participate in this review by completing an online survey and participating in a focus group. City residents without children enrolled in the District were also given opportunities to participate in an online form only.
- Over 8,700 students, parents, district staff, and City residents participated between February and April 2022. Surveys and focus groups were completed prior to the Uvalde school shooting on May 24, 2022.

[1] Beaverton Human Rights Advisory Commission Policing Recommendations, January 2021.
[2] Beaverton School District SRO Report, Beaverton School District Department of Public Safety, 2020.
[3] Beaverton School District SRO Experience Survey, ECONorthwest, Nov. 2020.
[4] The phrase "school staff" is used throughout this report to refer to all Beaverton School District employees. When the specific roles of school staff are relevant to the context, these exact roles are specified (e.g., administrators, teachers, school psychologists, etc.).

Equity Analysis

Students, parents, and school staff who share marginalized identities are often left out of the policy decisions that significantly impact their experiences. Thoughtful and intentional re-designs force us to articulate what is working well, what is not, for whom, and how to mitigate unintended consequences so that everyone benefits. This review process applies an analytical approach grounded in the premise that creating safe learning environments for all students is not a zero-sum game. When programs and policies are designed around those most impacted, everyone benefits.

Survey and focus group participants were provided with an option to share aspects of their identity, including their race/ethnicity. Students were also provided with options to share whether they have a disability and whether they identify as part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, nonbinary, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+)[5] community. Parents were given the option to share aspects of their children's identities. The purpose of this is threefold:

1. **To create safe and comfortable environments for sharing experiences in focus groups.**
2. **To align with the District's stated equity commitment**.
3. **To address School Board members' and community members' questions about how SRO support differs by race/ethnicity.** This factor is also relevant to study in Beaverton due to national trends over time,[6][7] and due to the history of modern-day policing.[8][9]

Though collecting and reporting demographic identity is important for analytical purposes, no community is a monolith. Attempting to characterize every person of a particular racial/ethnic or other identity group as having one type of perspective is harmful, inaccurate, and overly simplistic. There is a richness in the diversity of thought, belief, strength, experience, and perspective among people of all identity groups. This report, when stating perspectives of different identity groups, implies trends based on the data collected and is not intended to be interpreted as indicative of every person of that same identity.

Key Findings

Finding 1: **Most people are not formally and proactively provided with any information about what SROs' roles are and what to expect from them. SROs themselves say there is a wide range of variation in the direction they get from school leaders.**

- One parent said, "[t]here's never been a clear explanation of the day-to-day responsibilities of what I should expect as a parent from SROs." This sentiment was shared widely across District community groups (e.g., students, parents, staff) and across identities (e.g., race, role).

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[5] Researchers recognize that language is ever-evolving, and so too are culturally-defined acronyms such as LGBTQIA+. The plus sign (+) in the acronym denotes the myriad ways gender identities and sexual orientations are described. As noted in the Oregon Department of Education's Student Success Plan for this community of students, this acronym refers to gender identities as well as sexual orientations. It is important to recognize the challenges for each are unique. Definitions may be found here.

[6] Hoekstra, Mark, and CarlyWill Sloan. 2022. "Does Race Matter for Police Use of Force? Evidence from 911 Calls." *American Economic Review*, 112 (3): 827-60.

[7] Desilver, D., Lipka, M, and Fahmy, D. "10 Things We Know About Race and Policing in the U.S." Pew Research. 6/3/20.

[8] "The Origins of Modern Day Policing," NAACP.

[9] "The History of Policing and Race in the U.S. Are Deeply Intertwined." NPR. 07/13/20.

- In the survey, 68% of high school students and 53% of middle school students said they have seen an SRO at their school. One out of three students said they know nothing about SROs.

- SROs are likely to say that their role is to build relationships with students, help school staff identify how to handle situations that may relate to crimes, provide education to students, and enforce the law.

- Most staff that participated in focus groups and surveys (78%) are not aware of any written protocols that guide the use of SROs, leaving much to discretion. SROs themselves referenced variability between schools in how they typically get involved in law enforcement situations.

- Staff shared experiences of inconsistent use of SROs and a lack of district-wide standards and expectations for how and when SROs are engaged. This variability and discretion have significant consequences for students' involvement with the juvenile justice system.

Finding 2: **There is a wide range of perspectives about whether police have a place in schools, and for what safety concerns. Despite the breadth of perspectives, there is common ground that police are needed for active shooter threats and situations of extreme violence.**

- Students of all identities share a fear of school shootings, weapons at school, mental health challenges, and bullying. Black and other students of color experience additional barriers to safety. Barriers compound for students of color who may also experience disabilities or identify as LGBTQIA+.

- Positive perceptions of SROs: Most parents (71%) and staff (66%), but fewer than half of students (43%) support having SROs in schools. The most common response for what students, parents, and staff like about SROs was a perception that SROs can stop someone who is harming others (particularly school shootings), have special training to deal with emergencies, and can stop a crime from happening.
    - In survey responses, three out of ten students said that they feel safer with SROs. These students were more likely to be Native American/Alaska Native, White, and/or male.
    - Approximately 45% of students said they trust SROs. Student groups who were the most likely to say they trust SROs are Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders students (73%)[10], male students (51%), and White students (45%).

- Negative perceptions of SROs: Fewer than 20% of students, staff, and parents oppose SROs in schools, while nearly an equal amount is undecided. Those with negative perceptions consistently include the same demographic groups among students, parents, and school staff.
    - More Black students (21%), students with disabilities (17%), nonbinary (19%), and LGBTQIA+ students (17%) are opposed to SROs in schools compared to students overall (11%). Substantially more high school students at ACMA (39%), Community School (38%), and International School (34%) oppose SROs compared to students overall (13%).

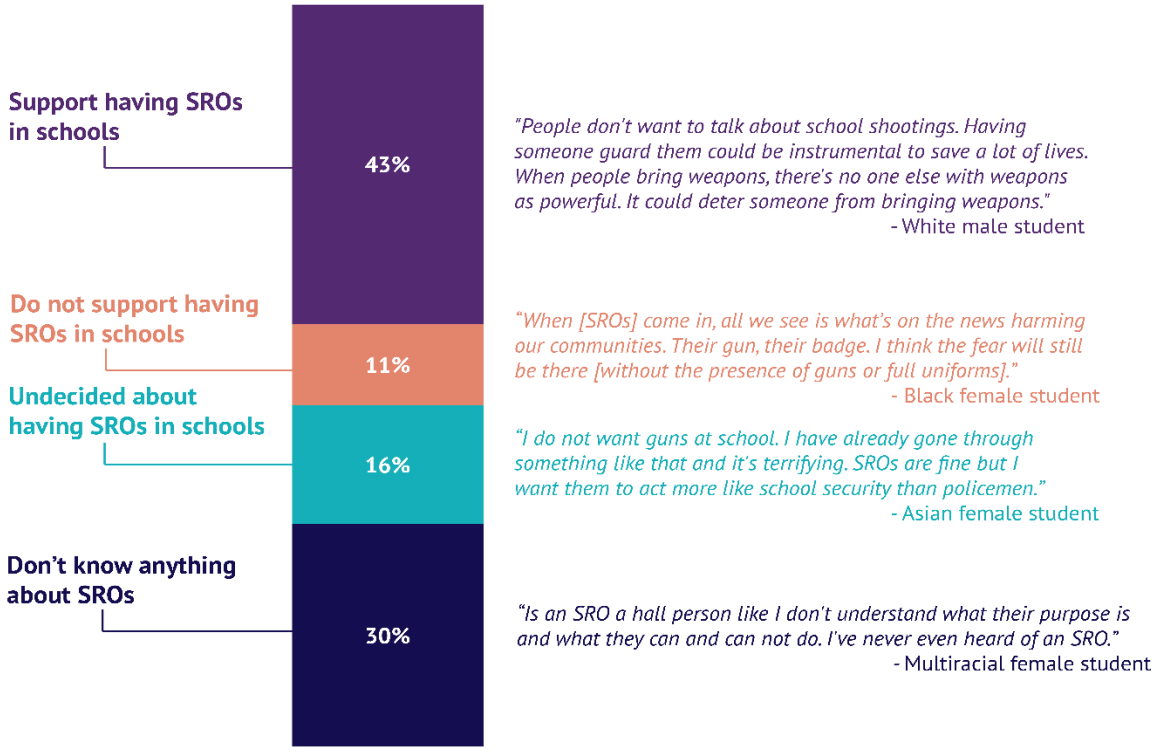
[10] The number of responses in this racial/ethnic group is small (n=20), however, this is representative of the student population. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students compose 1% of District enrollment and composed 1% of survey responses.

- More parents of Black students (29%), nonbinary students (34%), and LGBTQIA+ students (24%) oppose SROs in schools, compared to parents overall (12%). Comparing across grade levels, fewer parents of elementary school students (65%) support SROs in schools, compared to parents of middle school (75%) and high school (79%) students.
- Several students reported in focus groups and surveys that when they have engaged police or SROs to report crimes or for assistance, they feel that the police or SRO did not handle the situation appropriately; all of these are either female or nonbinary, except one. At best, they say police involvement did not help them; in some cases, it hurt them and negatively impacted their educational experience.

- School staff were most likely to say that SROs are most appropriate for responding to possible crimes in the school-adjacent neighborhood (79%), investigating threats against students (72%), and leading a school response to a public safety emergency (69%). Students and parents in focus groups widely agreed that SROs are not at all appropriate for mental health responses.

- **There is common ground that police are needed for certain situations.** Parents, students, and staff across identity groups said that police should be involved in responding to incidents that involve school shootings and extreme physical violence. **Many parents - including those who are generally supportive of police - think there are ways to achieve that common ground without having police regularly in schools.**

FEWER THAN HALF OF STUDENTS SURVEYED SUPPORT HAVING SROs IN SCHOOLS; NEARLY A THIRD DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT SROs



Source: Survey of Beaverton School District middle and high school students conducted Feb-Mar, 2022.

Finding 3: **Most school administrators and many school counselors, social workers, and psychologists find value in partnerships with police officers to address the prevention and intervention of school violence, serve as a consultant/advisor on law enforcement topics, and educate students about the law.**

- School administrators are the most likely school staff to rely on SROs (72%). With a few exceptions, nearly all administrators in interviews and focus groups shared that they have experienced SROs being helpful to manage school and student safety. Administrators rely on SROs to play a consultant role for administrators/school staff.
  - Examples of trainings that SROs have done include safety trainings for parents about social media and explaining to students the legal or criminal aspects of some infractions.
  - Examples of how SROs have supported school safety by being a consultant include stories of journals being found in a students' possession, identifying weapons at home, creating safety plans for students, and connecting families with community services. SROs often participate in "Behavioral Health and Wellness Team" meetings or threat assessments, perceived as a valuable role by school staff. Most students and parents are unaware of this function, as there is no information shared with them by the District about this work and how it supports student and school safety.

Finding 4: **While police based in schools have supported many people's sense of safety, police have threatened the safety of others including many nonbinary, LGBTQIA+, Black, and other students of color. There is evidence of this threat in the disproportionate discipline, arrests, and referrals for some of these populations, impacting their ability to learn in school.**

- Students that identify as Black, Hispanic/Latino, or Pacific Islander experienced a disproportionate rate of arrests and referrals for a criminal offense by Beaverton Police compared to their proportion of the student population. School staff (89%) and students' family members (10%) initiated nearly all the reports that lead to student arrests and referrals.

- SROs from Beaverton Police arrested or referred 121 Beaverton School District students in the school years from 2018-19 to 2021-22, which averages to about 40 arrests and referrals a year not including 2020-21.[11] [12]
  - Twenty of those students were arrested (i.e., taken into custody) by the SRO and 101 were referred to the Washington County Juvenile Department (WCJD). The median age of students arrested for criminal offenses is 14 years old.
  - Among the students arrested, eight (40%) were for non-criminal offenses (e.g., truancy, running away from home) and 12 (60%) were for criminal offenses. The most common criminal offense is disorderly conduct, composing 19% of referrals. This charge is subject to considerable discretion and may include offenses that are violations of the school code.

- These trends are mirrored in decades of national data and research, and recent Beaverton School District exclusionary discipline data. Research indicates that disproportionalities are likely a product of implicit bias within the school and law enforcement systems, not of higher

[11] Students were not meeting in-person for most of this school year due to mandated distance learning from the COVID-19 pandemic.
[12] Arrest data from Washington County Sheriff's Office and Hillsboro Police were not obtained for this report.

rates of misbehavior or criminality of any racial/ethnic group.[13]

A snapshot of what the research says about what's behind the disproportionalities in exclusionary discipline, referrals, and arrests

"Although discriminant analysis suggests that disproportionate rates of office referral and suspension for boys are due to increased rates of misbehavior, no support was found for the hypothesis that African American students act out more than other students. Rather, African American students appear to be referred to the office for less serious and more subjective reasons. Coupled with extensive and highly consistent prior data, these results argue that disproportionate representation of African Americans in office referrals, suspension and expulsion is evidence of a pervasive and systematic bias that may well be inherent in the use of exclusionary discipline" (Skiba, 2000, p. 3).

Finding 5: **Creating school cultures that prioritize students' emotional safety in addition to their physical safety will require a district-wide culture shift that offers guidance for all schools. This work requires verbal and resource-backed commitments from District leadership; professional support for school-level leaders and staff; and dedicated time.**

- When students, parents, and school staff were asked in focus groups what their priority recommendations to strengthen student and school safety are, community members indicate a widespread desire for more District-wide safety supports that prioritize emotional safety, including mental health, time for school staff to build positive relationships with students, and time for students to build positive relationships with their peers.

- In May 2022, the Beaverton School District Behavioral Health & Wellness Project team proposed a comprehensive set of recommendations that are grounded in trauma-informed, anti-racist practices. This work presents a tremendous district strength, and a foundation from which to build a future comprehensive safety and wellness support plan.

- Restorative justice practices were identified in staff focus groups and interviews as a tool for supporting students and an alternative to exclusionary practices, including suspension and expulsion that some associate with the SRO program.

- When implemented with fidelity, restorative practices are grounded in a philosophical shift that centers on emotional safety by building healthy relationships and positive school culture.

[13] Skiba, Russell & Michael, Robert & Nardo, Abra & Peterson, Reece. (2000). The Color of Discipline: Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment. Indiana Education Policy Center.

Snapshot of Beaverton School District's SRO Program

Who pays for the SROs?

There's a common misconception that the District pays for all or most of the SROs and that those funds can be repurposed for more school staff. However, the vast majority of funding comes from the City of Beaverton ($1.2 million for 6 SROs) and Washington County Sheriff ($371,454 for 3 SROs). The District does share some cost with the City of Beaverton.

Where are SROs based?

- 3 agencies provide 11 SROs: Beaverton Police (7), Washington Co. Sheriff (3), & Hillsboro Police (1)
- Not in 1 school all the time as there are 54 schools in District
- Assigned to high schools in portfolio. Also visit other schools & respond to calls for service in community.

Who hires SROs & what qualifications must they meet?

- Hired, selected by law enforcement agencies that employ them.
- Qualifications include a minimum of 3 years experience as a police officer and few other minimum qualifications. This differs from best practice.
- Beaverton Police IGA has a provision to allow City and District to make recommendations on hiring.

What are the training requirements?

- District defers to the individual law enforcement agencies entirely.
- This is different from Hillsboro School District, which prescribes some minimum training requirements.
- Many SROs take a nationally recognized training for SROs.
- However, training is not required in IGAs, job descriptions, or policies/protocols.

What the Research Says

What can be learned from other school districts?

- At least 50 school districts around the country serving a total of two million students either eliminated school resource officer programs or cut their budgets in the past two years.[14]
- In a few cases, districts chose to end the program amidst local public pressure but reinstated the program following pressure from the other end of the spectrum of debate regarding police in schools. These examples shed light on the inevitable pendulum swing that elected officials face regarding highly charged policy and budget decisions. Further, these examples show how extreme shifts in short periods may be mitigated by thoughtful planning for alternative measures if SROs are removed, and by an intentional re-design of policy solutions that benefit everyone.

What does the research say about SROs and school shootings?

- In the wake of the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, there is renewed interest in research about whether the presence of SROs in a school can prevent or stop a school shooting. Many people think and want to believe that SROs prevent or reduce gun violence in schools, but the evidence does not substantiate that perception. There is no known study that substantiates the claim that school shootings are prevented by SROs or the presence of armed staff.
- In fact, research has shown that the presence of an SRO may increase the death toll in school shootings. A study that reviewed nearly 40 years of data from school shootings in schools with and without an armed officer or guard found that the death rate was 2.83 times *higher* in schools with an armed officer/guard present compared to those without one.[15] Research indicates that many school shooters are actively suicidal, and that an armed officer may serve as an incentive rather than a deterrent. Further, because the majority of school shooters target a school they have attended in the past, active shooter drills may be counterproductive. This research recommends schools invest in preventative efforts rather than school hardening measures.
- Without quantitative evidence that SROs prevent or deter school shootings and gun violence, proponents of school-based policing point to anecdotes in which police played a role in engaging an active shooter at school (e.g., Columbine, Santa Fe, Reynolds High Schools). However, there are also examples of SROs being widely criticized and subject to legal and procedural investigations for their lack of (timely) response to school shootings (e.g., Uvalde, Parkland).
- At Robb Elementary in Uvalde, video evidence and testimony from responding officers documented that the District's own SRO program failed to comply with the Active Shooter Plan they authored and contradicted their training in law enforcement protocol and doctrine.[16] A bi-partisan committee in the Texas legislature called this a "systemic failure" that implicated the school district and multiple law enforcement agencies.[17] Most victims were 10 and 11 years old, some of whom had called 911 near the beginning of the shooting. At least one person is believed to have died waiting for police response in the over one hour before police engaged the shooter. Nearly 400 local, state, and federal law enforcement officers responded to that shooting.

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[14] Riser-Kositsky, M., Sawchuk, S., Peele, H. "Which Districts Have Cut School Policing Programs?" Education Week. 06/29/22.

[15] Peterson J, Densley J, Erickson G. Presence of Armed School Officials and Fatal and Nonfatal Gunshot Injuries During Mass School Shootings, United States, 1980-2019. *JAMA Network Open.* 2021;4(2).

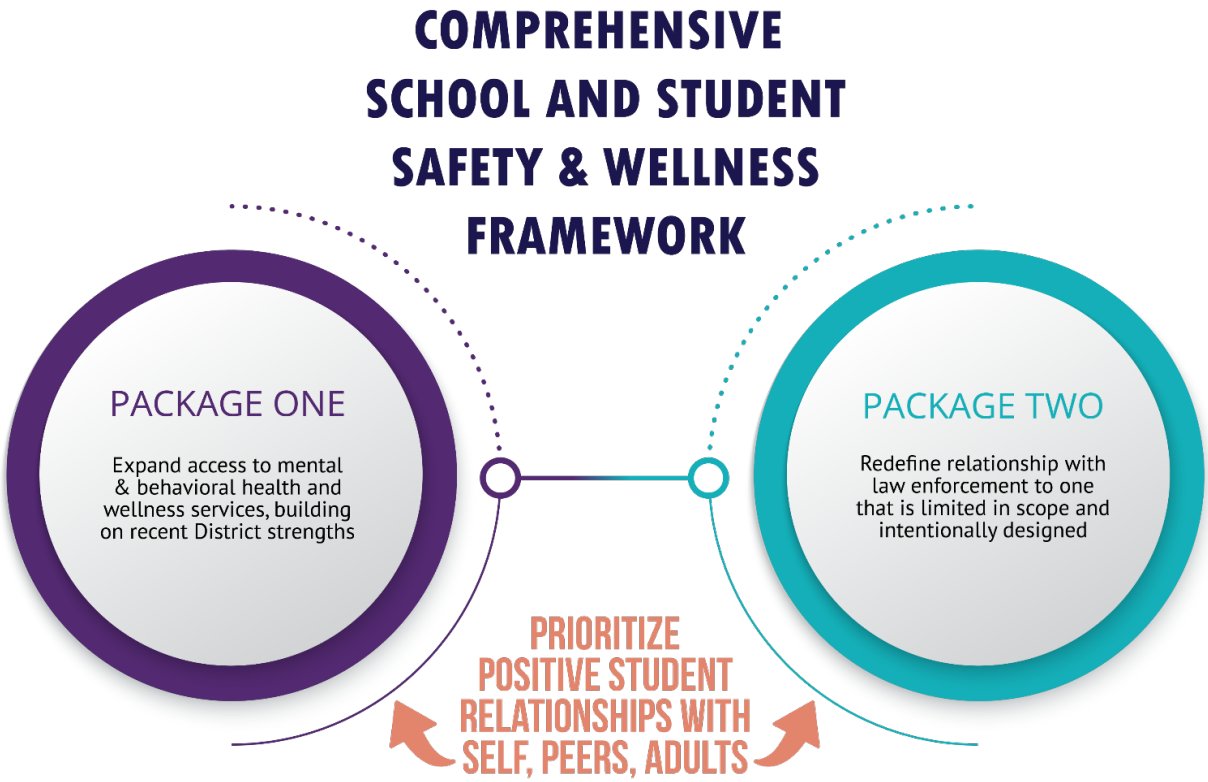
[16] Investigative Committee on the Robb Elementary Shooting, Texas House of Representatives. Interim Report 2022.

[17] Despart, Z. "'Systemic failures' in Uvalde shooting went far beyond local police, Texas House report details." Texas Tribune. 07/17/22.

Recommendations

This review sought to conduct a student-centered comprehensive review of Beaverton School District's SRO program and to provide recommendations for "actionable next steps to guide the District and the City in the development and delivery of the best model for ensuring student and community safety and support."[18] The recommendations offer this guidance, elevating where there is common ground across a diversity of perspectives.

The graphic below provides an overview of two separate and complementary recommendation packages, both of which are equally important and necessary. The first package is focused on prevention strategies by expanding access to mental and behavioral health and wellness services. This package builds on the District's strengths. The second package is focused on redefining the relationship between the District and the law enforcement agencies through a substantially different Intergovernmental Agreement. Both packages are threaded together by a District-wide focus on prioritizing positive student relationships with peers and adults. The District may wish to create a comprehensive school and student safety and wellness plan that incorporates both packages.



[18] Request for Proposals, issued August 2021 by Beaverton School District, written in collaboration with representatives from the Beaverton City Council, p. 3.

Package 1.

Continue to expand access to mental and behavioral health and wellness services, and practices that promote positive relationships between and among students, school staff, parents, and community members.

Recommendations
a. Behavioral Health & Wellness Project: Fund and implement the Project recommendations, developed by district staff, school staff, students, and parents from a variety of school communities.
b. Restorative Practices: Make it a district and board priority to define when and how restorative practices will be used as an alternative to discipline and when discipline is more appropriate. Standardize district-wide protocols and practices.
c. Staff Capacity for Relationship-Building: Consider establishing and resourcing a district-wide level of service for mental and behavioral health professionals and social workers. Prioritize providing equitable access to these professionals across schools and provide regular public reports about the implementation of this effort accessible via web and School Board meetings.
d. Mental Health First Aid: Convene a diverse stakeholder group to develop a long-term strategy for deploying professionals trained in mental health first aid specifically among youth and who are representative of the diversity of the District's student population.
e. Positive Identity Development & Peer Relationships: Engage students, parents, and school staff in the design and implementation of initiatives that support positive identity development and peer relationships. This includes conflict resolution training, anti-bullying support, and culturally sustaining curriculum. Resource and support district-wide integration of these initiatives, partnering with community-based organizations and training providers who are experienced in culturally specific and responsive approaches.
f. Staff Mental Health Needs: Regularly engage staff associations to ensure that teachers and school staff's mental health needs are addressed in ways that are valuable and meaningful to them.

Package 2.

Redefine Beaverton School District's (BSD) relationships with law enforcement agencies to be limited in scope and intentionally designed. This should occur through a single new IGA with all three agencies. The IGA should clearly structure and limit the role of law enforcement in schools to the specific law enforcement activities that represent "common ground" or shared interests among an overwhelming majority of the BSD community - including those most impacted by school arrests and referrals to the justice system, who identify as LGBTQIA+, and/or who identify as experiencing a disability. IGAs were described earlier in this report as a nearly unanimous best practice for fostering positive relationships between law enforcement agencies and school districts. A clear and limited IGA also provides the School Board, City Council, and community with more transparency and clarity about the role of law enforcement in schools.

Law enforcement does not need to have offices within schools for these functions/roles to occur, nor do they need to be in any one school full-time (this does not happen anyway). These officers' duties will be significantly more limited in scope than the current SRO program allows (a comparison chart

is available in the Recommendations section in Table 21). To acknowledge that the recommended limited and specific role for law enforcement is substantially different from current practice and that it differs from traditional SRO programs, it is recommended that this program be referred to as something like a Youth Services Officer, Community Service Officer, or Law Enforcement Liaison Program. If this recommendation is adopted, the District should develop and implement a communication and public information strategy to ensure that people are informed with accurate information about changes and the rationale behind the changes. The IGA should include the components below and emphasize a limited and specific role for law enforcement for the duties outlined in items a-f.

Recommendations for a new IGA with law enforcement agencies
a. Active Shooter Threats: Provide immediate response to active shooters on school grounds. This revision should also: a) outline the frequency with which district and school leaders and law enforcement officials review safety protocols with a trauma-informed lens; and b) create at least annual training and table-top exercise opportunities to review After-Action Reports from prior school shootings nationally.
b. Extreme Violence: Provide immediate response to extreme violence at school, involving weapons and/or imminent threats of severe physical harm to students, school staff, volunteers, or others. As part of the implementation, District leaders, school leaders, and law enforcement officials should collaboratively develop a shared agreement about what situations are deemed "extreme violence" and talk through "gray areas" to avoid over-reliance on law enforcement, to delineate staff roles, and determine how data about SRO involvement in these incidents will be tracked consistently.
c. Collection of Illegal/Prohibited Substances: Law enforcement may take possession of large quantities of illegal or prohibited substances found on school grounds that cannot be disposed of safely and legally by school or district personnel.
d. Law Enforcement Consultant: The IGA should specify the role of a Law Enforcement Consultant specifically for school administrators, counselors, social workers, and psychologists. This role shall also be available to schools' "Behavioral, Health & Wellness Teams," "Care Teams," and threat assessment review teams.
e. Limit law enforcement role in discipline and mental health emergencies: The District should consider convening a multi-stakeholder group to make recommendations about narrowing or prohibiting the use of disorderly conduct as a charge for student behavior when no other crime is alleged/committed. This would reduce reliance on individual discretion, subject to implicit bias. This specificity should be documented in the IGA. Additionally, the IGA should delineate the limited circumstances in which a police officer would be called for a mental health emergency (package 1 identifies alternative resources which are better equipped for these situations).
f. Prohibit law enforcement role in immigration enforcement on school grounds or at school events: The IGA should clearly specify that it is not the role of local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration laws. In 2017, the Beaverton City Council passed resolution 4429 declaring the City a "Sanctuary City."[19] This resolution affirms that the City will follow state law (Oregon Revised Statute 181A.820) that prohibits state and local law enforcement agencies from using their personnel, equipment, or resources to enforce federal immigration law.

[19] City of Beaverton Resolution 4429.

g. Selection & Training: Require any officer likely to work with youth to be sufficiently trained in active shooter responses in school settings; trauma-informed approaches to working with youth; information and knowledge about law enforcement role (specified above) in mental health emergencies and law enforcement; and student and parent rights related to searches and arrests.

h. Uniforms & Weapons: The process of updating the IGA should consider "dressing down" traditional law enforcement uniforms in favor of uniforms that cause less intimidation and fear. There are many other agencies - including in neighboring Hillsboro - that allow officers to wear polo shirts with clear law enforcement markings, names, and badges. Also consider keeping firearms concealed, reducing the number of weapons carried, and wearing protective vests under shirts.

i. Data Collection & Reporting: Require brief monthly reports from any officers who work in District schools. These reports would be provided to and reviewed by the Sergeant and District staff.

Recommendations for the District

a. Enhance Communications with Students, Parents, and School Staff: The above recommendations propose a substantial redefining of the current relationship that the District has with law enforcement. Given that there has been significant misconception of what this relationship is and how it operates, it is advised that the District develop a robust communication plan and process for regularly informing the District community about this new IGA, if adopted, and the implementation of it. These communications should be easy-to-digest in their design (e.g., Frequently Asked Questions), focused on the District's comprehensive student and school safety plan (not just law enforcement), and should be supplemented by discussion integrated into staff meetings, parent meetings, student assemblies, etc.

b. Expand Training for School Administrators and Other School Staff: The District should provide all school administrators clear expectations, training, and guidance about when to involve law enforcement in a school setting. This training may also be made available to the school staff who are most accustomed to working with police in schools including social workers, counselors, psychologists, and campus monitors. The District should also establish a consistent point of contact who hears feedback from administrators and coordinates with administrators to identify ways to improve implementation of changes and develop consistency around approaches to school safety.

c. Develop and Implement Data Collection, Reporting, and Continuous Improvement Practices regarding Use of Law Enforcement: The District should produce an easily accessible, translated, legally compliant (i.e., FERPA) summarized version of the monthly reports of officers' work in the District. This report should be made available for school administrators, students, parents, and the public through an easily accessible District webpage on a bi-annual or annual basis. Reports should also be presented to the School Board. At a minimum, data collected would follow the best practice guidance detailed earlier.

Introduction

The Beaverton School District ("District"), in partnership with the City of Beaverton ("City"), commissioned an external "Comprehensive Review" of the District's School Resource Officer ("SRO") program. Articulated in Intergovernmental Agreements with the District, the Beaverton Police Department, Hillsboro Police Department, and the Washington County Sheriff's Office each assign armed, uniformed law enforcement officers to serve as SROs in District schools.

Amidst national and local events particularly in the months and years following the murder of George Floyd and many other Black Americans, multiple public discussions on the topic of SROs have been held by the Beaverton City Council, the Beaverton School Board, the Beaverton Student Advisory Committee, and the Beaverton City Human Rights Advisory Commission, with the latter making a recommendation to the City Council to remove City SROs from District schools.[20]

This review follows a smaller study the District conducted about the SRO program.[21][22] It intends to provide additional information and evidence about the program, including District community members' perceptions and experiences, along with policy research and recommendations to help District and City leaders plan for the future of school security, student safety, and the SRO program.

What is an SRO?

The Education Commission of the States did a review of all states' policies regarding School Resource Officers in early 2019. Oregon was one of just 20 states in the country without a statute that clearly defines what an SRO is.[23] Instead, it appears that in Oregon and 19 other states without clearly defined statutes, many school districts individually enter into written agreements with their local law enforcement agencies to provide SROs. These agreements, known as Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs), tend to define SROs in terms of their duties, roles, and training.

Common characteristics across different definitions specify that an SRO is an armed, uniformed law enforcement officer working in schools with the legal authority of any typical officer (including arrest). The National Association of School Resource Officers defines an SRO as follows: "The school resource officer (SRO) is a carefully selected, specifically trained, and properly equipped full-time law enforcement officer with sworn law enforcement authority, trained in school-based law enforcement and crisis response, assigned by the employing law enforcement agency to work in the school using community-oriented policing concepts."[24]

[20] Beaverton Human Rights Advisory Commission Policing Recommendations, January 2021.
[21] Beaverton School District SRO Report, Beaverton School District Department of Public Safety, 2020.
[22] Beaverton School District SRO Experience Survey, ECONorthwest, Nov. 2020.
[23] 50-State Comparison: K-12 School Safety regarding School Resource Officers, Education Commission of the States, Feb. 2019.
[24] National Association of School Resource Officers Frequently Asked Questions.

SRO Program Review Process

Key Takeaways:

- Researchers centered the review process on the experiences and perceptions of students, parents, administrators, teachers, and other school staff. They were invited to participate in an online survey and a focus group.
- Over 8,700 students, parents, district staff, and City of Beaverton residents completed online surveys or feedback forms, and more than 120 students, parents, and staff participated in a focus group. This section describes outreach methods.

As a follow-up to the District and City's prior work on SROs and continued community interest in the topic of police in schools, the two parties jointly decided that a review of the SRO program was needed. Representatives from the School Board and City Council jointly developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify a consultant to conduct the review. The purpose of the review is to "center on the experience of Beaverton School District students" and result in recommendations for "actionable steps to guide the District and the City in the development and delivery of the best model for ensuring student and school community safety and support.[25]" The School Board and City Council collaborated to develop many research questions in the RFP. Following a competitive process with representatives from the Beaverton School District (including school board, student, and staff union representatives), Beaverton City Council, and Beaverton Human Rights Advisory Commission, SeeChange was selected to conduct this review and to provide recommendations.

Community Engagement

Student Surveys

Researchers developed the student survey in collaboration with representatives of the Beaverton Student Advisory Committee. The online survey was administered in February 2022 to all middle and high school students. The survey was anonymous and remained open for two weeks.

- 3,733 students completed the survey.
- Almost all middle schools and high schools were proportionally represented. Flex Online, charter schools (Spanish and Chinese Immersion), and the middle school options programs at Aloha-Huber Park, Raleigh Hills, and Springville were not represented in the survey (Table A1 in the Appendix).
- Students had the opportunity to self-report their racial/ethnic identities in the survey. All racial/ethnic backgrounds were proportionally represented in survey results compared to district enrollment, except Latino students, who were unrepresented, and Multiracial students, who were overrepresented. Nearly 30% of survey respondents identify as LGBTQIA+ and 10% identify as experiencing a disability.

[25] Request for Proposals, issued August 2021 by Beaverton School District, written in collaboration with representatives from the Beaverton City Council, p. 3.

Student Focus Groups

In April and May 2022, 47 high school students participated in virtual or in-person focus groups about their experiences related to school safety and School Resource Officers. All high school students who completed the survey had the opportunity to express their interest in participating in a virtual focus group via a form connected to the student survey. The researchers also communicated the survey and focus group sign-up opportunity to Oregon Student Voice, a statewide student-led organization that has representation from the District. Parents of students who signed up for focus groups were notified and allowed to opt their students out of participation. All other students were emailed an invitation to reserve a focus group spot.

Virtual student focus groups:

- Virtual focus groups were offered after school hours for up to 80 students.
- 61 students signed up for a virtual focus group and 56 were invited. Due to slow responses to the invites, researchers emailed 2-3 personalized reminders to students and offered incentives.
- Attrition occurred due to parent opt-outs or incorrect/missing contact information.
- 56 students received invitations based on their interest, and 6 students participated virtually.

In-person student focus groups:

- Researchers coordinated with school-based staff to recruit students. Focus groups were open to students regardless of whether they completed the survey and were done during the school day.
- 18 students participated in 2 separate focus groups at Community School.
- 7 students participated in a focus group at Westview High School.
- 16 students participated in a focus group at Southridge High School.
- In total, 41 students participated in an in-person, voluntary focus group.

Parent/Guardian Surveys

The parent/guardian survey was an adapted version of the student survey to allow for comparisons between the two groups on similar topics related to school safety and SROs. The online survey was administered in March 2022 to parents and guardians of all students using an invitation and link sent by District staff via ParentSquare. This method was chosen to ensure that people who completed the survey were District parents, rather than those who may find the link online but otherwise have no connection to the District. In addition, outreach included multiple culturally specific organizations in the region such as Unite Oregon's BOLD program (partnership with the City of Beaverton), Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), Folks of Color in Schools, CAIRO, REAP (which has programs that serve BSD students), the Beaverton Black Parent Union, and the District's Special Education Advisory Group. The survey was anonymous and available in the nine most common languages spoken by parents/guardians in the District. The survey remained open for two weeks.

- 3,991 parents of Beaverton School District students completed the survey.
- All grade levels and schools were represented, proportionate to student enrollment.
- Parents of students from all racial/ethnic backgrounds were represented.
- 11% of parents/guardians said they have a student who identifies as LGBTQIA+ and 17% have a student experiencing a disability.

Parent/Guardian Focus Groups
All parents who completed the survey had the opportunity to express their interest in participating in a virtual focus group via a form connected to the parent survey. Because the number of focus group volunteers far exceeded the number of parent focus group slots (over 700 signed up for 64 slots), researchers used a stratified random sampling process to select parents for the following nine focus groups: Black and African American parents, Asian and Asian American parents, Hispanic and Latino/a parents, Parents whose primary language is Spanish, Parents of students who identify as LGBTQIA+, Parents of students experiencing a disability, and two focus groups for any parents. Parents on the District's SPED Advisory Council were invited to an additional virtual focus group.

- 95 parents were randomly selected and invited for 64 virtual focus group slots.
- 27 parents participated in focus groups.

School Staff Survey
In March 2022, an online survey was administered to all District employees and school-based employees of community partners using an invitation and link sent by District staff via their staff portal.

- 870 District teachers, administrators, and other school staff completed the survey.
- School staff from all elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, charter schools, options schools, the Community Transition Program, and the FLEX Online program were represented.
- Classroom teachers (42%) and other school-based staff (41%) comprised most participants. School administrators (3%); school counselors, social workers, and school psychologists (6%); campus supervisors (1%); and district administrators and staff (7%) also participated in the survey.
- Most survey participants identify as White (72%); 16% of participants did not disclose their race/ethnicity.

School Staff Focus Groups and Interviews
All school staff who completed the survey had the opportunity to express their interest in participating in a virtual focus group via a form connected to the staff survey. All school staff who signed up were invited to participate in one of 7 focus groups: middle/elementary school administrators; teachers and staff of color; any classroom teacher; social workers/counselors/school psychologists; and campus monitors/supervisors or other school staff; and two focus groups for any school staff. Individual interviews were offered to all high school administrators who were not available to participate in a focus group. Seven high school administrators were interviewed, representing 5 out of 6 comprehensive high schools.

- 87 administrators, teachers, and other school staff signed up for focus groups. All were invited.
- In total, 47 participated in a focus group or interview.

SRO Focus Groups and Interviews
In April 2022, researchers conducted in-person focus groups with the majority of the District's SROs and their sergeants. Researchers also interviewed leaders from the Beaverton Police Department, Washington County Sheriff, Hillsboro Police Department, and the District's Public Safety Department.

City of Beaverton Resident Community Input Form

The preceding surveys and focus groups describe opportunities for those who are either current students in the District, parents/guardians of current students in the District, or staff who work in the District. Community members who are not currently students, school staff, or parents/guardians of students had an opportunity to provide input via a brief electronic input form publicized by the City through their website and an electronic newsletter. This form received 110 responses. Of these, 34% identified as a former District student, staff, or parent. Approximately 20% of respondents are residents of unincorporated Washington County, 3.5% are residents of the City of Hillsboro, and nearly 7% have no current or past connection to the City of Beaverton or District schools.

Interviews with City or District Public Bodies with Public Positions on SROs

Researchers sought to include the perspectives of any official City of Beaverton or District committee with a public position about SROs. The only entity that met this criterion was the City's Human Rights Advisory Commission. The Commission designated one representative that was made available for an interview with researchers for this report.

Additional Data Sources

In addition to the surveys, focus groups, and interviews, this review was informed by an analysis of the following data sources:

- School district documents (e.g., policies, handbooks)
- Law enforcement agency documents (e.g., policies, job descriptions)
- Law enforcement agency calls-for-service logs and arrest/referral records
- School district student discipline records
- School climate survey data
- Existing research and reports about school safety and SRO programs
- City of Beaverton Human Rights Advisory Commission SRO recommendations

Equity Analysis

Students, parents, and school staff who share marginalized identities are often left out of the policy decisions that significantly impact their experiences. When programs and policies are designed around those most impacted, everyone benefits. Why? Because thoughtful and intentional re-designs force us to articulate what is working well, what is not, for whom, and how to mitigate unintended consequences so that everyone benefits. This review process applies an analytical approach that is grounded in the premise that creating safe learning environments for all students is not a zero-sum game. There are approaches to safety that can work for everyone.

Survey and focus group participants were given the option to share aspects of their identity, including their gender and race/ethnicity, and for students, whether they have a disability or identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. Parents were given the option to share aspects of their children's identities. The purpose of this is threefold:

1. **To create safe and comfortable environments for sharing experiences in focus groups.** Based on experience, researchers know that for some people, sharing experiences with people who share one or more aspects of their identity creates a safe space. In focus group sign-up forms, participants were given multiple options for focus group participation (e.g., similar

race/ethnicity, similar school, LGBTQIA+ orientation, student disability). They were also provided with the option to state that these preferences are not salient to them.

2. **To align with the District's stated equity commitment**. In its equity policy, the District states, "Equity is achieved when there is sufficient evidence that each child has a high-quality educational experience, and outcomes and successes are not predicted by student subgroup membership.[26]" To address inequities, community engagement approaches must intentionally seek out and create the conditions for historically and currently marginalized community members to participate. This means employing targeted strategies to reach these populations as a supplement to universal strategies that ensure everyone has a chance to participate (i.e., this is why universal survey and focus group sign-up opportunities were provided, too).

3. **To address School Board members' and community members' questions about how SRO support differs by race/ethnicity.** In defining the scope of work for this comprehensive review, the City Council and School Board expressed a desire to learn these differences. In addition, a prior District survey about SROs did not include demographic data collection. This was cited as a shortcoming by some board members and community members at the Board's November 16, 2020 meeting. This current SRO review addresses this by identifying quotes by gender and race/ethnicity when this information was known, pertinent to the finding, and/or when it would not compromise anonymity.

This report often uses the term "people of color" to describe trends found in qualitative and quantitative data. This term is used to describe individuals of Asian, African, Latino/Latina, and Native backgrounds as a recognition that each of these communities has been impacted by structural racism. Historically, the phrase "women of color" was first developed by Black women in collaboration with other racially minoritized women in the context of the women's rights movement in the 1970s as a form of cross-racial solidarity. [27] Since then, the phrase "people of color" has been used as a uniting force by individuals of many different races and ethnicities. However, this term, like many, is not universally accepted and does not on its own recognize the myriad ways individual communities are impacted by racism differently. For this reason, the report identifies the race/ethnicity of many individuals in quotes when it is relevant for the context and when identifying that level of racial/ethnic specificity does not compromise anonymity. "People of color" is used as a supplement.

Though collecting and reporting demographic identity is important for analytical purposes, no community is a monolith. Attempting to characterize individuals who identify as part of a particular racial/ethnic group as having one type of perspective is harmful, inaccurate, and overly simplistic. In reality, there is a richness of diversity of thought, belief, experience, and perspective among people of all identity groups. This report, when stating perspectives of different identity groups, implies trends based on the data collected and is not intended to be interpreted as indicative of every person of that same identity. Overgeneralizations (e.g., "all people who identify as X race believe Y") should be avoided. Readers are invited to reflect on the quotes and perspectives that may be different than your own, and how they may be different or similar to what you expected.

[26] Beaverton School District Policy JBB, adopted 6/18/18.

[27] Grady, C. "Why the term 'BIPOC' is so complicated, explained by linguists." Vox. 06/30/20.

School Safety & How it Relates to Learning

Key Takeaways:

- Creating safe school environments is important for students' ability to learn.
- Most students and school staff feel safe at school most of the time.
- Safety threats to students and school staff include issues related to physical well-being (e.g., school shootings and extremely violent fights) and emotional well-being (e.g., mental health).
- Students of all identities share a fear of school shootings, weapons at school, mental health challenges, and bullying. Black and other students of color experience additional barriers to safety. Barriers compound for students of color who may also experience disabilities or identify as LGBTQIA+.
- Students are most likely to report safety issues to parents/family. They are not likely to report safety issues to an SRO.

The ability of students to learn in school is limited if they do not feel safe at school.[28] When students feel safe at school - physically and emotionally - they are less likely to exhibit symptoms of depression and more likely to enjoy their classes and be interested in school, have a positive sense of self, and are more likely to succeed academically.[29] Conversely, when students feel unsafe at school, they are more likely to exhibit behavior challenges that can impact the learning environment for everyone. Ensuring all students feel safe is crucial. So, what are the components of school safety?

Safety has both physical and emotional components

Much research defines school safety in terms of feeling and being physically safe. For example, the U.S. Department of Education releases an annual report on "Indicators of School Crime and Safety"[30] in which most of the indicators focus on physical aspects of safety. Example indicators include school shootings; threats and injuries with weapons; students' use of alcohol and drugs; fights; crime victimization; and bullying (including cyberbullying).

Emotional safety is just as important as physical safety for learning to occur. A leader in research on school climate and culture, the National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE), defines emotional safety as "an experience in which one feels safe to express emotions, security, and confidence to take risks and feel challenged and excited to try something new." [31] This research cites the importance of integrating social and emotional learning throughout all education services to create the conditions for emotional safety.

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[28] Kutsyuruba, B., Klinger, D., and Hussain, A. (2015). Relationships Among School Climate, School Safety, and Student Achievement and Well-being: A Review of the Literature. Review of Education, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 103-135.

[29] Concordia University. (2016, August 24). For teens, feeling safe at school means increased academic success: Research shows the impact of student bullying, depression on classroom engagement. *ScienceDaily*.

[30] Irwin, V., Wang, K., Cui, J., Zhang, J., and Thompson, A. (2021). Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2020 (NCES 2021-092/NCJ 300772). National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, DC.

[31] National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments "Emotional Safety" webpage.

Students' emotional safety is impacted by mental health challenges

It is well-known that students' emotional safety and wellness have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, bullying and harassment, especially online, and other stressors. The Center for Disease Control found that adolescent visits to emergency rooms for suicide attempts increased by 31% between 2019 and 2020.[32] Even before the pandemic - in 2018 - suicide was the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24. The worsening of the mental health crisis prompted the declaration of a "National Emergency in Child and Adolescent Mental Health" by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the Children's Hospital Association.[33]

Mental health challenges translate to the classroom. Students who have unmet mental health needs may experience challenges in relationships with peers and adults at school. Research shows that students' sense of emotional safety can be helped or hindered by teachers' ability to connect with students in relevant and meaningful ways. All this impacts students' physical and emotional safety.

School staff are similarly impacted by mental health challenges

Because school staff is responsible for creating the building-level conditions for student learning, it is important to also consider how teachers, school administrators, and other school staff experience school safety. According to a June 2022 study by RAND Corporation entitled "Restoring Teacher and Principal Well-Being is an Essential Step for Rebuilding Schools," teachers and principals nationally experience stress at twice the rate of the general working public (Figure 1).[34] This study found:

- Teachers and principals of color reported similar job-related stressors to White teachers and principals, but were more likely to also experience racial discrimination.
- Among all races/ethnicities, the second most common job-related stressor for teachers is managing student behavior (29%). The first most common is pressure to recover from COVID-related learning loss (47%).
- For principals, the most common job-related stressor (56%) is staffing teaching and nonteaching positions within their schools.
- Teachers and principals who experience supportive school environments are linked with better well-being.

Notably, the District's school climate survey[35] currently does not include any questions about mental health, though this is a prominent issue in this review's findings. In fact, the word "health" does not show up anywhere in the District's climate survey, and the word "safe" shows up twice. Staff are asked about their ability to address "challenging behaviors," but otherwise, the District may not have sufficient data collection, reporting, and meaning-making infrastructure to regularly explore the breadth of students' and staff needs related to mental and emotional health, which are linked to emotional safety.

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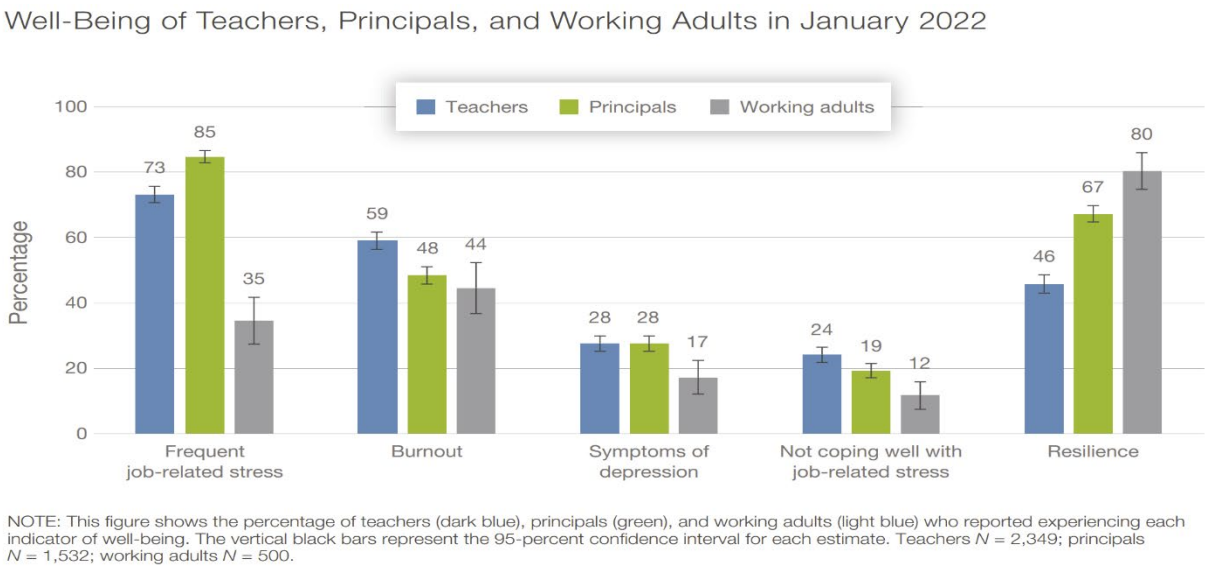
[32] Vestal, C. COVID Harmed Kids' Mental Health - And Schools Are Feeling It. Pew Charitable Trust. 11/08/21.
[33] AAP-AACAP-CHA Declaration of a National Emergency.
[34] Steiner, Elizabeth D., Sy Doan, Ashley Woo, Allyson D. Gittens, Rebecca Ann Lawrence, Lisa Berdie, Rebecca L. Wolfe, Lucas Greer, and Heather L. Schwartz, Restoring Teacher and Principal Well-Being Is an Essential Step for Rebuilding Schools: Findings from the State of the American Teacher and State of the American Principal Surveys. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2022.
[35] https://www.beaverton.k12.or.us/departments/accountability/research-reports

Figure 1. The most common school safety concerns among students, parents, and employees



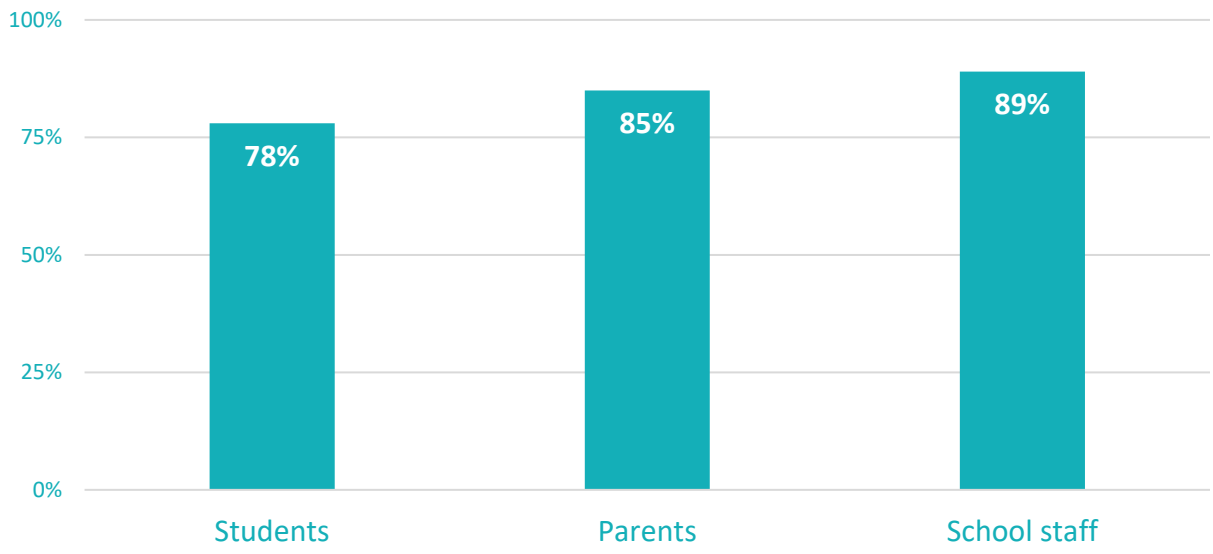
NOTE: This figure shows the percentage of teachers (dark blue), principals (green), and working adults (light blue) who reported experiencing each indicator of well-being. The vertical black bars represent the 95-percent confidence interval for each estimate. Teachers *N* = 2,349; principals *N* = 1,532; working adults *N* = 500.

Source: From Steiner, Elizabeth D., Sy Doan, Ashley Woo, Allyson D. Gittens, Rebecca Ann Lawrence, Lisa Berdie, Rebecca L. Wolfe, Lucas Greer, and Heather L. Schwartz, Restoring Teacher and Principal Well-Being Is an Essential Step for Rebuilding Schools: Findings from the State of the American Teacher and State of the American Principal Surveys. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2022, p. 5.

Feelings of Safety Among Students, Parents, and School Staff

Results from the surveys conducted for this review show that most students (78%) and staff (89%) feel safe at school all or most of the time, and most parents (85%) feel their children are safe at school all or most of the time (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentage of students and school staff who feel safe all or most of the time at school, and percentage of parents who feel their children are safe all or most of the time at school



Source: Surveys of middle and high school students, parents, and staff, Feb-Mar 2022.

Additionally, there are some notable differences in how District community members of different backgrounds experience safety at school (Table 1):

Students:

- More Asian students (85%) feel safe compared to other students.
- Fewer students with disabilities (64%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders (65%), nonbinary (58%), and LGBTQIA+ (68%) students feel safe compared to other students.

Parents: Fewer parents of Black (73%) and Latino (71%) students feel that their children are safe at school, compared to other parents.

School Staff: Fewer Black, Native American/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (83%), Hispanic/Latino (85%), and multiracial (86%) staff feel safe at school compared to Asian (91%) and White staff (91%).

Table 1. Percentage of students and school staff who feel safe all or most of the time at school, and percentage of parents who feel their children are safe at school all or most of the time by social demographics

	Percent of Students	Percent of Parents	Percent of staff
Race or ethnicity			
Asian	85%	89%	91%
Black, African American	72%	73%	--
Black, African American, Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	--	--	83%
Hispanic, Latino/a/x	77%	71%	85%
Multiracial	75%	83%	86%
Native American, Alaska Native	78%	88%	--
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	65%	83%	--
White	79%	89%	91%
Gender			
Female	78%	85%	86%
Male	84%	86%	92%
Nonbinary	58%	77%	80%
Sexual Identity			
LGBTQIA+	68%	80%	--
Not LGBTQIA+	84%	86%	--
Disability			
Experiences a disability	64%	79%	--
Does not experience a disability	81%	87%	--

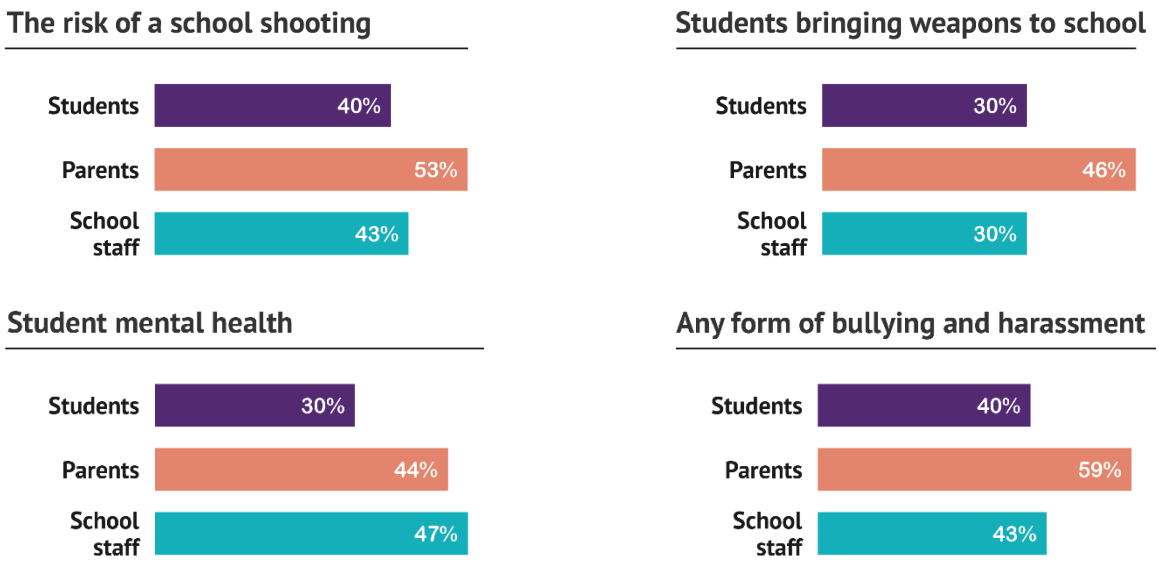
Note: Due to small sample sizes, Black/African American, Native American/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander staff were combined for analysis to protect privacy.
Source: Surveys of middle and high school students, parents, and staff, Feb-Mar 2022.

Results from the District's 2020-21 school climate survey also found that fewer Black (83%) students feel safe at school, but more students overall (93%) reported feeling safe at school.

Safety Concerns

The most common school safety concerns for students, parents, and staff are the risk of school shootings, students bringing weapons to school, student mental health, and bullying and harassment among students (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Most common school safety concerns



Source: Survey of middle and high school students, parents and school staff, Feb-Mar 2022.

Students and parents of all demographic groups expressed some type of safety concern that relates to the above, but students of color also experience *additional* fear related to their race/ethnicity (Table 2). This is an important finding because one of the most common concerns that students, parents, and staff have about SROs being in schools is the negative impact SROs could have on the safety and perceptions of the safety of students of color, especially Black students.

Table 2. Safety concerns related to racial/ethnic identity are more common among students of color and their parents.

	Percent of students who feel unsafe at school because of their race/ethnicity
Black students	**31%**
Asian students	14%
Latino students	13%
Multiracial students	13%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander students	10%
Native American, Alaska Native students	4%
White students	2%

	Percent of parents who feel their children are unsafe at school because of their race/ethnicity
Parents of Black students	**51%**
Parents of Asian students	30%
Parents of Latino students	21%
Parents of Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander students	21%
Parents of Multiracial students	19%
Parents of Native American, Alaska Native students	10%
Parents of White students	4%

Source: Survey of middle and high school students and parents, Feb-Mar 2022

To Whom Do Students Report Safety Threats?

SROs are commonly described by law enforcement leaders, SROs, school administrators, and some school staff as being a trusted go-to for students in need of reporting a crime or safety issue, noting that SROs are focused on building relationships with students. However, the survey results do not indicate that students' relationships with SROs are strong enough for students to feel comfortable going to them first regarding safety threats. The survey for this review asked students, "Which adult would you go to first if you feel unsafe?" Students said that they would first report their safety concerns to a parent or family member (58%), followed by a trusted teacher (15%); or a counselor, therapist, or social worker (11%) (Table 3). Troublingly, 3% (112 students) indicated "no one." This is itself a safety concern for the District as students who do not feel they have anyone to report safety threats to – including family members – may be experiencing unaddressed mental health challenges that could impact safety for themselves or others. Only 2% said they would report their safety concern to an SRO first (75 students).

Table 3. The most common people students would report safety concerns to

	Percent of students who would first report a safety concern to:
Parent or family member	58%
Teacher	15%
Counselor, therapist, social worker	11%
Someone else	4%
No one	3%
Friend(s)	2%
School Resource Officer	2%
School administrator	2%
Coach	2%
Campus supervisor	1%

Source: Survey of middle and high school students, Feb-Mar 2022

SRO Program Structure & Operations

Key Takeaways:

- Beaverton School District's SRO program depends on its partnership with Beaverton Police, Washington County Sheriff, and Hillsboro Police. Together, they provide 11 SROs.
- The majority of costs for the SROs are borne by the City of Beaverton and the Washington County Sheriff's office, not by the District.
- The partnerships are governed by Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) between the District and the law enforcement agencies. These IGAs serve as contracts.
- While SROs are full-time armed, uniformed officers with arrest powers, none of the SROs are stationed at a single school full-time.
- The agencies hire their officers and there is a minimal role for the District to define qualifications for SROs or to be part of the selection process.
- The District defers to the training requirements of the individual law enforcement agencies and does not prescribe anything additional related to school- or district-specific policies or practices. There are no standard SRO training requirements that are prescribed in policy or protocol. Rather, training appears to be subject to discretion and availability of resources.
- Given what is described in the IGAs, SROs' role in discipline is unclear.

Background

Beaverton School District's partnerships with law enforcement agencies have been long-standing and ever-evolving. Reflecting national trends, as the number of SROs in the District increased, the scope and role of SROs have increased. In the 1970s, Beaverton School District first partnered with the Beaverton Police Department to teach students about bicycle safety.[36] Through the 1990s, the partnership expanded to include safety education related to the national Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program, followed by the implementation of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) program.[37] The mass shooting at Columbine High School in 1999 prompted Congress to allocate dedicated funding for police presence in schools through the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Police Services (COPS) office. To date, the National Education Policy Center reports that the COPS office has provided $14 billion to 13,000 law enforcement agencies and districts to fund SROs in schools.[38] The growth of police in schools is attributed to the tremendous growth of federally driven investments. In 1975, only 1% of schools across the United States had police on-site; by 2018, that grew to 58% of schools.[39]

District Public Safety Department

The District's Public Safety Department is a certified law enforcement agency registered with the Oregon Department of Public Safety, Standards and Training. Its Director is a certified law enforcement

[36] Beaverton School District's own SRO Report.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Where Does Funding for SROs Come From? Three Federal Programs Explained. National Education Policy Center. 07/13/21 Newsletter.
[39] Connery, C. "The Prevalence and the Price of Police in Schools." University of Connecticut Neag School of Education. 10/27/20.

officer authorized to carry out police action.[40] The Department is responsible for coordinating with law enforcement agencies for the SRO program, managing campus supervisors (also known as "campus monitors"), and more.

SRO Team

There are currently 11 SROs from three law enforcement agencies that serve the District's 54 schools. Each SRO is based at a high school within their agency's jurisdiction. Most SROs have designated workspaces in those schools, but they are also expected to move about the District to service middle and elementary schools regularly. Each agency assigns a sergeant to supervise the SROs. The District Public Safety Department leads a weekly team meeting with SROs at the District offices.

SRO Program Costs

The estimated costs of the SRO program exceed $1.5 million per year. Most of the costs are borne by the law enforcement agencies, which employ the SROs.

> **The Beaverton Police Department** (BPD) funds six out of the seven SROs they assign to the District at a cost of over $1.2 million. The District accessed a federal grant to pay BPD for the seventh SRO for $163,000. Through a separate agreement, the District pays an additional $18,500 per year for SRO coverage at sporting events and after-school activities.
>
> **The Washington County Sheriff** provides the second-largest source of funding ($371,454) for the three SROs they provide to the district. There is no-cost sharing from the District for SROs during the school day, but the district does have an agreement with the Sheriff's Office to pay up to $18,500 for SROs at after-school events.
>
> In January 2020, the District executed an agreement with **Hillsboro Police** (HPD) for an SRO at Beaverton Academy of Science and Engineering (BASE). The district pays for 75% of a single SRO. For the 2020-21 school year, this was $37,500 due to a partial year caused by the pandemic.

SRO Program Agreements

Beaverton School District has written agreements, called Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs), with each of the three law enforcement agencies that serve the district with SROs. IGAs serve as contracts that articulate the scope of services of SROs and guide how services will be provided. Though the IGAs are not identical, in general, all IGAs reflect a scope that includes providing law enforcement assistance to the District, providing a "positive image" of police for students, and serving as a resource to staff.

> **The City of Beaverton IGA** to provide BPD officers was executed in June 2016 for a five-year term, automatically renewed each year. The intent of the agreement is to "…equip School District with School Resource Officers to provide students in the district with a positive image of law enforcement and law enforcement officers; provide direction for troubled students; and

[40] District Public Safety Department Operations Annual Report to School Board Work Session, 10/08/2018.

facilitate a coordinated effort in dealing with youth problems involving schools, parents, police, and other community agencies...".[41]

The Washington County Sheriff's Office IGA was executed in September 2021 and expires on June 30, 2022. The intent of the agreement is to provide SROs to "promote a positive image of the law enforcement profession," serve as a resource to school administration and serve as a liaison.[42]

The City of Hillsboro IGA to provide an HPD officer expires June 30, 2025. The IGA intends to "provide greater and more direct law enforcement support to the student population and allow for a more developed understanding of investigation of youth incidents while alleviating the heavily burdened patrol division.[43]"

Program Goals and Outcomes

Though there may be district-wide goals to keep all students, staff, and schools safe, there appears to be no discernable and measurable goals for the District's SRO program. This insight is based on a review of the IGAs, the recent District-issued SRO report,[44] and interviews.

Where SROs are "stationed"

A common misconception of the District's SRO program is that SROs are stationed full-time within individual schools. While SROs work full-time (as employees of the law enforcement agencies), they are not at any individual school all the time. There are currently 11 SROs and 54 schools in the District which limits the time that anyone SRO can spend at a school site. However, according to the IGAs and what occurs in practice, SROs do spend a substantial amount of time at their assigned high schools.

In BPD's IGA with the District, "one SRO shall be assigned to each comprehensive high school" and that SRO will also respond to calls for service in the elementary and middle schools that feed into their assigned high school.[45] SROs are provided with a desk, computer equipment, and office supplies at their assigned high school (usually one high school per SRO portfolio), but are not always provided with an office at the school. Additionally, as on-duty law enforcement officials, all SROs are expected to respond to calls for service in the community during the school day, make court appearances, or be off-site for any work-related reason. No data has been collected about how much time SROs spend in schools. Appendix B provides an overview of SRO assignments.

Hiring, Supervision, and Evaluating SROs

Many students, parents, and school staff said that whether SROs should be in schools depends on who the officer is, particularly their demeanor and ability to relate well with youth. According to document reviews and interviews, the agencies have significant autonomy over the hiring, supervision, and evaluation of SROs. SROs are not District employees.

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[41] Compiled Intergovernmental Agreement, p. 3.
[42] Ibid, p. 4.
[43] Ibid, p. 26.
[44] Beaverton School District's own SRO Report.
[45] Compiled Intergovernmental Agreement, p. 6.

Hiring: The IGAs with Beaverton Police and Washington County Sheriff specify that the agencies solely have the power and authority to hire, discharge, and discipline their employees. The IGA with Beaverton Police notes that a "joint committee of representatives from the City and School District shall make recommendations for the SRO positions to the City's Chief of Police. After receiving the recommendations, City's Chief of Police shall determine which officers to assign as SROs.[46]" It also allows for a principal to request that the Chief assign a different SRO if "dissatisfied" with the assigned officer. This review did not find evidence that collaboration regarding hiring occurs on a consistent basis.

Qualifications to become an SRO: There are no national standards or laws regarding SRO qualifications. Oregon does not have statewide requirements or certifications for SROs (other states do). As noted by one SRO, the Oregon Police Canine Association has a certification process for police who work with dogs, but there is no similar certification process for SROs as police officers who work with students.[47] Absent this, requirements are left to individual law enforcement agencies, school districts, or both. Since the law enforcement agencies hire and employ the SROs, they also set the qualification requirements. Beaverton Police's job description for SROs states only one requirement to be an SRO - that an officer has at least 3 years of experience as a police officer. Other than that, the job description "recommends" that applicants have an interest in working with youth; an ability to develop lesson plans; an ability to interact effectively with students, parents, and school staff; an ability to serve as a role model for youth; and an ability to "take charge" of various situations.[48] In contrast, Hillsboro Police SRO job descriptions extensively delineate the required knowledge, skills, competencies, and experience. These include familiarity with the IGA with the District, conflict resolution skills, maintaining accurate records, etc.

Supervision: SROs are subject to their law enforcement agency's chain of command and are immediately supervised by their sergeant. The IGA specifies that sergeants must review their assigned SROs' citations and the number of hours of classroom instruction.

Evaluation: Though not specified in the IGA, Beaverton Police leaders clarified that evaluation and oversight of SROs are provided by the sergeant and the Community Services Lieutenant. In addition, "input from the Beaverton School District administrators may be included in the evaluation." The SROs are subject to Police Department performance evaluations.

Duration of SRO Assignment: Each agency limits an SRO assignment period to between 5-6 years (Beaverton Police have a 5-year limit). The intention behind this limit is to ensure that other patrol officers have an opportunity to serve as an SRO. Several school staff believe this limitation is challenging because of the relationships they build with SROs.

[46] Compiled Intergovernmental Agreement, p. 6.
[47] Focus group data from an SRO that serves Beaverton School District & Beaverton Police Department website.
[48] Compiled Job Descriptions, p. 1.

SRO Training

The District defers to the training requirements of the individual law enforcement agencies and does not prescribe anything additional related to school- or district-specific policies or practices. Among the agencies that serve the District, there are no standard SRO training requirements prescribed in state law, local policies, or protocols. It is up to individual law enforcement agency leaders to encourage SROs to take trainings and to offer the resources (e.g., funding for travel, registration fees), and it is up to individual SROs to follow through. This contrasts with the neighboring Hillsboro School District, which specifies a range of training requirements in their IGA with the Hillsboro Police Department. More discussion about training is included later in this report in "What the Research Says" regarding best practices.

SROs shared that they could benefit from more training and even a certification program, but opportunities are currently limited. They learn about training opportunities through emails from the various organizations (e.g., the National Association of School Resource Officers) that host training. The SROs shared that in-person training is the most effective, but they often do not have the budget to send all SROs and often cannot send any. Additionally, they shared that SROs who attend training are often expected to share their learnings with other SROs informally.

> "In Oregon, there is no state training requirement. Oregon only requires us to be certified as a police officer. *The state does not require any additional training to work as an SRO. Unlike canine, the state requires canine officers to be certified through the Oregon Police Canine Association, to be able to work their dog and to be governed, but there's no state training [for SROs] that's actually required."* - SRO

Access to Student Records

Access to student records is an important privacy-related topic for many students and parents. It is governed by federal and state law, namely through the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA sets restrictions on who has access to personal student and family information and what type of access they have. SROs have access to student records, but the IGA with Beaverton Police articulates more limited access to student records than the IGA with Washington County.

- Beaverton Police SROs are provided with access to confidential student records only as allowed by federal or state law, particularly if a student's record is needed to preserve their own or others' health and safety. As written, the IGA makes it seem as if these are limited occasions, though researchers were unable to explore how this translates into practices.
- The IGA between the District and Washington County Sheriff's office states that the District "shall furnish SROs with a Synergy/SIS account. The District will only provide access to students in schools at which the SRO is assigned." [49] A SIS is a Student Information System for storing student information, including demographic information, parent contact information, grades, course assignments, disciplinary records, and more. This provision appears to give the Sheriff's office broader access to student records compared to Beaverton Police. Both IGAs cite the importance of FERPA compliance.

[49] Compiled Intergovernmental Agreement, p. 15.

Accountability

Many students, parents, and school staff are curious about what "accountability" looks like for the SRO program. Who should complaints about SROs go to and what is done with them? What data is collected, if any? What does the data tell us about who is impacted by SROs?

Complaints: Based on a review of the IGAs between the District and law enforcement agencies, interviews with district and school leaders, SROs, and school staff, the district does not have a system intentionally designed for students, parents, and staff, to voice their concerns or grievances about an SRO or the SRO program. Informally, the expectation for individuals wishing to provide positive or negative feedback about the program is to contact the Public Safety Director or the sergeant employed by the law enforcement agency that supervises the SRO. The complaint procedure is not well-defined nor well-known, and if students or parents have a complaint about an SRO, they may not feel comfortable sharing their concern with the District Public Safety Director or the sergeant (they are also not likely to know who an SRO's sergeant is).

Data about the program: The District also does not appear to have metrics to define or assess the performance and impacts of the SRO program. The only data systematically collected about the SRO program is done by the law enforcement agencies (not the District). These include calls for service records and reports from incidents resulting in student arrests and referrals.

SRO Assigned Duties & Role in Discipline

The Beaverton Police and Washington County Sheriff provide the District with all its assigned SROs except for one officer provided by Hillsboro Police. The list of SROs' duties specified in the Beaverton Police and Washington County Sheriff IGA are nearly identical and cover many different roles and activities. A few provisions are highlighted below, some of which are included in the Hillsboro agreement:[50]

Example Provisions in the IGAs with Law Enforcement Agencies

• Serving as a liaison with other law enforcement agencies	• "Provide a positive image of law enforcement…"
• Acting as an "extension" of the principal's office	• "Provide a safe environment…by acting as a designee of the campus administrator for maintaining the physical plant of the campus…"
• Providing presentations on drugs, alcohol, and sexual assault	• "Be a classroom resource for law education…"
• Create "an atmosphere of safety and security on school campuses"	• "Be a resource for students by providing them with a law enforcement figure and role model in a student environment"
• Work with school and District administration on safety threats	• "Be a resource for teachers, parents, and students for conferences…"
• Provide information and "informal counseling" to students	• "Appear before site councils, parent groups, and other groups…"

[50] Compiled Intergovernmental Agreement, p. 3.

Given what is described in the IGAs, SROs' role in discipline is unclear and contradictory. In one instance, SROs are to act as an "extension" of the principal's office. For context, principals and school administrators are responsible for administering discipline. Violations of school code may lead to discipline. Within the same area of the IGA, SRO duties are described as being a "visible, active law enforcement figure on campus who works on law enforcement matters and school code violations that originate from his or her assigned campus." On the surface, it appears that these two provisions mean that SROs should be involved with discipline for code violations. This may be concerning to many people - including many administrators and SROs - who expressed in focus groups or surveys a desire for SROs not to be involved with discipline.

Seemingly in contradiction, the IGA later says that SROs should "be involved with discipline if it involves preventing a disruption that, if ignored, place students, faculty, and staff at risk of harm…". In interviews with school administrators and SROs, it appears that most administrators recognize that their role is to administer discipline and that SROs may only be involved in critical situations that may involve a violation of school code and a crime (e.g., a particularly violent school fight could be a violation both of school rules and assault).

SROs too, when asked if they are involved with school discipline, share a clear verbal boundary of their role to avoid involvement in school discipline. However, examples were shared in focus groups or interviews of some administrators calling SROs to be involved with incidents that SROs feel are most appropriately handled without them (because the incidents are seen as violations of school code, not of the law). For instance, there were examples of SROs being called by administrators to send a message to students about the potential for them to be arrested (i.e., "scared straight"). SROs are generally not supportive of this type of function (which some school staff referred to as an "educational" function) and regret being placed in that position. To SROs, more communication and training to school administrators could be helpful to eliminate these occurrences. Overall, there is an absence of clear policy direction (via the IGA) and related lack of practical day-to-day direction/expectations from the district to school leaders about what the roles for SROs should be and how administrators can use them effectively.

Uniforms & Weapons

Individual law enforcement agencies set the uniform and weapon-carrying requirements of individual SROs. In general, all SROs who serve the District do so in the standard police uniform including vests and several standard-issue weapons that run the continuum of use of force.[51] More detail is in the Best Practices for SRO programs section.

The topic of weapons and uniforms is salient because, for many students, parents, and school staff, these are noted as helpful aspects of SROs or intimidating/detrimental aspects of SROs. For example, several people noted in in focus groups or survey comments that they have a fear that SROs' weapons may be obtained by students and used to inflict harm on students and school staff. Others believed that the weapons and uniforms send a positive message to students about police and can influence students to behave better around SROs. Additionally, fewer than one-third of students like that SROs carry weapons and fewer than one-third of staff think SROs carrying weapons has a positive impact on

[51] Use of Force Continuum, National Institute of Justice

school climate. Additionally, about half of students like that SROs wear uniforms and about half of staff think it has a positive impact on school climate (Table 4).

Table 4. Percent of students, parents, and staff who like that SROs carry weapons or wear uniforms or think they have positive impacts on school climate

	Percent of students	Percent of parents	Percent of staff
SROs carry weapons	27%	47%	31%
SROs wear uniforms	51%	68%	53%

Source: Survey of middle and high school students, parents, and staff Feb-Mar 2022

In focus groups with SROs, several alluded to conversations within their law enforcement agencies about whether the uniform and weapons for SROs should be the same as patrol officers. A few of the comments from SROs are noted below:

> *"I only know of one situation where a weapon was ever removed from one of these holsters ever, and the kid was high on crazy stuff."* - SRO

> *"I've been asked by our own staff why we don't have more low-key uniforms. We have to respond to calls in the community. And, we like having our kids seeing this. It's typically the adults not the kids who have a problem with the uniform."* - SRO

> *"If you remove the uniform, you remove the resource. We're from different [law enforcement] agencies but we are all still recognized as law enforcement."* - SRO

Defining the Purpose of SROs

Key Takeaways:

- This section details how different District community groups - students, parents, school staff, and SROs - define the purpose of SROs.
- There is a wide array of perceptions about what purpose SROs serve. In general, enforcing the law broadly and explicitly stopping or deterring school shootings were common themes amongst parents, staff, and students. SROs said their role is to keep the school environment safe (in general), build relationships with students, be a resource for school staff, and educate students about the law.
- Students of color, students who are LGBTQIA+, and students who are enrolled in alternative programs were more likely than other students to say SROs' purpose is to instill fear or to intimidate.
- Administrators nearly universally agree that SROs should not be involved with administering discipline unless it is required as part of the student code of conduct.
- Students, school staff, and parents have not been formally informed about the role/purpose of SROs in the District, which means that people are left to rely on their own assumptions about what SROs are "supposed to do" or individual experiences with them.

When asked what purpose they think SROs serve, focus group participants' responses varied widely. Even within District community groups (e.g., among students), there is a broad range of perspectives and some commonalities. For example, enforcing the law broadly and explicitly stopping or deterring school shootings were common themes amongst parents, staff, and students.

Despite these similarities, a few distinctions are notable. Students were most likely to say to enforce the law, deter illegal behavior, or that they don't know. School staff were most likely to say some version of "to build relationships with students." Parents tended to say some version of "to support school safety," including responding to violent situations. This section breaks down the perspectives of multiple community members, centering students' voices first.

Students

Students of color, students who are LGBTQIA+, and those who are enrolled in alternative programs were the more likely than other students to say SROs instill fear or intimidate. Many students in focus groups (38%) said that the purpose of SROs is to instill fear or intimidate students or that they don't have a purpose whatsoever. These same student populations were also more likely to share a sentiment like this one: "Many people say that police are in schools 'to keep us safe,' but from what? A lot of people say school shootings, but [the SRO] can't take on an individual by [themself]." No students who identify as White said the purpose of SROs is to instill fear or intimidate.

Many staff in focus groups validated students' beliefs about the purpose of SROs, but they differed on whether they thought SROs intimidating students and/or controlling behavior was a positive or

negative role. Some staff see SROs in this role as helpful in creating safe learning environments. Others see this as detrimental to students and the learning environment.

SROs have said that they are put in situations by some administrators who do not feel it is an appropriate use of SROs' authority. SROs have stated that, at times, they are placed in uncomfortable situations by administrators to send a message to students about their behavior and to gain compliance. SROs regret being put in this position with one SRO saying, "we're not here to be the heavy."

Another SRO reflected on the tension that they experience as officers. They have an intent to support school safety, but recognize that some students' perceptions of SROs and police are shaped by what they see on the news:

"Pre-COVID, I used to walk around during lunches and, you know, say 'hi' to kids and talk to teachers or whoever. But then it was brought to my attention that there were certain groups of BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, People of Color] students that thought that I was out there to watch them and keep an eye on them…I'm just trying to be the happy go lucky community service officer, but their perception was that…

That's the thin line that we have to walk because we can't control the perception of other people, and this happened to be during a time when, obviously, tensions were high and, you know, everything that you would see on the news was how horrible we [police] are. So, the perception was that 'why is he out there, the only reason he would be out here is to be seen.'

So, it puts us in a hard spot, because on one hand, they're saying, you know, society wants us to come out and interact with the kids and, you know, show them that we're approachable. But then you could have a group of kids that, just by your presence, thinks that [we're there to keep an eye on them]. That makes it really hard for us. We're walking a real thin line that I think people need to understand. We're doing the very best we can, but we're never going to make every single person happy. Ninety to 95% of the student population might be glad we're out there and high five us. But if there's a couple of kids that are thinking completely differently, not based on what we're doing, but just on our presence…that's hard."

-SRO

Parents

There is common ground that police are needed for specific situations. Parents across identity groups said that police should be involved in responding to incidents that involve school shootings, extreme physical violence, and according to some parents, sexual assault.

> *"We shouldn't expect teachers to know how to handle everything. I see police as having specialized skill sets that their skills are appropriate."*
>
> - White Parent of LGBTQIA+ student

> *“High school students do things that teenagers do- if it is a crime, it should be investigated [by an SRO]. School shooting response, violent crimes, that's when you should have a police response.”*
>
> - Latino male parent

Many parents - including those who are generally supportive of police - think there are ways to achieve that common ground without having police based out of schools. These parents - including White male and female parents who are generally supportive of police and Black parents who have said their primary safety threat is police presence- believe that police don’t necessarily need to be regularly in school for those responses to occur. “I don’t see a reason for them other than a violent outbreak. But there are enough police stations nearby where they should be able to respond quickly,” said one Black parent. Another parent (White) said, “a police officer with a gun on site isn’t going to make a huge difference.” This sentiment was repeated throughout nearly all focus groups with parents. Another parent who identifies as White with a student who has a disability also said police should be used sparingly for exceptional situations:

> *"[T]here are categories of crises for which police are not particularly good. There are categories where, you know, it's a no brainer that you need a police officer on hand. But if you're putting police on hand for that smallest and relatively rare incident in any particular school, then it's kind of like buying a huge moving van as your normal commute vehicle. You might use it, you know, 2% or 1% of the time, but overall, you're not (using it).”*

Among parents in focus groups, 35% said that SROs don’t serve a purpose at all. This came up in nearly all focus groups, and among parents who identify as Asian, Black, Latino/a/x, Multiracial, White, and among a multiracial group of parents with children that identify as LGBTQIA+.

> *"I don't understand why we have them. If they're there to build community in the school. If we, as parents don't know their purpose, they probably aren't building community.”*
>
> - Black female parent

> *"There's never been a clear explanation of the day-to-day responsibilities of what I should expect as a parent from SROs."*
>
> - Black male parent

> *"In an ideal world, [SROs] could serve a valuable purpose, but in reality, that's just not how it works. Whatever idealized purpose they serve, they don’t serve that purpose. They are there to protect and serve but they are not protecting."*
>
> - White parent with LGBTQIA+ student who also experiences disability

Several parents expressed that police were present in schools for “optics” to shape public perception of police or “appease the fear of people in suburbia.” While these are just a few comments, combined they represent the sentiments shared by over one-third of parents in focus groups.

School Staff

To further unpack the purpose and role of SROs in schools, school staff were asked a detailed survey question to discern what roles are most and least commonly thought of as appropriate for SROs to handle as opposed to school personnel. School staff were most likely to say that SROs are most appropriate for responding to possible crimes in the school-adjacent neighborhood (79%), investigating threats against students (72%), and leading a school response to a public safety emergency (69%). School staff are in wide agreement that the SROs are not at all appropriate for mental health-related incidents (42%) or violations of school rules (52%). Another 40% of school staff say SROs are only appropriate to intervene if other more appropriate personnel are not available (Table 5).

Table 5: The roles and responsibilities school staff think SROs are most and least appropriate for

	Most appropriate	Sometimes appropriate	Not at all appropriate
Responding to possible crime in the school-adjacent neighborhood	79%	15%	6%
Investigating threats against schools and students	72%	24%	4%
Leading a school response to a public safety emergency	69%	25%	6%
Intervening when a student breaks the law	68%	27%	5%
Patrolling school grounds, including to enforce "no trespass" rules	58%	29%	13%
Intervening when a student threatens or attempts to harm others	57%	37%	7%
Teaching students about the law and how to stay safe	56%	34%	10%
Conducting safety checks at students' homes	45%	38%	17%
Conducting personal property searches	43%	39%	18%
Intervening when a student threatens or attempts to harm themselves	17%	55%	28%
Intervening when a student breaks a school rule	7%	40%	52%
Intervening when a student experiences a mental health incident	6%	51%	42%

Source: Survey of District and school staff, Mar 2022

Several staff shared that they would prioritize keeping SROs or adding more to schools to strengthen accountability and consequences for student behaviors. In focus groups two staff mentioned a desire to have SROs stationed in every school, and far more shared the value that SROs bring to their sense of safety and their belief that SROs support accountability systems for students.

> *"They [students] see that there is nothing being done. Admin and the school system need to have accountability and consequences. Kids are getting away with it."*
> *– White female teacher*

> *"There have been, unfortunately, several opportunities where my SRO is able to educate my students about the seriousness of their infraction, 'had you done this*

> *when you were 16 or 18, what would the consequence be that you would be facing…'"* - School Administrator (unknown race)

> *"Kids came back to school [from the pandemic] unhinged and unleashed. Kids haven't been in school for 2 years. Now is not the right time to disband SROs. Help us to mitigate the damage of what's already been done. We've got half a dozen teachers who are ready to walk all because of a Tik Tok video…we haven't been trained. Teachers aren't here to defend ourselves to break up violent fights."*
>
> *- White male school staff*

When asked about what purpose, if any, SROs serve for disciplining students, administrators nearly universally agree that SROs should <u>not</u> be involved with administering discipline unless it is required as part of the student code of conduct.

> *"My experience with SROs, I've always found them to be having an understanding that school discipline isn't an SRO role. If in fact that there is a legal element to an incident…as a school, we need to follow our policies and practices regardless of if there is a legal path that must be also launched. We try to keep it separate."*

> *"No, [administering discipline is] my job."*

> *"There are times when the [student code of conduct] handbook requires law enforcement. SROs can be a consultant if there's a criminal aspect."*

SROs

SROs' most common response to questions about what purpose they serve was to support school and student safety, build relationships with students, and be a resource for select school staff.

> *"We're just available not just for admin staff but for kids as well. We stand in the hallways at passing time. I think the kids enjoy us there and seeing us. It gives them a different view of us, and we can interact on a person-to-person level."*

> *"Kids are more likely to be victims of crime than perpetrators of crime. We want to protect kids and be there when they need help."*

> *"I got to teach civil rights and street law. It helps us with relationship-building. I have students tell me, 'I hate cops, but I like you, you're cool.'"*

> *"Within the schools, we work with a small percentage of the population there. Occasionally, the students. We don't hardly interact with the teachers. They wouldn't know what we do. We're dealing with the counseling department [and administrators]."*

Analysis

Most students, school staff, and parents have not been formally informed about the role of SROs in the District. SROs are likely to say that their role is to build relationships with students, help school staff identify how to handle situations that may relate to crimes, provide education to students, and enforce the law. Students in nearly all focus groups stated that if police officers plan to be in schools, the school should create structured introductions to police officers who visit their schools rather than it being in school hallways in passing (e.g., introductions at assemblies).

SRO activities have either positive, negative, or neutral impacts on staff, students, and parents/caregivers. The impact of SROs on people depends on several factors including their perception of police in general, their most salient safety threat, prior experiences with police or SROs, family relationships with law enforcement, and much more.

Just as there is a wide range of perspectives of what SROs do or should be doing, so too is there a range of perceptions, experiences, and impacts. Ultimately, meeting shared goals around student safety requires teasing apart the perceptions, experiences, and impacts while recognizing their interconnectedness. The following sections explore these issues.

Perceptions of SROs

Key Takeaways:

- Most parents and staff support having SROs in schools, but less than half of students do.
- Those who support SROs are likely to do so because they perceive SROs as being able to stop someone from causing harm, having special training to deal with emergencies, and stopping crimes. In survey responses, three out of ten students who support SROs said that they feel safer with SROs. These students were more likely to be Native American/Alaska Native, White, and/or male.
- Those who do not support SROs are likely to feel that way because they perceive SROs as causing Black students and other students of color to feel less safe. Among those most likely to say they feel less safe around SROs are students who identify as nonbinary, LGBTQ, experiencing a disability, Black, and Multiracial.
- Among students, 46% said they are either undecided about their support of SROs or don't know anything about SROs.
- In general, among people who support SROs and those who do not, there is common ground that police response is needed for school shooting threats and extreme violence.

Positive Perceptions of SROs

Most parents (71%) and staff (66%), but fewer than half of students (43%) support having SROs in schools (Table 6).

Table 6. Comparison of support for SROs by group

	Support SROs	Do not support SROs	Undecided about SROs	Do not know anything about SROs
Students	43%	11%	16%	30%
Parents	71%	12%	9%	5%
School staff	66%	17%	17%	1%

Source: Survey of middle and high school students, parents and school staff, Feb-Mar 2022.

Reasons why people support SROs: The most common response for what students, parents, and staff like about SROs was a perception that SROs can stop someone who is harming others, have special training to deal with emergencies, and can stop a crime from happening. In focus groups, students expanded on the types of threats they perceive. The most common safety threats that they think police can address include school shootings and extreme violence in schools.

SROs support some students' sense of safety: In survey responses, three out of ten students said that they feel safer with SROs. Overall, 28% of students say that students behave better around SROs (Table 7).

Table 7. Positive student perceptions of SRO impact on their sense of safety at school

	Percent of students who feel safer	Percent of students who think others feel safer	Percent of students who think students behave better
All students	**30%**	**19%**	**28%**
Asian	30%	20%	27%
Black, African American	19%	15%	23%
Hispanic, Latino	27%	19%	21%
Multiracial	27%	20%	29%
Native American, Alaska Native	39%	35%	30%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	35%	30%	45%
White	32%	19%	31%
Female	28%	19%	28%
Male	36%	20%	31%
Nonbinary	17%	15%	24%
LGBTQIA+	21%	0%	24%
Disability	27%	16%	27%

Source: Survey of middle and high school students, Feb-Mar 2022.

Trust for SROs: Approximately 45% of students said they trust SROs. Student groups who were the most likely to say they trust SROs are Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders students (73%)[52], male students (51%), and White students (45%) (Table 8).

Table 8: Student experiences with SROs

	Percent of students who trust SROs	Percent of students who have *positive* experiences with SROs	Percent of students who have *negative* experiences with SROs
All	**44%**	**27%**	**7%**
Asian	47%	19%	3%
Black	31%	20%	10%
Latino	40%	23%	7%
Multiracial	42%	31%	8%
Native American, Alaska Native	47%	33%	7%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	73%	27%	0%
White	45%	29%	7%
Female	41%	26%	7%
Male	51%	28%	5%
Nonbinary	27%	23%	16%
LGBTQIA+	29%	25%	14%
Disability	38%	25%	16%

Source: Survey of middle and high school students, Feb-Mar 2022.

[52] The number of responses in this racial/ethnic group is small (n=20), however, this is representative of the student population. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students compose 1% of District enrollment and composed 1% of survey responses.

Students

> *"People don't want to talk about school shootings. Having someone guard them could be instrumental to save a lot of lives. When people bring weapons, there's no one else with weapons as powerful. It could deter someone from bringing weapons."*
> - White male student

> *"They're here to stop school shootings and nothing more."*
> - Nonbinary student of color

> *"If there is a threat. Cops are in charge to take that threat down."*
> - Female student of color

Parents

> *"...[S]chool shootings* is *a type of incident that would require a response from an armed, unformed police officer…"* - Black male parent

> *"Whenever there is an active shooter situation - [SROs] have the ability to neutralize the situation."* - Latino male parent

> *"We shouldn't expect teachers to know how to handle everything. I see police as having specialized skillsets."* - White parent of LGBTQIA+ student

School Staff

> *"A student brought a [weapon] to school. From that came a bigger situation [involving] threats on other students. The SRO followed up at home. Journals were discovered, writing, and access to weapons at home. We wouldn't have any of that information but for [the SRO]. Now [the student is getting access to services] and we have a detailed safety plan."* - School Administrator

> *"Compared to calling a police non-emergency line, SROs have relationships with students. Kids know them. The majority of our kids know them. A lot of times they're more thoughtful [than a typical patrol officer] about who we're working with. [SROs are] used to working with teenagers…Most of their job is building really positive relationships with all of their kids."* - School Administrator

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Negative Perceptions of SROs

Fewer than 20% of students, staff, and parents oppose SROs in schools, while nearly an equal amount is undecided. Those with negative perceptions consistently include the same demographic groups when talking to students, parents, and school staff (Table 9).

Students: More Black students (21%), students with disabilities (17%), nonbinary (19%), and LGBTQIA+ students (17%) are opposed to SROs in schools compared to students overall (11%). Substantially more high school students at ACMA (39%), Community School (38%), and International School (34%) oppose SROs compared to high school students overall (13%).

Parents: More parents of Black students (29%), nonbinary students (34%), and LGBTQIA+ students (24%) oppose SROs in schools, compared to parents overall (12%). Comparing across grade levels, fewer parents of elementary school students (65%) support SROs in schools, compared to parents of middle school (75%) and high school (79%) students.

Staff: As a group, staff who identify as Black, Native American/Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (28%) are more likely to oppose having SROs in schools, compared to staff overall (17%). These racial identities were aggregated due to small sample sizes.

Table 9. Student support of SROs by social identity groups

	Support SROs	Do not support SROs	Undecided about SROs	Do not know anything about SROs
All	**43%**	**11%**	**16%**	**30%**
Asian	39%	7%	17%	36%
Black, African American	37%	21%	10%	32%
Hispanic, Latino	38%	8%	16%	37%
Multiracial	42%	12%	17%	29%
Native American, Alaska Native	43%	10%	10%	38%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	55%	5%	15%	25%
White	46%	12%	16%	26%
Female	40%	10%	19%	31%
Male	51%	10%	12%	27%
Nonbinary	28%	19%	18%	35%
LGBTQIA+	32%	18%	20%	30%
Students with disabilities	39%	17%	18%	26%

Source: Survey of middle and high school students, Feb-Mar 2022.

Reasons people may not support SROs: The most common concern all that District community members (regardless of race) have about SROs being in schools is the real and perceived negative impact their presence might have on students of color, especially Black students. In focus groups, Black parents were more likely to acknowledge the disconnect between intention (to foster school safety) and impact (to have a disproportionate negative safety impact on Black students, in particular). Other parents who identified as Black (one of whom has a student who experiences a disability) said that the presence of a police officer could trigger trauma.

> *"My White colleagues might say safety, safety, safety, because that's interpreted in many ways. For us, the safety threat is being potentially harmed by police. We worry about police."*

Further, two parents of color who are also educators said SROs often make school staff feel unsafe. "As a high school student two decades ago, it was clear that SROs felt like they have the power. Now when I see them, when I typically have them interact with me, I haven't felt comfortable. And I'm a teacher [who has family members that are police officers]."

SROs do not support the sense of safety for some students: Survey and focus group data confirmed that students who feel less safe around SROs were expectedly more likely to oppose SROs. Among those who are the most likely to say they feel less safe around SROs are students who identify as nonbinary (23%), LGBTQIA+ (23%), experiencing a disability (20%), Black (15%), and Multiracial (15%) (Table 10).

Table 10. Negative student perceptions of SRO impact on their sense of safety at school

	Percent of students who feel less safe	Percent of students who think others feel less safe	Percent of students who think students behave worse
All students	**11%**	**26%**	**4%**
Asian	7%	22%	2%
Black, African American	15%	19%	7%
Hispanic, Latino	9%	23%	6%
Multiracial	15%	30%	4%
Native American, Alaska Native	4%	22%	4%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	10%	30%	10%
White	12%	29%	4%
Female	11%	28%	5%
Male	8%	23%	3%
Nonbinary	23%	36%	5%
LGBTQIA+	23%	37%	6%
Disability	20%	32%	7%

Source: Survey of middle and high school students, Feb-Mar 2022.

Trust for SROs: Overall, 7% of students stated in the survey that they had a negative experience with SROs (261 students). Students who identify as experiencing a disability (16%), nonbinary (16%), LGBTQIA+ (14%) and Black (10%) were more likely to report negative experiences than other students.

Students

> *"If a lot of people of color are at school, if they see how police are negatively impacting our community, if they're being killed by police…how would that make them feel?"* - Black female student

> *"When [SROs] come in, all we see is what's on the news harming our communities. Their gun, their badge. I think the fear will still be there [without the presence of guns or full uniforms]."* - Black female student

> *"I don't see why they have to be physically present in the building...school should not just be safe, they should feel safe. We don't necessarily need their physical presence in the building."* - Black female student

Parents

> *"Casual racism and casual bigotry is a problem in law enforcement - learned it firsthand being in a law enforcement family. My daughter would show anxiety when police showed up at school. Students are not in a bubble, they internalize what they see in the media."* - White parent of LGBTQIA+ student with a disability

> *"Being a woman of color…and…having children of color…and also being a special education teacher. My own children as well as the students I case manage are policed heavier. When I look at the news, not one SRO has stopped a school shooting. I see my colleagues, myself, protecting our students. I respect the place for police in our world, however, I don't know the purpose of them being in school."*
> - Parent of color and educator

School Staff

> *"I've heard SROs should be in schools to build community connections and build positive relationships with students. I wonder, well, why? Who does that serve… I don't see the role just to build relationships. I see that benefiting SROs, but I don't see it benefiting our students."* - White staff member

Perceptions of weapons and uniforms

Staff, students, and families had a variety of views on weapons and uniforms. Many individuals noted the different roles that SROs play, including responding to calls in the community and working in schools. Some recognize that these different roles may require different levels of uniforms and weapons. Others shared a desire for uniforms and weapons that cause as little intimidation as possible.

One noteworthy nuance explored in focus groups is that many people who support having SROs in schools say that there is an opportunity to revisit the uniforms and weapons that police wear to address safety concerns that others have. Relatedly, many people, including those who do not support having SROs in schools, believe that having weapons is necessary for certain rare situations (e.g., active shooter situations).

Uniforms and weapons can have a positive impact on safety:

> *"It takes time to get a weapon. Hopefully, it never happens. But, it's like a seatbelt. It should be there. If they [SROs] are going to be there, they should have their uniform and weapons."* -Latino Parent

> *"I believe an officer should always be fully dressed as an officer. Maybe not the full weapons…maybe the firearm, maybe a taser and club. But the uniform is important for Latinos. It demands respect."*
>
> -Latina Parent

> *"I guess…because, like, there is a better chance we can be safer because they have weapons and things. So they're kind of back up. If they didn't have weapons, that would not make me feel safer."* -White Female Student

> *"I have layered thoughts about [uniforms and weapons]. It goes to how law enforcement agencies set them up. They get called to respond to calls for service in the community and, if that happens, they need their equipment at any moment."*
>
> -Principal

<u>Uniforms and weapons can have a detrimental impact on safety:</u>

> *"Having a weapon or being in that uniform is unwelcoming for a significant part of our population. Weapons and uniforms don't feel central or even peripheral to what we use SROs for."* -Assistant Principal

> *"I felt threatened by their tactical gear. Just seeing it makes me anxious. Definitely a change in uniform could make a difference."* - Asian Female Staff

> *"I want them to be able to do the job if needed, but in the schools they shouldn't need to do that all of the time."* - White Female Parent

> *"I would like to have a police officer not wearing a uniform on campus. It might be better if they were part of the school and not in uniform. Officers should be able to carry a gun. It could be similar to a U.S. Marshal (more concealed) to help promote community."* -Latino Male Parent

Experience with SROs

Key Takeaways:

- Most students have not had regular interactions with SROs.
- There is no clear communication to students about why SROs are present.
- Staff experiences with police depend on individual officers' demeanor and skills.
- A few students reported positive experiences with SROs for situations related to criminal complaints and active shooter threats. However, several students said that when they have engaged police or SROs to report crimes or for assistance, they feel that the officer did not handle the situation appropriately. These reports were almost all female or nonbinary.
- Administrators rely on SROs to play a helpful consultant role for administrators/school staff and as an educator to students about the law.
- Many staff members experience SROs promoting a culture of control in schools.
- Most staff are unaware of any written protocols that guide the use of SROs and assume that administrators and SROs have some discretion.

Neutral or no experience with SROs

Most students have not had regular interactions with SROs, contrary to one of the intended purposes of "building relationships" with students. In the survey, 68% of high school students and 53% of middle school students said they had seen an SRO at their school. The most common activities students have seen SROs do at school are walking around (57%), greeting students arriving at school (32%), and talking with students about their interests (23%) (Table 11). Over 48% of students in focus groups at Southridge, Westview, Community School, and across schools through virtual focus groups said that they had no or limited interaction with SROs.

Table 11: The activities students have seen SROs do at their schools.

	Percent of students who have seen an SRO do this activity
Walk around the school	57%
Greet students arriving at school	32%
Talk with students about their interests	23%
Remove a student from a classroom or school	14%
Have lunch with students	13%
Do a presentation or educate students about safety and crime	12%
Keep students safe during an emergency	10%
Stop someone who tried to harm students	6%
Use physical force or restrain a student	6%
Handcuff a student	5%

Source: Survey of middle and high school students, Feb-Mar 2022.

One of the stated functions of SROs is to build relationships with students, but a few SROs said they do not have sufficient time to do that well. Beaverton Police Department SROs, unlike SROs from the other two agencies, are assigned to sex abuse cases. This role involves working with the Department of Human Services on up to 20-25 cases at a time.

> *"We'd like to be more involved [with mentoring and building relationships with students], but we're busy working on cases. The amount of time we have to go out and talk to a class and interact with the kids more to build relationships. I just don't have that."* - SRO

> *"Having multiple schools that we have to go to is a challenge. I have five schools [in my assignment] and I'm getting pulled in different directions…Then there's a communication breakdown where something happens at a school, and they don't call me and I'm not there. Ideally, we would want to have more SROs at the school. The more, the merrier, I think."* - SRO

> *"Those relationships and that mentoring probably happen more at the high school level. Those of us that are assigned the high schools versus those that are just assigned middle schools and elementary schools, because you don't have that home office, you don't have that base of operations, you're bouncing from school to school. So, you're visible for an hour, hour and a half, and then you bounce around to those schools. So, you're not as visible as you are, per se in a high school where you're able to build that relationship and be that mentor."* - SRO

There is an absence of clear communication to students about why SROs are present on campus. The survey found that one out of three students do not know anything about SROs, implying that these students have no information about and no experiences with SROs. Focus groups too revealed that an average District high school student might have never been formally or informally introduced to the SROs in their schools. This leaves students guessing the many reasons an SRO might be at their school. Other guesses from students included addressing fights among students, and "intimidating" students.

> *"I guess a[n] SRO could potentially stop a shooting."* - Student

> *"[SROs] might freak some kids out I guess?"* - Student

Staff shared that whether their interactions with police and SROs are positive or negative can depend on the officer. Even staff that were generally in support of SROs shared examples of individual SROs not having the appropriate demeanor, knowledge, and training to support students' needs, including the needs of students with disabilities.

> *"I've seen some [SROs] be an amazing partner and somebody who the community adores. Like, there was [an SRO] voted [for an award]. And then I've seen an SRO where basically, if this were a staff member that I was responsible for, I would have to write them up for sexual harassment."* - Administrator

> *"What is critical is that we have SROs that want to be there…And that they have the skills needed including cultural sensitivity, awareness, and that they match the needs of schools. You definitely have some that are better than others, in my experience. The only reason I'd say I oppose SROs is if the individuals don't have experience and training to be relevant to that particular school."*
>
> - White Female Classified Staff

> *"I've seen some police officers come in and do things not right. ....There's a lot of variability in the personalities and the ways the police officers conduct themselves."*
>
> -School Psychologist

A paraeducator who was in support of SROs spoke of an experience of seeing an SRO escalate a situation with a student with a disability and shared:

> *"[Paraeducators] know what won't work and usually how to deal with the situation. SPED is tricky like that."* -White Male Paraeducator

Positive Experiences with SROs

Students

A few students who participated in focus groups or the survey shared a positive personal experience with SROs for situations related to criminal complaints and active shooter threats. For example, one student said that another student had assaulted them, and that the SRO helped them and their parents press charges against the individual. Many more students spoke about an SRO's role in preventing or stopping school shootings. For example, one student (a White male) said that he saw SROs at his school a few years ago when there was an active shooter threat and he felt that made school safer. Other similar sentiments are below.

> *"Every day I'd walk into school and see an armed officer and think, thank God, at least someone here could stop someone wanting to cause harm. Then for political reasons they were removed and every day I'm not afraid, but I think the only thing between us and someone who wanted to hurt us is a couple of doors, and that is unnerving."*
>
> - White male student (Mountainside)

> *"At Sunset I rarely ever see SROs, I do remember interacting with them more in middle school in a casual friendly way. I think they are valuable in a school due to the problems of school shootings throughout our country and other problems. I think it would be cool if it felt like they were more a part of our community."*
>
> - White female student

About 1% (42) of students said they support SROs *and* have positive personal experience with SROs. For example, a Black male high school student said that "we have a good relationship." A White female high school student said she had a prior experience with online harassment and appreciated that an SRO helped them with that. A White student who identifies as gender-fluid stated that Child Protective

Services and an SRO questioned them, and that "they were both very nice and understanding to my situation."

School Staff

About a quarter of all staff (24%) and most administrators (72%) have called an SRO for assistance at some point. Nearly all administrators in interviews and focus groups shared that they have experienced SROs helping them manage safety issues. After administrators, school counselors, social workers, and school psychologists have the most experience engaging SROs for assistance (39%) or being involved in an incident that also involved an SRO (55%). Campus monitors (43%) are also more likely than staff overall (33%) to have worked with SROs (Table 12).

Table 12: School staff experiences with SROs

	Percent of staff aware of protocols for engaging SROs	Percent of staff who have ever called an SRO for assistance	Percent of staff who have ever been in an incident involving an SRO
All staff	**22%**	**24%**	**33%**
By Role			
School Administrator	33%	72%	72%
Classroom Teacher	18%	19%	33%
Counselor, Social Worker, School Psychologist	25%	39%	55%
Campus Supervisor	25%	29%	43%
District administrator or staff	34%	22%	35%
Other school-based staff	22%	27%	31%
By School-type			
Elementary	20%	26%	30%
Middle	19%	21%	36%
High	19%	21%	34%
Options	29%	33%	30%
Multiple types (includes Community Transition Program and FLEX Online)	23%	22%	41%

Source: Survey of District and school staff, Mar 2022.

Administrators rely on SROs to educate students about crime and safety. This is particularly true in high schools and progressively less in middle and elementary schools.

> *"Our SRO has led trainings with students and staff on everything from internet safety to explaining legal issues, including what harms students out there like drug and alcohol."*

> *"We've had them do presentations to parents in the evenings about things to look for in social media."*

> *"[Part of their role is to] educate students and parents about the seriousness of some infractions. Law enforcement can get involved really easily these days; the education piece is so important. It's one thing for parents/students to hear it from educators but they take it more seriously when hearing it from an SRO."*

> *"Our goal is not to have things go to higher levels of law enforcement. Our goal is for everyone to learn, and to come out of the situation in a better place than they entered."*

Administrators rely on SROs as consultants/advisors on crime and safety incidents and as connectors to information and resources for school staff, students, and families.

> *"They're playing a consultant role to help us understand the broader family context of what else might be going on [outside of school] …. They're also at our Behavioral Health & Wellness team meetings so they're sharing resources and 'have you thought about x' questions. If we're talking about a safety plan, they might have suggestions for a search, for example."*

> *"They're a consultant for us. They are involved in some processes in getting additional information when there are student threats and when there is an incident out of school [that pertains to students]."*

> *"They can be a consultant in some ways if there's a legal part to follow up with."*

> *"In my view and my experience, SROs have provided a sounding board often when we meet with our Care Team (now our Behavioral Health & Wellness team), and they've provided for us sometimes resources and info that can be helpful for families. A lot of times when we talk about students with needs, they can help put a full picture together."*

Negative Experiences with SROs

Students

Several students reported in focus groups and surveys that when they have engaged police or SROs to report crimes or for assistance, they feel that the police or SRO did not handle the situation appropriately; all of these are either female or nonbinary, except one. At best, they say police involvement did not help them; in some cases, it hurt them and impacted their engagement with school. These lived experiences shaped their perspective that SROs do not enhance their safety at school.

> *"I was going through a situation at a [Beaverton School District school]. My teacher told me to go to the SRO. I talked to him about it... I was in an abusive situation. I'd go every week. He said, 'I can't believe you' and told me I don't have a good background….It [keeps me away] from the police. They always turn it back to me."*
>
> - Female student of color

> *"When I talked to [the SRO], they completely turned around my issue about [the crime that I had reported to the SRO]. They were worried about the [students I had reported for a different reason but not interested in helping me with my crime report]."* This student later said that the SRO exacerbated matters for them, and negatively impacted the student's engagement with that school.
>
> - Female student of color

> *"I've had bad experiences with police outside of school. It made me uncomfortable, threatened, scared…like I was not safe."*
>
> - Nonbinary student of color

> *"A kid was touching me [in school]. When I went to someone, I was so annoyed... I went to an SRO, and he did not help me."*
>
> - White female student

> *"A sexual assault happened to me and through no means of my own the SRO from [my school] showed up at my front door without any warning wearing full uniform and tried to scare me into telling them the incident that I had absolutely no intention of talking to the police about. They used victim-blaming tactics and tried to guilt me."*
>
> - Latina student

> *"I know people who went to him about sexual assault and he didn't do anything."*
>
> - White male student

> *"I was walking home [from school] with [detail removed]. We got jumped (I didn't get hurt but my friend did) and we talked with our school's SRO. And he didn't straight up call me a liar to my face but he used other words that meant the same thing."*
>
> - White nonbinary student

Two students in focus groups experienced being physically searched by an SRO at school. Both described these as negative interactions and said they were accused by other students of something they did not do. Both students are male, one is White and another is Latino. Neither student was with their parent nor were they aware of their rights. The White student described being deeply affected by the incident and later led to his disengagement from that school.

<u>School Staff</u>

Many staff members experience SROs promoting a culture of control in schools, causing many of their students to be fearful of SROs and negatively impacting their school environment. Staff comments point to the diversity of opinions about what it means to support student safety, with some staff relying on SROs for control and compliance and others concerned about that intention.

> *"At my school, students don't feel safer [with SROs]. They distrust adults in the building when SROs are involved. These are conversations they've had with me when SROs are present. They'll be like, 'Sorry, I had to take the long way to class to avoid*

> *the cops in the halls' or 'can I call my parents to let them know that the cops are here in case something happens to me?' To me, that says the way our SRO system works makes our school feel less safe."*
>
> - White female teacher

> *"Admin leans too much on SROs to control behavior…Punishment isn't effective. Admin are overwhelmed and they count on SROs."*
>
> - Multiracial female educator

Most staff that participated in focus groups and surveys (78%) are not aware of any written protocols that guide the use of SROs. Administrators and SROs use significant discretion. While administrators in focus groups agreed that SROs should not engage in discipline matters, there was also agreement that there are no clear protocols for when to call an SRO. The distinction between a criminal act and students being "out of control" is unclear.

> *"Some infractions included in the handbook [require law enforcement], but other than that, it's discretionary. It's a source of frustration that we don't have cross-[school] building agreements."*
>
> - School administrator

> *"A lot of school staff don't understand how to use SROs. Teachers don't know."*
>
> - SRO

> *"SROs' relationships are with admin and sometimes that's where the communication stops. SROs should be informed but they don't necessarily have to be involved."*
>
> - District Central Office Staff

Staff shared experiences of inconsistent use of SROs and a lack of district-wide standards and expectations for how and when SROs are engaged. This variability and discretion significantly affect students' involvement with the juvenile justice system.

> *"I've seen kids in mental health crisis be handcuffed by police. I see that as police officers' policy that if there's a student out of control, you have to arrest them for safety purposes. I wish it wasn't a policy. I've seen some police officers use their discretion."*
>
> - White School Psychologist

> *"With the exception of students who are endangering other students at school, when is criminalizing a 12-year-old beneficial to them? They are kids. Students make mistakes. At the middle school level, with the exception of endangering other students in the building, I don't see a situation where arresting a student is beneficial to them."*
>
> - White female teacher

SROs referenced variability between schools in how they typically get involved in law enforcement situations.

> *"[How we get involved in incidents at school] depends on the school."*
>
> - SRO

> *"A lot of autonomy is given to schools on how we do things. If it was more consistent…if there were 'these are the people who have to be involved,' that would be better."* - SRO

> *"I think also there's probably a misconception that we're inserting ourselves in a lot of these situations. Many times, you know, are we the best person to handle? Well, a lot of these times it's either the kid coming to us, or someone else coming to us, right? It's not like we're going in inserting ourselves into, 'you know what, I think I'm the best person to handle this' and pushing the counselor aside. That's not how it works in the schools. It's the kids coming to us and asking us, or a counselor asking us to assist them, or an administrator or teacher, whoever it may be. But usually, it's more of an assist role. It's not something that's directly in our purview. It's not us inserting ourselves into situations. That's not how we operate."*
>
> - SRO

Impact of SROs

Key Takeaways*:*

- Students who identify as Black, Hispanic/Latino, or Pacific Islander experienced a disproportionate rate of arrests compared to their proportion of the student population. These disproportionalities are evidence that implicit bias may be at play within the school and law enforcement systems, not of criminality of any racial/ethnic group.
- School staff noted that SROs are most helpful when they provide consultation and advice for diversion programs, referrals, and education to students about the law.
- Some staff believe SROs positively impact school climate by breaking up fights and being available to interact with students.
- Parents do not, in general, think of SROs as supporting students' sense of emotional safety, and in some cases, feel that SROs can be harmful to emotional safety.

Justice system involvement (i.e., "school-to-prison pipeline")

Regardless of whether they support or oppose having SROs in schools, many students, parents, and staff are primarily concerned about an increased risk that some students, especially those who are Black, face of becoming justice-involved with school-based policing (i.e., the "school-to-prison pipeline").

For their part, SROs emphasized in focus groups, "[t]he last thing we want to do is make an arrest of a kid. People don't realize this." Another said, "For me, the pipeline to prison is offensive. That's not what we're here for. We're here to interact with hundreds of students and statistics show they're not all going to prison." Another officer responded that even if a student does get involved with the justice system, that entry into the system "can get them on the right path." Additionally, fewer than a quarter of students and fewer than half of parents like that SROs can arrest or handcuff students, and fewer than a third of school staff think SROs ability to arrest or handcuff students has a positive impact on school climate (Table 13).

Table 13. Percent of students, parents, and staff who like that SROs can arrest or handcuff students or think it has positive impacts on school climate

	Percent of students	Percent of parents	Percent of staff
SROs can arrest students	24%	42%	31%
SROS can handcuff students	24%	37%	24%

Source: Survey of middle and high school students, parents, and staff Feb-Mar 2022

For this report, researchers obtained and reviewed data from the Beaverton Police Department to understand the extent to which SROs arrest and refer students to the Washington County Juvenile Department. **Arrest and referral data from the Washington County Sheriff and Hillsboro Police departments were not obtained for this analysis. Beaverton Police account for most SROs (seven out of eleven) and cover most schools in the district. For these reasons, the total arrest and referral rates for Aloha High School, Westview High School, International School of Beaverton, and Beaverton Arts and Science Academy are not reflected in the data analyzed for this report.**

SROs from Beaverton Police arrested or referred 121 Beaverton School District students in the school years from 2018-19 to 2021-22; this averages to about 40 arrests and referrals a year, not including 2020-21.[53]

- Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Pacific Islander students experienced a disproportionate rate of arrests and referrals compared to their proportion of the student population (Table 14).
- Five schools (Beaverton High School [HS], Southridge HS, Sunset HS, Conestoga Middle School [MS], and Five Oaks MS) accounted for most (71%) arrests and referrals (Table 15).
- Two SROs accounted for more than half (55%) of arrests and referrals (Table 16).
- School staff (89%) and students' family members (10%) initiated nearly all the reports that lead to student arrests and referrals.

These disproportionalities are evidence that implicit bias may be at play within the school and law enforcement systems, not of the criminality of any racial/ethnic group. The "What Does the Research Say" section details the research basis to demonstrate this national pattern.

Table 14. Beaverton PD student arrests and referrals by student race/ethnicity, SY 2018-19 to 2021-22

School	Number of arrests or referrals	Percent of arrests or referrals	Percent of student population
White	55	45%	44%
Hispanic, Latino	44	36%	26%
Black, African American	17	14%	3%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	3	2%	1%
Native American, Alaska Native	1	1%	< 1%
Unknown	1	1%	--

Note: these data only reflect arrests and referrals made by SROs from the Beaverton Police Department.
Source: Analysis of Beaverton Police Dept. arrest and referral data, May 2022.

[53] Students were not meeting in-person for most of this school year due to mandated distance learning from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 15. Beaverton PD student arrests and referrals by school, SY 2018-19 to 2021-22

School	Number of arrests or referrals	Percent of arrests or referrals
Total	**121**	**100%**
Beaverton HS	24	20%
Southridge HS	21	17%
Five Oaks MS	16	13%
Conestoga MS	13	11%
Sunset HS	12	10%
Highland Park MS	6	5%
Mountainside HS	6	5%
Cedar Park MS	4	3%
Whitford MS	4	3%
ACMA	3	2%
Cascade Academy	3	2%
Chehalem ES	3	2%
Tumwater MS	2	2%
Aloha HS*	1	1%
Bridges Academy	1	1%
Community School	1	1%
Fir Grove ES	1	1%

***Note**: These data only reflect arrests and referrals made by SROs from the Beaverton Police Department, which means that Westview, International School of Beaverton, and BASE are not represented here along with other middle and elementary schools. The Aloha HS numbers reflected in this chart do not include arrests and referrals by the Washington County Sheriff; this means the total of arrests and referrals for that school is likely higher than reflected in this table.
Source: Analysis of Beaverton Police Dept. arrest and referral data, May 2022.

Table 16. Beaverton PD student arrests and referrals by SRO, SY 2018-19 to 2021-22

School	Number of arrests or referrals	Percent of arrests or referrals
SRO A	37	31%
SRO B	29	24%
SRO C	17	14%
SRO D	16	13%
SRO E	13	11%
SRO F	4	3%
SRO G	3	2%
SRO H	2	2%

Note: these data only reflect arrests and referrals made by SROs from the Beaverton Police Department.
Source: Analysis of Beaverton Police Dept. arrest and referral data, May 2022.

Arrests

Of the 121 arrests and referrals of Beaverton School District students by Beaverton Police in 2018-19 to 2021-22, 20 of those students were arrested (i.e., taken into custody) by the SRO and 101 were referred to the Washington County Juvenile Department ("WCJD"). **The median age of students arrested for criminal offenses is 14 years old.**

- Among the students arrested, eight (40%) were for non-criminal offenses (e.g., truancy, running away from home) and 12 (60%) were for criminal offenses.
- Of those 12 students arrested for criminal offenses, three (25%) were Black, two (17%) were Hispanic/Latino, one (8%) was Native American, and six (50%) were White (Table 17).

Table 17. Student arrests for criminal offenses by student race/ethnicity, SY 2018-19 to 2021-22

School	Number of arrests	Percent of arrests	Percent of student population served by BPD
Black, African American	3	25%	3%
Hispanic, Latino	2	17%	26%
Native American, Alaska Native	1	8%	< 1%
White	6	50%	51%

Note: these data only reflect arrests and referrals made by SROs from the Beaverton Police Department.
Source: Analysis of Beaverton Police Dept. arrest and referral data, May 2022.

Referrals to Washington County Juvenile Department

Most (84%) referrals to the WJCD were for criminal offenses such as assault, disorderly conduct, minor in possession, and trespassing (Table 18).

Table 18. Top 5 offenses students were referred to WJCD for, SY 2018-19 to 2021-22

School	Number referrals	Percent of referrals
Disorderly conduct	19	19%
Minor in possession	13	13%
Assault	10	10%
Trespassing	10	10%
Criminal mischief	9	9%

Note: these data only reflect arrests and referrals made by SROs from the Beaverton Police Department.
Source: Analysis of Beaverton Police Dept. arrest and referral data, May 2022.

Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Pacific Islander students are disproportionately overrepresented among students referred for a criminal offense. Compared to all juvenile referrals to WCJD from across the

county,[54] District SROs refer Black and Hispanic students for criminal offenses at a higher rate, and White students at a lower rate (Table 19).

Table 19. Comparison of referrals across the District to referrals across Washington County

	% BSD Student Population Served by BPD	Percent of Beaverton SD students referred to WCJD for criminal offenses by BPD SROs	Percent of Washington County juveniles referred to WCJD for criminal offenses any law enforcement
Black, African American	3%	13%	8%
Hispanic, Latino	26%	42%	31%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	1%	4%	not available
White	51%	40%	48%

Note: School district data only reflect arrests and referrals made by SROs from the Beaverton Police Department.
Source: Analysis of Beaverton Police Dept. arrest and referral data, May 2022; Washington County Youth & Referrals Data and Evaluation Report

Due to confidentiality, records from the Washington County Juvenile Department and Juvenile Court were not obtained for this analysis, so the outcomes of these arrests are not known.

School Discipline

Exclusionary discipline practices, such as out-of-school suspensions, have been associated with "school-to-prison pipelines." Research has shown that students who are punished with out-of-school suspensions or expulsions are at greater risk of dropping out of school or becoming incarcerated.[55]

Researchers analyzed District discipline data to understand the rate at which students are punished with out-of-school suspensions or expulsions and to understand if/how SROs are associated with student discipline.

- For the current school year 2021-22, about 2% of the District's student population had out-of-school suspensions or expulsions.
- Black/African American (2.9 times), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (2.3 times), Native American/Alaska Native (1.7 times), and Hispanic/Latino (1.6 times) students were punished with out-of-school suspensions and/or expulsions at higher rates than White students, a trend that has persisted annually since at least 2017-18, the earliest year for which data were available for this analysis (Table 20).
- Middle school students accounted for more than half (52%) of out-of-school suspensions in 2021-22.

[54] Washington County Youth & Referrals Data and Evaluation Report (2021). Juvenile Justice Information Steering Committee, Oregon Youth Authority. https://www.oregon.gov/oya/jjis/Reports/2021WashingtonYouthReferrals.pdf.
[55] Russell J. Skiba, Mariella I. Arredondo & Natasha T. Williams (2014) More Than a Metaphor: The Contribution of Exclusionary Discipline to a School-to-Prison Pipeline, Equity & Excellence in Education, 47:4, 546-564, DOI: 10.1080/10665684.2014.958965.

- SROs made discipline referrals that resulted in out-of-school suspensions, though they account for fewer than 1% of those referrals. SROs are more likely to make disciplinary referrals for incidents involving "dangerous drugs," "unexcused absences," and that occur off-campus.

Table 20. Rate of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions by student race/ethnicity, SY 2021-22

Student racial/ethnic group	Rate of students with out-of-school suspension or expulsion	Relative rate ratio comparing rate of out-of-school suspensions or expulsion of each racial/ethnic group with the out-of-school suspension rate of White students
All students	**1.86**	**1.12**
Asian	0.60	0.36
Black, African American	4.72	2.85
Hispanic, Latino	2.66	1.61
Multiracial	1.71	1.03
Native American, Alaska Native	2.81	1.70
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	3.76	2.27
White	1.66	Comparison group

How to read this table (example): 4.72 of every 100 Black, African American students has an out-of-school suspension or expulsion in the 2021-22 school year. Black, African American students are given out-of-school suspensions or expelled 2.85 times more than White students.

Source: Analysis of Beaverton School District discipline records, March 2022.

Little or unclear impact of SRO Program

Students

In focus groups, 60% of students said that they perceive SROs as either having no impact on school safety or having little impact.

> *"They have little impact but the impact they do have makes school less safe. Like, there are some situations where students have a mental health crisis. Having an armed officer respond to an incident with a student within a mental health crisis could make it more dangerous."* - White male student

> *"I'd say in between less safe and not a clear impact on safety... but could be based on school. At my school they don't do much but make students feel uncomfortable. They're an authority figure that is very dominating in their presence. Their presence is dominating because you know they're a representative of the police. Their big bullet proof vests and all that. Sometimes they're not friendly in their [demeanor]"* - Female student of color

> *"I just see them standing there, staring at students."* -Nonbinary student of color

> *"I don't see the benefits of what they do. There's nothing that they do that I would miss if they weren't here."*
>
> - Male student of color

> *"[Whether they make school feel more safe, less safe, or have no impact on safety] depends on who they are. How do they interact with us? He was friendly to the students. But when we see them, they are on the balcony watching us. Watching over us. It's unsettling."* -Female of color

Positive impact of SRO Program

School Staff

School staff noted that SROs are most helpful when they provide consultation and advice for diversion programs and referrals. In 2020, 2,351 school safety incidents required suicide prevention, student threat assessments, sexual incident responses, social work referrals, and flight team responses.[56]

> *"SROs provide important information for threat assessments, and they may be the only person with this information."* - School Psychologist

Other school staff said that SROs can positively impact the school climate. For some staff, SROs have a positive impact when they are available to break up fights or otherwise be present in the building to interact with students.

> *"Most importantly and more common is the relational pieces. Some of our students struggle with behavioral social emotional issues. SROs can develop a relationship with them."* - White male administrator

> *"It's important for kids to have positive and deep meaningful connections with adults. Sometimes when they're struggling in school, they have a hard time connecting with teachers in an academic way. They see teachers as barrier. Being able to connect with adults in academic setting that's not an academic person [like a teacher] can be really powerful."* - White female teacher

> *"Nobody is calling an SRO because of disobedience. But call when you have a fight and someone is going to get hospitalized. Beat a teacher- that's when we need an SRO in the building. We do have kids who have hit staff. [I] will call…where you do not feel safe and need more authority."* - Paraeducator (undisclosed race)

> *"When we [campus monitors] try to break up fights, students don't respect us when officers are there. Two students were knocked down…one knocked out a student.*

[56] Beaverton School District SRO Report, 2020. Beaverton School Public Safety Department.

> *They didn't stop hitting him until the police officer showed up in the room."*
> - Campus monitor

> *"Obviously, it's very helpful to have SROs in uniform [to address student fights]. A lot of students will respond immediately to his request and command. But does that mean we require [their involvement]? I think that's a good question. It might not be required. Could we do it on our own? I don't know. It's debatable."* [Later, he said that most fights are not overly violent, and supervisors or admin will separate them and walk them back to where they need to be.] *"If safety is an imminent risk, the SRO along with the rest of us will break up the fight."*
> -Administrator (undisclosed race)

Negative impact of SRO Program

Students

In focus groups, most Black students, and a few other students of color, observed video recordings and other media involving police officers in other communities, which shaped their perceptions of police in schools.

> *"[W]hen they come in, all we see is what's on the news harming our communities. Their gun, their badge. I think the fear will still be there [without the presence of guns or full uniforms]."*

> *"If a lot of people of color are at school... if they see how police are negatively impacting our community… if they're being killed by police…how would that make them feel?"*

> *"I'm afraid [of police]."*

Parents

As noted earlier in the "Perceptions about SROs" section, there are parents who feel that SROs cause harm by threatening a sense of school safety. This is particularly true of parents who identify as Black and those who have students who are LGBTQIA+ or experiencing disabilities.

According to survey results, parents of Black (51%) and Asian (30%) students were more likely to worry about their child's safety because of their race/ethnicity compared to 12% of parents overall. Additionally, 22% of parents of Black students and 22% of parents of nonbinary students say that SROs or police officers in schools make them worry about their children's safety, compared to 7% of parents overall.

When asked about SROs' role regarding mental health crises or with students with disabilities, several parents said this is not an appropriate use of SROs and could cause harm.

> *"There are categories of crises on campus that really police are not set up to deal with, and they can be violent episodes and death, but they tend to, you know…. the problem is that there's a category of these sort of episodes around mental health issues, where the presence of police usually escalates the problem, not defuses them."*
> -White Male Parent

> *"Introducing an armed police officer when a situation is already difficult is not de-escalating. If there's a police officer around, the automatic response will be to have them deal with the situation rather than to access other resources."*
> -Multiracial Female Parent

Parents do not generally think of SROs as supporting students' sense of emotional safety, and in some cases, can be harmful to it. In general, parents who identify as teachers of color, other parents of color (who are not teachers), parents of students who identify as LGBTQIA+, and students with disabilities tend to identify emotional safety as equally (and in some cases, more) important to physical safety. A parent of color, who is also an educator (not in the Beaverton School District), shared:

> *"Safety is more about the experience in the classroom. For me, safety that is in the classroom involves how is the teacher creating the community and much less about broader forces that may need to involve a [School] Resource Officer."*

This parent did recognize their own concern about intruders and school shootings but continued, "Given this, I haven't seen SROs make it more safe. I'd say, less safe." Another parent, who identifies as Black, shared the following:

> *"Safety is the culture of the community that goes from the district office to principal's office to teachers and classified staff. For me, when I consider my daughter's safety, is she respected as a human being? Is she going to be respected as a young Black girl? Will her culture be regarded in her daily life? It's not necessarily an SRO being in school that will make me feel safe. SROs are not there most of the time. It's up to me and… other teachers to help students find safety. SROs would make schools less safe for some students."*

<u>School Staff</u>

About half of staff think that SROs being able to handcuff (55%) and arrest (47%) students, and SROs carrying weapons in schools (44%) have a negative impact on school climate.

- School administrators (39%) are less likely to think SROs being able to arrest students has a negative impact on school climate, compared to all staff.

Analysis

When families, students, and staff describe the SRO program's impact, they illuminate how perception and experience both contribute to impact. Perceptions of how SROs treat students, the possibility for SRO engagement to lead to life and legal consequences, the existence of weapons on campus, and the lack of clarity on when and how an SRO may engage all have an impact on school climate and culture and on feelings of safety in schools across the district.

When it comes to the fear of school shootings, which is shared widely among students, families and staff, many people have perceptions that SROs could prevent or stop that threat. That perception means that having SROs in the building contributes to some people's sense of emotional safety (typically among staff compared to students). For some staff, students, and families, particularly those who experience marginalization based on their identity, the fear of school shootings exists alongside concerns about being targeted, pushed out of schools and into the juvenile justice system, or both. Those who do not hold these fears are not as directly impacted by them, but those that do hold these fears experience SROs in schools as a threat to their safety.

Comprehensive Safety, Health & Wellness

Key Takeaways:

- A comprehensive framework for school safety includes physical elements (e.g., safety and security infrastructure, physical health) and elements that attend to emotional needs (e.g., mental and behavioral health, school climate and culture).
- Restorative justice practices were identified in staff focus groups and interviews as a tool for supporting students and an alternative to exclusionary discipline practices.
- When implemented with fidelity, restorative practices are grounded in a philosophical shift that centers emotional safety by building healthy relationships and positive school culture.
- The District is several years into its effort to grow mental and behavioral health staff, services, restorative practices, and professional learning support for school staff. This is a foundation from which to further build a network of comprehensive safety, health, and wellness supports for students and school staff.

As referenced earlier in this report, Beaverton students, staff, and parents view school safety in terms of physical and emotional needs. The comprehensive school safety framework below, developed by parents impacted by the Sandy Hook Elementary school shooting, tracks to those needs, and addresses the full breadth of what the District community wants from its safety program. This section highlights a few promising practices that relate to the emotional health aspects of this framework: culture, climate & community; mental & behavioral health; and health & wellness. The "What the Research Says: Best Practices" sections cover the physical elements of this framework, including operations and leadership/policy.

Figure 4. Safe and Sound Schools School Safety Framework

Source: From Safe and Sound Schools: "Rethinking School Safety."

Culture, Climate & Community

Promising Practice: Restorative Justice

Restorative justice practices were identified in staff focus groups and interviews as a tool for supporting students and as an alternative to exclusionary discipline use. Restorative justice has grown in popularity in many districts, with varying degrees of training and shared understanding across staff, students, and families.

The Restorative Justice Coalition of Oregon describes restorative justice as:

> *"[A]n alternative to traditional discipline models that utilize suspension and expulsion as a response to conflict and behavior challenges. Rather than excluding students from school when a problem arises, Restorative Justice seeks to establish accountability, repair harm, and provide space for learning and growth. Restorative justice in schools is not a singular program or process, rather a philosophy and practice based on a core set of principles that emphasizes healing and repair over punishment, inclusion over exclusion, individual accountability with a high level of community support, and building relationship-based school climates where problems are less likely to occur."*[57]

While restorative justice practices are thought to be an alternative model of discipline, it is much more than that. When implemented with fidelity, restorative practices are grounded in a philosophical shift that centers emotional safety by building healthy relationships and positive school culture. Simply put, restorative justice relies on the premise that there is something worth restoring when harm is caused. If there is no sense of a school community or authentic relationships between students and their peers and teachers, the work of repairing and learning is challenged.

Developing a resilient school community also requires addressing inequities that exist in school systems. As researchers Anne Gregory and Katherine R. Evans found in evaluating the impact of restorative justice practices in school systems, "Despite synergy between RJE [Restorative Justice in Education] and social justice, too often implementation of restorative practices fails to address policies and practices related to oppression, abuses of power, and silencing of voices."[58]

The opportunity of well-implemented restorative justice is not merely a replacement for more traditional forms of discipline. It is an opportunity to contribute to a school culture where relationships are authentic, and where students and staff feel part of a caring community.

This quote from an Education Week on discipline captures the power of this kind of alignment between discipline and school culture:

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[57] Restorative Justice Coalition of Oregon, http://rjoregon.org/what-is-rj.

[58] Gregory, A., & Evans, K.R. (2020). "The Starts and Stumbles of Restorative Justice in Education: Where Do We Go from Here?" Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. Retrieved May 15th, 2022, from http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/restorative-justice.

"In a school that has brought its disciplinary, cultural, and instructional aspirations into alignment with each other through intentional design, core values reinforce rather than compete with each other. Students get used to the expectation that their role, across the various contexts that together constitute 'school,' is to actively and authentically engage with each other and with new content. In so doing, they learn to trust that that the adults in the building believe in their ability to self-direct, self-actualize, and contribute."[59]

Mental & Behavioral Health

Beaverton School District Behavioral Health & Wellness Project

The District School Board directed staff to develop recommendations for enhancing district-wide support for students, educators, and other school staff in 2021. In May 2022, the Behavioral Health & Wellness Project team proposed a comprehensive set of recommendations that are grounded in trauma-informed, anti-racist practices.[60]

"Behavioral Health and Wellness refers to the social, emotional, and behavioral welfare of all. This comprehensive system of trauma-informed and anti-racist foundational strategies, universal prevention, and evidence-based interventions is intended to improve student engagement, reduce barriers to learning, and ultimately contribute to post high school success. The Behavioral Health and Wellness framework nurtures the resiliency of our students, staff, and organization by promoting well-being and building community, the core tenets of Behavioral Health and Wellness."

Curricula were vetted with a rigorous scoring process that included accessibility, cultural responsiveness, family components, and alignment with other district initiatives.

Guiding principles for this program include:[61]

- Foster and maintain healthy relationships
- Student voice and self-empowerment
- Climate, culture, and values
- Culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-racist, and anti-biased
- Commitment to system-wide collective responsibility
- Family and community partnerships
- Proactive planning and data-based decision-making

[59] Fine, Sarah M, "Deeper Discipline Demands Deeper Pedagogy," Education Week, Learning Deeply, Contributing Blogger, October 07, 2015.
[60] Behavioral Health and Wellness: Curriculum Adoption Project Team Report (Phase 1). May 2022. Shared at Beaverton School Board meeting on May 23, 2022.
[61] Ibid.

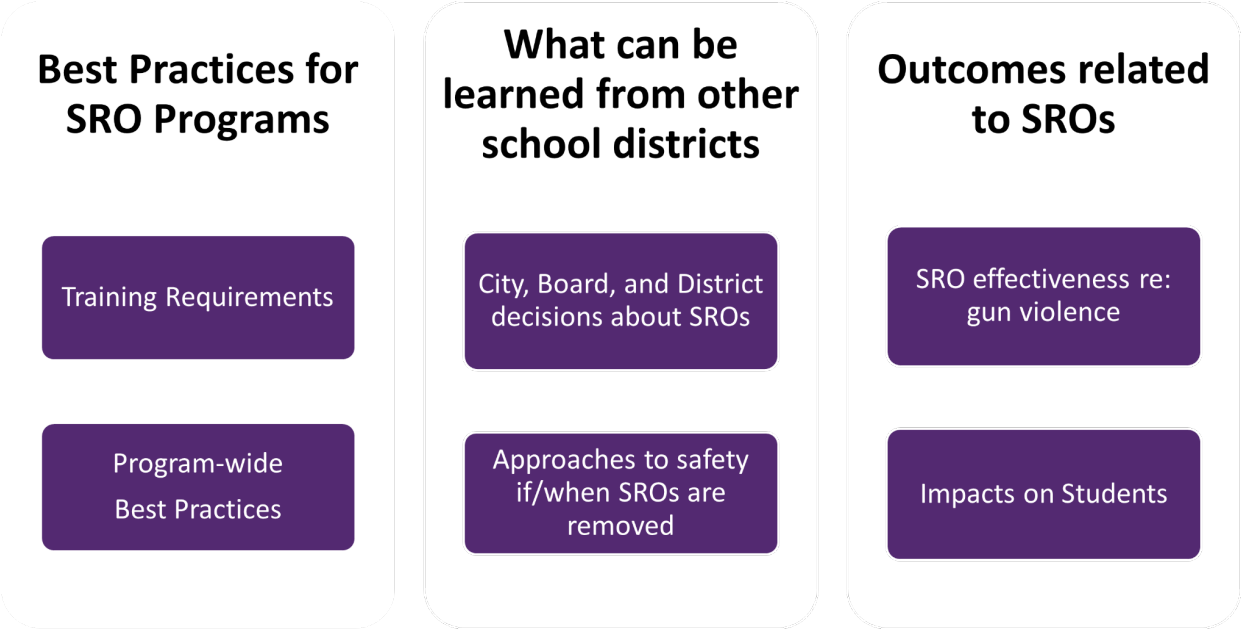
What the Research Says

Survey and focus group participants - including school staff, SROs, parents, and students - have shared their personal beliefs, perceptions, and experiences with SROs in schools. At the same time, many have expressed their interest in knowing "what the research says."

District community members and Beaverton residents are curious about the extent to which police in schools prevent/deter school shootings, their impact on the use of discipline and whether there is a school-to-prison pipeline, and curiosity about what other communities across the country have done to grapple with a broad range of community opinions.

For instance, many people mentioned their support of the SRO program because of their belief that all SROs are specifically trained to work with youth and that they are effective in deterring school shootings. Others are opposed to SROs, believing that officers are not appropriate uses for the vast majority of incidents at school or that they are associated with disproportionate arrests of students of color and students with disabilities. This section responds to these and other questions with national research. Most research questions were posed by the Beaverton City Council and Beaverton School District Board in their co-developed Request for Proposals (RFP) for this SRO review project.

Figure 5. Summary of Questions Explored in This Section



Best Practices for SRO Programs

What training requirements exist for SROs?

District community members expect a difference in the training that SROs receive compared to a typical patrol officer, and many believe they have specialized training that prepares them for a school setting. Training on topics that include trauma-informed approaches to working with youth - from elementary to high school, antiracism, de-escalation tactics, and specific strategies for active shooter situations were all mentioned as important knowledge that SROs should have. However, this training for Beaverton School District SROs is not specified in policy, protocols, or the IGA that communicates expectations. Instead, it is up to individual law enforcement agencies to offer the trainings to their officers, and it is up to officers to take the trainings. In the absence of written policies, protocols, or expectations, training specific to school settings and youth is not institutionalized throughout the District's SRO program. This means that expectations for individual officers may be different and lead to inconsistencies in approaches to working with students, parents, and school staff.

A state's policy context is important to consider when reviewing an individual district SRO program, as school districts and local law enforcement are guided by state policies. According to a 50-state review in 2019 by the Education Commission of the States, there are 30 states that define what a School Resource Officer is in state law and 20 do not, including Oregon.[62] Some states, in their definition of an SRO, also specify that part of being an SRO means having a minimum set of training relevant to that role.[63] Texas, where the most recent mass school shooting occurred, updated their training requirements in 2020 to specify that SROs "must obtain a school-based law enforcement proficiency certificate within 180 days" of their placement on a school campus.[64] Oregon does not have a similar requirement.

Because Oregon law does not specify this level of detail either about what an SRO is or what training is required, these issues are up for negotiation and determination by local communities. An advantage of this approach is that local communities in Oregon can decide how SROs should be used and what training is required for individual communities. A disadvantage is that individual communities may not have the capacity and resources to explore best practices or common practices about what training is beneficial for SROs, what duties they should be explicitly tasked with doing and avoiding, and ultimately, there may not be clarity about what the SRO program outcomes are and how these will be monitored.

The national membership organization for SROs, the National Association of School Resource Officers, provides several courses for SROs including a 40-hour basic training and 24-hour advanced training.[65] However, there is no general state or federal requirement that this training be done prior to becoming an SRO, nor is it clear that this set of trainings alone is sufficient for what local communities might want their SROs to be able to know and do. In a 2018 Education Week Research Survey among SROs, one in

[62] 50-State Comparison: K-12 School Safety regarding School Resource Officers, Education Commission of the States, Feb. 2019.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Texas Administrative Code §221.43, amended Feb. 2020. Prior to the update, the administrative code required the certification only for SROs in districts with more than 30,000 students.
[65] National Association of School Resource Officers Training Courses.

five SROs said they did not have sufficient training to work in a school environment.[66] In addition, less than 40% said they had training on child trauma and 54% said they were trained on how to work with students in special education.[67] Below is a sample of how some states define SROs, which demonstrates the variance in how these definitions incorporate training:

Alabama: A "'School resource officer' is a law enforcement officer employed by a law enforcement agency who is specifically selected and specially trained for the school setting. School resource officers are permitted to carry a deadly weapon.[68]" In addition to this specific language, it should be noted that state law requires that SROs annually complete the firearm requalification required of law enforcement officers and they must complete active shooter training.

California: A "'School security officer' is employed to provide security services as a watchperson, security guard, or patrol person at a school district to protect persons or property, prevent the theft or unlawful taking of district property or to report any unlawful activity to the district and local law enforcement agencies.[69]" SROs must complete training directly related to the role of SROs, approved by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training.

Colorado: "'School resource officer' means a peace officer who has specialized training assigned to a school to create a safe learning environment and to respond to all-hazard threats." The training must be approved by the Colorado Post Officer Standards and Training.

Oregon: Oregon law authorizes a district school board to establish its own law enforcement agency if they wish and employ personnel needed to ensure "the safety of school district personnel and students.[70]" This law does not specifically address school district requirements when partnering with law enforcement agencies, and unlike the states identified above, it is silent on what training is required.

Beaverton School District: Noted earlier in this report, the District does not have its own training requirements for SROs. Instead, the District defers to each of the three law enforcement agencies with which it partners. Among all three agencies, there are no standard SRO training requirements that is prescribed in policy or protocol, rather, all training is a matter of practice which may lead to inconsistency across and within a law enforcement agency. This is in contrast with the neighboring Hillsboro School District, which specifies in their IGA with the Hillsboro Police Department a range of training requirements. The similarities and differences between law enforcement agency practices are discussed below.

- **Beaverton Police Department (BPD) does not have policies, protocols, or job description requirements that specify the types of training SROs have or receive.[71]** However, as a matter of practice, the department provides transportation, travel, lodging, and release time for SROs

[66] Kurtz, H. , Lloyd, S., Harwin, A., and Osher, M. School Policing: Results of a National Survey of School Resource Officers (2018), Education Week Research Center.
[67] Sawchuk, S. "School Resource Officers Explained," EdWeek, 11/16/21.
[68] 50-State Comparison: K-12 School Safety regarding School Resource Officers, Education Commission of the States, Feb. 2019.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Oregon Revised Statute 332.531.
[71] Beaverton Police Department response to information request, Feb. 17, 2022.

to attend annual training provided by the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO). Training topics include school safety, de-escalation in mental health crises, communication skills, and more.[72] According to Department leadership, three of the seven SROs have begun serving as an SRO within the past two years and have not yet had an opportunity to attend the NASRO conference due to COVID-19 conference cancellations. NASRO resumes its annual conference in July 2022. In addition to this training, Department leadership states that, "BPD provides ongoing annual training for trauma-informed care, anti-bias/anti-racism, and sexual harassment…SROs also receive training in forensic interviewing of children, child sex trafficking (awareness and response) and threat assessment. Training is an ongoing process and ranges from many topics such as child abuse, crime scene investigations, mental health, leadership, explosives, weapons handling, workplace harassment, criminal law updates and other topics. Training for SROs and police officers never ends.[73]"

    - **According to the SRO job description at BPD, a minimum of three years of experience as a police officer is required.[74]** The job description does not reference any required training background, nor does it state any expectations that SROs, once hired, must complete SRO-specific training to be considered for SRO assignments. NASRO best practices suggest that all SROs complete the 40-hour Basic SRO course prior to beginning an SRO assignment or within one year.[75] This training supports officers' development in three areas: law enforcement, informal counselor/mentor, and educator.[76] As noted on the course outline, the NASRO training is certified by the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training.

- **Hillsboro Police Department (HPD), like BPD, does not specify in policies, protocols, or job descriptions any required background related to training completed or expected once hired.** However, like BPD, it ensures that as a matter of practice that SROs (only one from HPD serves BSD) receive NASRO's 40-hour training.[77]

    - HPD also serves Hillsboro School District. In their IGA for SROs, there are clear requirements that specify what training SROs have. These include provisions that all SROs for Hillsboro School District complete, at minimum, "a basic national recognized training class for police officers working in school environments" [this could be construed as the NASRO training that HPD and BPD do ask their SROs for Beaverton School District to attend, but is not required], "the same virtual training through Safe Schools required for [Hillsboro School District] certified staff…" and 8 hours per year of anti-bias, diversity, equity, and inclusion training.[78]

- **The Washington County Sheriff, like BPD and HPD SROs for Beaverton School District, does not have specific policies or protocols that require SRO training, but as a matter of practice**

[72] An example agenda can be found for the 2022 NASRO conference here. Breakout session agendas for content areas can be found here.
[73] BPD response to information request, Feb. 17, 2022.
[74] Compiled Job Descriptions p. 1-2.
[75] Best Practices: School Resource Officer Program Recommendations. (2021). NASRO.
[76] NASRO 40-hour course outline guide.
[77] HPD response to information request, Feb. 28, 2022.
[78] IGA between Hillsboro School District and Hillsboro Police Department, p. 2.

the Sheriff does ask SROs to attend a 40-hour basic SRO course from NASRO. In addition, SROs receive an initial 16 hours of crisis/mental health training and an additional three hours every other year. They receive one or two hours per year of training related to anti-bias. They are also able to attend additional trainings as requested, including but not limited to the Oregon School Resource Officer annual conferences and threat assessment trainings.[79]

[79] Washington County Sheriff's Office response to information request, Apr. 8, 2022.

Best Practices for SRO Programs

What are the best practices for SRO programs?

The concept of "best practices" is often a matter of perspective in terms of a) how community members define "safety" and b) how they define SROs role in ensuring that definition of safety. SROs are traditionally associated with physical aspects of safety, though as noted previously in this report, they might also have an impact on students,' parents', and school employees' sense of emotional safety. This section attempts to summarize best practices from multiple perspectives regarding various components of SRO programs (e.g., SRO duties; data collection and reporting; evaluations).

To develop this summary, researchers sought a balanced approach to identify possible "best practices" given the subjective nature of "best." This section therefore includes perspectives from SROs representatives (via their trade association, the National Association for School Resource Officers); civil rights organizations including the Advancement Project, the Alliance for Educational Justice, and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund; and government agencies which may be perceived as relatively more neutral compared to NASRO and the Advancement Project. These agencies include the Congressional Research Service (a non-partisan government agency that serves members of Congress of all political parties), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Justice.

- **Number of SROs per school:** NASRO recommends having one SRO per school as a best practice.[80] The FBI acknowledges that "not all schools may require or want" an SRO.[81] A more detailed guide from the FBI recommends that local law enforcement agencies coordinate with schools to "conduct a needs assessment to determine goals and scope of law enforcement involvement."[82] Others nationally - including the Advancement Project, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and the Alliance for Educational Justice[83] - and in Beaverton School District's own community have said it is best to have zero SROs in schools.[84]

- **Relationships between Districts and Local Law Enforcement:** NASRO recommends that "for the School Resource Officer program to be successful, the law enforcement agency head and the superintendent of the school district should understand and support the School Resource Officer program…"[85] This is shared as a best practice by the FBI and the U.S. Department of Education.[86] [87] According to the FBI's best practice guidance, if schools do not have a SRO, they should at minimum have a point of contact in the local police department. The U.S. Department of Education, which collaborated with the U.S. Department of Justice, issued guidance that suggests districts work with civil rights organizations, community members, and law

[80] National Association of School Resource Officers Frequently Asked Questions.
[81] Schweiz, K., and Mancik, A. "School Resource Officers and Violence Prevention: Best Practices (Part One)," April 11, 2017.
[82] "Violence Prevention in Schools," U.S. Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Investigation. March 2017.
[83] Police Are Not the Answer to School Shootings, Advancement Project, Alliance for Educational Justice, Dignity in Schools Campaign, and NAACP Legal Defense Fund. Original release 2013, re-release 2018.
[84] Focus group data shared earlier in this report, as well as the City of Beaverton's Human Rights Advisory Commission recommendations in January 2021.
[85] Best Practices: School Resource Officer Program Recommendations. (2021). NASRO, p. 6.
[86] Schweiz, K., and Mancik, A. "School Resource Officers and Violence Prevention: Best Practices (Part One)," April 11, 2017.
[87] Safe School-Based Enforcement Through Collaboration, Understanding and Respect: Local Implementation Rubric (SECURe). U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice.

enforcement to develop the IGAs.[88]

- **Defining SRO responsibilities/duties and documenting in a written agreement**: There is nearly universal agreement that if SROs exist, a detailed written agreement should specify roles and responsibilities (Beaverton School District has one for each law enforcement agency, as noted earlier). The Congressional Research Service and U.S. Department of Justice recommend that if a school decides to use an SRO, "there should be clear goals for the program" and that "SROs should engage in activities that directly relate to school safety goals and address identified needs."[89] This is particularly important since philosophical differences between education institutions and law enforcement institutions may occur, resulting in a need to proactively address these directly in an IGA to mitigate unintended scope creep by law enforcement and/or un-resourced demands from school district officials.

    - Role in School Discipline: There is also near-universal agreement that SROs should not be involved in discipline and that it should be clearly codified in written agreements. NASRO recommends specifying that an SRO "should NOT administer formal discipline such as detentions, suspensions, and expulsions. These decisions are the sole responsibility of school personnel."[90] While the FBI makes a similar recommendation, it further advises that the district and law enforcement agencies should talk through possible "gray areas:" specific scenarios where it might not be clear whether issues are strictly criminal or discipline-related.[91] This practice does not occur within Beaverton School District, based on interviews, focus groups, and information requests. The Advancement Project's sample agreement between districts and law enforcement agencies advises that school principals or their designee "must attempt to de-escalate school-based incidents involving students whenever possible prior to calling or otherwise involving the police department.[92]"
    - Example IGAs and additional guidance can be found on the websites of the Advancement Project, NASRO, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the U.S. Department of Education.

- **SRO Program Monitoring, Evaluation, & Transparency:** The Congressional Research Service, in its report published one year after the Sandy Hook school shooting (2012), acknowledged that few available studies have reliably evaluated SRO program effectiveness. This is partially due to the lack of reliable data collection and evaluation. SRO programs should be accompanied by clear and measurable goals, active data collection, and a reporting system to ensure intended goals are met.[93]
    - In the Advancement Project's compilation of recommended IGA components between districts and law enforcement, Broward County, Florida's IGA is included as a model.

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[88] Ibid.
[89] James, N., McCallion, G. "School Resource Officers: Law Enforcement Officers in Schools," Congressional Research Service, June 26, 2013, p. 11.
[90] Best Practices: School Resource Officer Program Recommendations. (2021). NASRO, p. 6.
[91] Schweiz, K., and Mancik, A. "School Resource Officers and Violence Prevention: Best Practices (Part One)," April 11, 2017.
[92] Recommended Memorandum of Understanding between the School District and Police Department, Advancement Project.
[93] James, N., McCallion, G. "School Resource Officers: Law Enforcement Officers in Schools," Congressional Research Service, June 26, 2013

Broward County is the home of Parkland's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, where the third deadliest mass K-12 school shooting in 2018. The IGA requires that data reflecting "all school-based arrests, referrals to law enforcement, and filing of criminal complaints disaggregated by location of arrest/school, charge, arresting agency, gender, age, race/ethnicity, disability, and ESL status is collected by the School District and the Department of Juvenile Justice.[94]" Further, the IGA specifies that this data will be reviewed monthly by a committee to monitor compliance and racial disparities. This data is reported to the public each semester. Finally, the Advancement Project's recommended IGA provisions include specifying that a user-friendly, multilingual complaint process is established and communicated to parents, students, and staff, along with an independent investigation process for any allegations against SROs.

- Beaverton School District's IGAs with all three law enforcement agencies provide little direction as to what data should be collected and reported to the school board, district administration, school staff, students, and families. Hillsboro School District offers a potential model for Beaverton. Hillsboro School District's IGA with HPD requires SROs to submit a monthly activity report to the Superintendent and school principals. At a minimum, this data should include number of calls for service; presentations delivered to students, school staff, and parents; and investigations.[95] Further, the Hillsboro School District IGA requires SROs to submit an annual professional training record for each calendar year.

- **SRO Evaluations:** Each of the three law enforcement agencies that serve Beaverton School District employ the SROs, and these SROs are evaluated by their supervisor (a sergeant employed by the agency). The agencies may engage school administrators in the SRO evaluations as a matter of practice. NASRO recommends a best practice that school administrators are consulted to offer feedback for SRO evaluations.[96] The U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice recommend the intentional design of evaluation systems, which should develop a crosswalk of trainings provided to the capabilities expected, along with an evaluation of how SROs de-escalate and use alternative disciplinary actions to prevent citations, ticketing, and arrests. These agencies also recommend that student, family, and school staff feedback is gathered and reviewed as part of an SRO's evaluation.[97]

- **Uniforms & Weapons:** There is minimal "best practice" guidance regarding the uniforms and weapons that SROs have. NASRO merely provides general counsel that SROs "should be clearly defined as law enforcement" and that the uniform they wear and equipment they carry "should be defined by the agency policy."[98]
    - Though there is not much data or research available about Oregon-specific practices among SROs, an example from Minnesota is provided here not as guidelines but rather as an offering of limited data that exists about the prevalence of different uniforms for

[94] Recommended Memorandum of Understanding between the School District and Police Department, Advancement Project, p. 33.
[95] IGA between Hillsboro School District and Hillsboro Police Department.
[96] Best Practices: School Resource Officer Program Recommendations. (2021). NASRO, p. 6.
[97] Safe School-Based Enforcement Through Collaboration, Understanding and Respect: Local Implementation Rubric (SECURe). U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice.
[98] Ibid, p. 7.

SROs. Minnesota's Department of Public Safety conducted a survey of SROs in the state in 2014 and found that a typical school-day attire consists of a full police officer uniform for 55% of SROs, a partial/ "soft uniform" for 20% of SROs, and plain clothes for 25% of SROs.[99] The majority in the survey said they carry a badge, firearm, cell phone, and handcuffs, and over 90% said they also carry a police radio.

- It is notable that Hillsboro PD serves Hillsboro School District and Beaverton School District with two different SRO uniforms. For Hillsboro School District, the SROs wear "dressed down" uniforms which consist of a polo shirt with the police department logo and officer name, a duty belt, department-issued uniform pants, and department-issued footwear. The IGA specifically notes that "[d]rop holsters and load bearing vests are not preferred wear in the school setting.[100]"
- Washington County Sheriff SROs, according to the IGA with BSD, "will wear approved department uniforms, formal business attire, or business casual with appropriate logos and name badges depending on the time of school year, the type of school activity or program, and the requests of the school or County." Despite this flexibility, deputies wear the standard department uniform as it is SROs' preference.

- **SRO Hiring/Selection:** Best practice guidance infers that school administration should be involved with selecting SROs, though this is not the practice in Beaverton School District as noted earlier. NASRO and the FBI recommend that "when possible," the school administration be involved with the selection process, such as being involved with candidate interviews[101] [102] The Advancement Project goes a step further, stating that selection of SROs for each school should be made by a committee of students, parents, community members, teachers, and school administration.[103] The U.S. Department of Justice and Department of Education further specify that this broad set of stakeholders also should have an opportunity to provide input on the hiring guidelines, with specific consideration for hiring SROs that have the ability to work well with students, parents, and teachers; an understanding of alternatives to arrest; consideration for past discipline and legal history; respect for youth and families of all backgrounds; and understanding of developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed practices to working with youth.[104]

    - **Qualifications**: NASRO recommends that SROs are "carefully selected" and "specifically trained.[105]" This guidance does not offer specifics on carefully selecting SROs, stating only that selection processes should include a) at least three years of law enforcement experience, b) a willingness to work with youth, and c) written and verbal

[99] Hurley Swayze, D., & Buskovick, D. (2014). Law enforcement in Minnesota schools: A statewide survey of school resource officers. Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs.
[100] IGA between Hillsboro School District and Hillsboro Police Department, p. 8.
[101] Best Practices: School Resource Officer Program Recommendations. (2021). NASRO.
[102] Schweiz, K., and Mancik, A. "School Resource Officers and Violence Prevention: Best Practices (Part One)," April 11, 2017.
[103] Recommended Memorandum of Understanding between the School District and Police Department, Advancement Project.
[104] Safe School-Based Enforcement Through Collaboration, Understanding and Respect: Local Implementation Rubric (SECURe). U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice.
[105] Best Practices: School Resource Officer Program Recommendations. (2021). NASRO, p. 4.

communication skills.[106] The FBI also offers little guidance.[107] [108]

- **Training:** NASRO recommends that SROs complete a school-based law enforcement course, such as their own 40-hour Basic SRO course, prior to starting school assignments, or within one year of assignment.[109] NASRO's course is certified by the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training.[110] This training is required by the U.S. Department of Justice for all SRO positions that are funded by the agency's COPS grant.[111] This is the same training that BPD, HPD, and Washington County Sheriff's office send SROs to, as noted earlier (though it is not required for their SROs, it is encouraged). The Oregon School Resource Officers Association endorses this NASRO course.[112]

    - While the NASRO course, developed by SROs themselves, emphasizes traditional policing translated to school and youth contexts, other organizations emphasize best practice guidance to build SROs familiarity with child development skills, restorative practices, accommodations for students with disabilities, and students' rights in school. The Advancement Project, for example, recommends that IGAs between districts and local law enforcement agencies specify that:

    - *"Prior to being assigned…, police officers shall be trained on their role within schools and on the rights afforded to students. Further, they shall be trained on: child and adolescent development and psychology; age-appropriate responses; cultural competence; restorative justice techniques; special accommodations for students with disabilities; practices proven to improve school climate; and the creation of safe spaces for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students. Such trainings shall continue on an annual basis."*[113]

    - There are no national training standards that specify what exactly SROs should know and be able to do in the same way that standards exist for teaching, for example.[114] Instead, the foundation of SROs' training is the basic training required to be a law enforcement officer, provided in police academies. Nationally, the amount of time that police academies spend on issues related to juvenile justice is about one percent. According to a 2013 study by Strategies for Youth, a national policy and training organization focused on improving youth/police interactions, this is true for Oregon as well.[115] This organization recommends best practices on training for police officers (not just SROs) to work with youth. It includes training on how to: work with students with learning disabilities, cross- training with mental health experts, strategies, and tactics for

[106] Ibid, p. 10.
[107] Schweiz, K., and Mancik, A. "School Resource Officers and Violence Prevention: Best Practices (Part One)," April 11, 2017.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Best Practices: School Resource Officer Program Recommendations. (2021). NASRO.
[110] NASRO 40-hour Course Outline & Objectives.
[111] "Important Considerations When Assigning School Resource Officers," U.S. Department of Justice.
[112] OSROA Position Statement on School-Based Policing.
[113] Recommended Memorandum of Understanding between School District and Police Department, Advancement Project, p. 3.
[114] Ryan, J.B., Katsiyannis, A., Counts, J., & Shelnut, J. (2018). The Growing Concerns Regarding School Resource Officers. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 53*, 188 - 192.
[115] Strategies for Youth. (2013). If not now, when? A survey of juvenile justice training in America's police academies, p. 16 & 30.

reducing implicit bias, understanding developmental differences, experiential work with youth during the training process, and understanding how officers may unintentionally escalate a situation by triggering youth.[116]

- SROs themselves, leaders in the law enforcement agencies that employ them, and some school employees spoke highly of the fact that SROs are trained to work with youth in ways that typical patrol officers may not be. As noted earlier, this difference often shows up in SRO demeanor, actions, and behavior that are seen as better attuned (and want) to working with youth.

- These reports, along with the training information in the preceding pages, raise questions about whether more law enforcement officers should be trained in working with youth as part of a standard, not just SROs. This consideration seems relevant mainly because a) there are so few SROs (11) relative to a student population of nearly 40,000 in the District, and b) youth are in schools only part of their time and may encounter non-SRO patrol officers or deputies off-campus. In the City of Beaverton, approximately 20% of residents are under 18 years of age, but few police are specifically and extensively trained in working with youth.[117]

[116] Ibid.

[117] U.S. Census Quick Facts for the City of Beaverton. (2021).

What can be learned from other school districts?

What can we learn from research concerning how other school districts locally and nationally have addressed SROs in schools?

Many districts around the country have grappled with what role, if any, SROs should play in schools. Following the May 2020 murder of George Floyd, small, medium, and large school districts in rural, suburban, and urban areas have chosen to either end their program or significantly modify it. Some communities that chose to end their contracts and agreements with police still have outstanding questions about what programs to have in place instead. These questions have been complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic. With in-person schooling suspended for much of the past two years in many parts of the country, there has been little time to implement on-site programs that are alternatives to SROs. In addition, the timeframe means it is too soon to evaluate whether any particular approach works better than others, since these programs are just in their first year of implementation.

Education Week, a national publication focused on K-12 education news, conducted the most comprehensive known review of how schools across the nation have been addressing SROs in schools since May 2020. Their review, based on media clips from around the country (last updated June 2022), found that at least 50 school districts serving nearly two million students either eliminated school resource officer programs or cut their budgets.[118] This is likely an undercount, as many decisions may be made about SRO programs without media reports. Most of these districts decided to end their agreements with law enforcement immediately or through a phase-out process. While some districts have claimed budget restrictions as to their decision to end their agreements with law enforcement, other reasons are not known.

In a few cases, districts chose to end the program amidst local public pressure but reinstated the program following pressure from the other end of the spectrum of debate regarding police in schools. These examples shed light on the inevitable pendulum swing that elected officials face regarding highly charged policy and budget decisions. Further, these examples show how extreme shifts in short periods may be mitigated by thoughtful planning for alternative measures if SROs are removed (e.g., plans to address school shootings or students bringing weapons to school), and by an intentional consideration of how to design policy solutions that benefit everyone.

- Fremont, California - With an enrollment size that is slightly smaller than Beaverton School District, the Fresno school board voted three to two in November 2020 to discontinue the SRO program based on a task force recommendations report.[119] Two months later and with two new board members, the board voted to restore the program after receiving input from other community members who had drastically different perspectives.[120] One parent was quoted in a local news article as saying that the 25-member task force was full of people with "anti-SRO positions," and stated "[w]e respect the law, we trust law enforcement, and we want SROs to

[118] Schwartz, S., Sawchuk, S., Pendharkar, E., Najarro, I. "These Districts Defunded Their School Police. What Happened Next?" EducationWeek. 06/04/21.
[119] Evaluating the Impact of a Permanent Police Presence on Fremont Unified School District Campuses.(2020). Fremont SRO Task Force.
[120] Geha, J. "Cops back on campus: Fremont School District will spend $913,000 to keep police patrols of high schools." The Mercury News. 05/20/21.

keep our children safe."[121]

- Alexandria, Virginia - In May 2021, the Alexandria City Council voted against the will of the Superintendent and the School Board to end the SRO program and reallocate funds to mental health resources. In October 2021, the City reinstated the SROs temporarily through the 2021-22 school year. The reinstatement occurred following a backlash after incidents involving students with weapons, one of which brought a gun to a high school.[122] Comments from community members who favored SROs provide insight on the rationale behind the Board's change in position: "Kids are getting assaulted, innocent kids are getting assaulted on a daily basis. We are trying to help a few when the many are being traumatized," Ricardo Roberts said.[123] The Superintendent favored reinstating SROs, saying his staff gave him a round of applause when he told them that he would ask the School Board to ask the City Council for SRO reinstatement. "I mean, the staff are like overjoyed, please go out and plead for us. We need this resource in our schools, and I just have to say that we really need … more services and … safety measures."[124]

- Pomona, California - The district voted to remove the SROs in July 2021 and employed "proctors" trained in de-escalation tactics. However, prompted partly by a shooting near Pomona High School in October 2021, the board voted unanimously to reinstate SROs. Community members who had been advocating for the removal of SROs for at least four years were disappointed by the reinstatement and stated that the board's decision did not allow time for adequate community input.[125]

Oregon School Districts

In Oregon, five districts no longer have SROs in decisions made between May 2020 and November 2021. The superintendent of the state's largest district, Portland Public, announced on June 4, 2020 that "[w]ith the new proposed investments in direct student supports (social workers, counselors, culturally specific partnerships & more), I am discontinuing the regular presence of School Resource Officers. We need to re-examine our relationship with [the Portland Police Bureau]."[126] Within hours, the Mayor of Portland, who oversees the Portland Police Bureau, announced that the City would end the SRO program entirely, impacting Portland Public, David Douglas, and Parkrose School Districts.[127] In addition, Eugene 4J School District chose not to renew their contract with Eugene Police after December 2020.[128] Most recently, in March 2021, Salem-Keizer's superintendent announced that it too is ending its SRO program, citing mission drift in their SRO program and a recognition that their

[121] Ibid.
[122] Armus, T. and Natanson, H. "In a dramatic 1 a.m. reversal, Alexandria City Council votes to put police back in schools temporarily." Washington Post. 10/13/21.
[123] Lukert, L. "Alexandria superintendent, parents plea for return of SROs." WTOP News. 10/08/21.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Smith, H. "Pomona defunded school police. But after a shooting, campus officers are coming back." Los Angeles Times. 11/05/21.
[126] Statement by Portland Public Schools Superintendent Guadalupe Guerrero via Twitter. 06/04/20.
[127] Miller, E. "Under Pressure, Portland Will Eliminate School Resource Officer Program." OPB, 06/04/20.
[128] Eugene 4J School Board Meeting Minutes, 06/17/20.

program did not follow national best practices.[129] The superintendent noted that, "[t]his doesn't mean that we will not have any formal relationship or contract with law enforcement."[130]

Alternatives and Modifications to SRO programs: Examples from Other Districts

In the cases in which districts no longer have an SRO program or have decided to modify the program, alternatives have included: phasing out SROs; hiring safety, restorative justice, or counselor positions; retaining SROs with significantly revised IGAs/contracts with law enforcement; and stationing police outside of schools but not inside. These alternatives or modifications are highlighted below with examples of what some individual school communities have done. This is not intended as a comprehensive list.

Phased out SROs

- Boulder Valley, Colorado - The board voted in November 2020 to phase out the SRO program, with a target end date of January 2022.[131] The district hired 10 school safety advocates, whose job description was designed with community input and whose focus is on restorative practice (these roles are specifically not involved in discipline).[132] The interviews conducted for this position included representatives of the Parents of Color Council, Youth Equity Council, Equity Council, and District Accountability Committee, along with middle and high school leaders. In addition, the district hired 5 additional mental health advocates and a restorative practices coordinator. The district also revised its agreements with law enforcement agencies.

Retained SROs, but specified additional training or changes to the contract

- La Crosse, Wisconsin - The school board approved a plan in December 2020 to decrease police from five to three by July 2021 and to two by July 2022. In August 2021, "a new agreement was written for three SROs who are overseen by a new committee.[133]" As of May 2022, the district plans to retain three SROs.[134]
- Poudre District, Colorado - The School Board decided to keep the SRO program, though they had considered committee recommendations to remove SROs.[135] In June 2021, the board specified additional training requirements and made other changes to the police contract. Standard operating procedures specify, for example, that immigration investigations are prohibited.[136] The district also developed a user-friendly website that provides information to community members about the program, and a steering committee will review the program four times per year, along with regular updates to the School Board.[137]

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[129] Pate, N. "Salem-Keizer Superintendent Christy Perry ends school resource officer contracts," Statesman Journal, 03/10/21.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Barber, R. "Board of Education Approves Resolution Directing BVSD to Address Disparities in School Discipline, End SRO program by January 2022," Boulder Valley School District, 11/11/20.
[132] Bounds, A. "BVSD school board hears update on hiring safety advocates, phasing out SROs," Daily Camera, 10/26/21.
[133] SRO Memorandum of Understanding between City of La Crosse Police Department and the School District of La Crosse, effective 07/01/21.
[134] "District updates SRO memorandum of understanding." La Crosse School District website. 05/20/22.
[135] Bohannon, M. "Poudre School District board moves forward with SRO program but seeks changes," Coloradoan. 05/11/21.
[136] Standard Operating Procedures Regarding the School Resource Officer Program in Poudre School District.
[137] Poudre School District SRO Program overview.

- Cedar Rapids, Iowa - The district changed its agreement with the police to "end SRO involvement in discipline, change the uniform, and have parents present when they question students."[138] Uniforms now consist of a polo shirt, khakis, vest, and gun. Changes also include mandatory de-escalation and restorative practices training and regular data collection and monitoring.[139]
- Howard County, Maryland - The district revised their agreement with the police to limit SRO involvement in discipline, specify that SROs shall only be in high schools, affirm the need to differentiate between school code violations and crimes, support an antiracism focus, and require a modified uniform of khakis and a polo shirt (Figure 6).[140]

Figure 6 | Howard County Public Schools (Maryland) Image of "Dressed Down" SRO Uniform

Source: From Presentation to School Board regarding School Resource Officer Memorandum of Understanding, Howard County Public Schools, 06/24/21, p. 11.

Hired safety, restorative justice, or counselor positions[141]

- Minneapolis, Minnesota - The district hired 11 public safety support specialists after the board voted to end the police contract in June 2020.
- St. Paul, Minnesota - The district hired "school support liaisons" instead of police after the board voted to end the police contract in June 2020.
- New Haven, Connecticut - "The board approved a task force's recommendation to keep police but hire more counselors and updated the outdated [IGA] with police."[142]

[138] Schwartz, S., Sawchuk, S., Pendharkar, E., Najarro, I. "These Districts Defunded Their School Police. What Happened Next?" Education Week. 06/04/21.
[139] Breese, T. "Fewer Students Being Charged After Changes to Cedar Rapids SRO Program." KWWL. 12/13/21.
[140] Presentation to School Board regarding School Resource Officer Memorandum of Understanding, Howard County Public Schools, 06/24/21.
[141] Riser-Kositsky, M., Sawchuk, S., Peele, H. "Which Districts Have Cut School Policing Programs?" Education Week. 6/29/22.
[142] Ibid.

- Madison, Wisconsin - The district ended its contract with the police department in June 2020 and its four SROs are being replaced by restorative justice coordinators.
- Albemarle, Virginia - The school board ended the SRO program in summer 2020 and hired eight school safety coaches instead.
- Charlottesville, Virginia - The school board ended their SRO program in 2020 and the Superintendent asked for a committee to come up with recommendations for a new safety plan. This plan, approved in 2021, prioritizes hiring and training "care and safety assistants" trained in de-escalation. The district also doubled the number of mental health professionals. The plan also includes expanding services to strengthen and expand other mental wellness services, community building, building security, and restorative practices. Police will still respond to school calls for assistance when necessary.[143]

Stationing police outside of schools[144]

- Rochester, New York - Though the district eliminated school police positions in June 2020, "in response to school violence in November 2021, the district began paying police to station officers outside schools before or after school."
- Maple Run, Vermont - The district decided to station their sole SRO within the police department (rather than in schools), but agreed that the SRO would be available for on-call support at schools when needed.
- Montgomery County, Maryland - Though police are no longer in schools, "community engagement officers" patrol areas around schools.

[143] Safety Services overview. Charlottesville City Schools.
[144] Riser-Kositsky, M., Sawchuk, S., Peele, H. "Which Districts Have Cut School Policing Programs?" Education Week. 06/29/22.

What can be learned from other school districts?

How is student safety addressed if/when SROs are removed, and how is the impact of those decisions assessed?

As noted in the previous section, school districts that have ended their SRO programs are employing a mix of strategies to address safety. These strategies commonly include adding other types of school personnel including counselors, restorative practices experts, and safety monitors. In addition, some school districts continue to partner with local law enforcement by stationing police outside the school. This section describes four case studies that provide an overview of these strategies in practice, including pitfalls to avoid.

CASE STUDIES

1. Minneapolis Public School District, Minnesota

- The district ended its SRO program in 2020 in the wake of a police officer's murder of George Floyd in the same city. In a student survey, the majority of students favored ending the program and instead desired more mental health support, restorative justice programs, counselors, social workers, and teachers of color.[145]
- The district focused on replacing the SRO program with "safety specialists" which almost mirrors the number of SROs the district previously had. Though these are intended as civilian positions without law enforcement authority, the district came under fire early in its hiring process for requiring a background in law enforcement to serve as a safety specialist (which they have since said was a mistake). This created concern about whether the program is a rebrand of the SRO program.[146]
- The district has also hired counselors.
- It is not apparent what data, if any, that district is using to determine the success of their decision to eliminate the SRO program, expand mental health support and counselors, and hire additional safety specialists.

2. Intermediate District 287, Minnesota

- The district ended its SRO program in 2017 following concerns from the public about the actions police were taking inside of schools. As an alternative, the district hired safety coaches focused on addressing students' mental health needs and conflict de-escalation. Coaches tend to have a paraprofessional background and experience working with students with special needs. They are still able to call police when emergencies require it, but district data shows this is only 2 percent of the incidents that coaches are involved with.[147] The Superintendent cited a drop in student arrests following their decision, from 65 to 12 in the first year of the program.[148]
- The removal of SROs has not come without unintended consequences. For example, on an educator survey, just 54 percent of educators said they felt "at least as safe" as they did before

[145] Sheasley, C. "In a roiled Minneapolis, schools are testing new model for safety." The Christian Science Monitor. 04/20/21.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Keierleber, M. "Police-Free Schools? This Suburban Minneapolis District Expelled its Cops Years Ago." The 74. 07/08/20.
[148] Ibid.

the district developed the coaching program and 33% reported feeling less safe.[149] Worker's compensation claims within the district increased, from 367 staff injuries in 2015 resulting in insurance claims of $475,000 to 699 the year after the district started using safety coaches instead of SROs, generating $1 million in insurance claims. The Superintendent shared in an interview with the media that "a shortage of mental health providers has made the district increasingly responsible for students with unmet needs," and denies that the spike in staff injuries is caused by the coaching program or caused by the removal of SROs. Specifically, she stated that most of the severe educator injuries tend to occur in special education classrooms for children with autism where special education, not arrests, are more effective at addressing behavioral issues.[150]

- In the 2021-22 school year, the district experienced three gun incidents, including one that resulted in a shooting death of a student outside of a school. A Safety Response Team provided recommendations to enhance staff training, add mental health services, and install metal detectors on school campuses. The metal detectors recommendation was not initially supported by the District superintendent, who stated that "there is little evidence that metal detectors prevent violence in school settings."[151] However, the Superintendent agreed to support the Team's recommendation for a two-year period.

3. Toronto School District, Canada

- Amid the 2017 calls for racial justice, the district (the largest in Canada) removed SROs following a public input process that centered the voices of students.
- The district decided to remove SROs despite the majority of survey respondents favoring the program. In its decision, the board acknowledged the impact on over 2,000 students who felt unsafe with police in schools.[152] The district stated that it would continue collaborating with the Toronto police.
- Few outcomes from the decision are known, though the trajectory of reduced suspensions and expulsions prior to the removal of SROs continued at least three years after their removal.[153]

4. Madison Metropolitan School District, Wisconsin

- SROs were replaced by an equivalent number of restorative justice coordinators starting in the 2021-22 school year.[154] It is too early to know what impact this change has had. It is also not apparent what metrics the district uses to assess the impact.
- In December 2021, several fights at schools that originated off-campus and spilled onto campus prompted media coverage to question the decision to remove SROs. While a parent in the article cites the removal of the SROs as the reason for the fights, the Superintendent did not make that correlation. Instead, he shared that the pandemic and related school closures likely

[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Rivard, R. "Intermediate District 287 to install metal detectors." Sun Current. 05/24/22.
[152] Belsha, K. "Canada's largest school district ended its police program. Now Toronto may be an example for U.S. districts considering the same." Chalkbeat. 06/19/20.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Schwartz, S., Sawchuk, S., Pendharkar, E., Najarro, I. "These Districts Defunded Their School Police. What Happened Next?" EducationWeek. 06/04/21.

impacted students' social-emotional development.[155] The School Board Vice-Chair also attributed fights to student stress, anxiety, and depression, a fact that local student survey data supports.

- The teacher's union supported the removal of SROs on the condition that all high schools be adequately staffed with counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, and mental health specialists according to recommended ratios (e.g., one counselor and social worker for every 250 students; one nurse for 750 students).[156]
- Restorative justice coordinators have trained parents and community members to facilitate conversations between students engaged in a dispute.[157]

[155] Beyer, E. "Fights prompt questions regarding Madison School District decision to remove SROs." Wisconsin State Journal. 12/06/21.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.

Outcomes related to SROs

What does research say about SRO effectiveness in reducing gun violence or school shootings?

In the wake of the second-deadliest school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, in May 2022, there is renewed interest in research about whether the presence of SROs in a school can prevent or stop a school shooting. As background, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports annually on various indicators of safety, including student and educator victimization, deaths, prevalence of fights and weapons, and other factors. The most recent report uses 2019-20 school year data, which reports that there were 75 school shootings across the country, and 27 resulted in at least one death.[158] Some people may interpret these numbers and conclude that school shootings are "very rare" events and use this data as evidence to support beliefs that police in schools are not needed or helpful, in part because of the rare chance that a shooting will occur and rarer chance that an SRO will be able to intervene. Others note the Oregon school shootings that hit close to home - one at Thurston High in Springfield in 1999, another at Reynolds High School in 2014, and an averted shooting at Parkrose High School in 2019. Given this context, this response aims to summarize the research base on SROs' effectiveness in preventing shootings at school.

Many people think and want to believe that SROs prevent or reduce gun violence in schools, but the evidence does not substantiate that perception. There is no known study that substantiates the claim that school shootings are prevented by SROs or the presence of armed staff. Even more broadly beyond preventing school shootings, "[u]ntil this decade, cause-and-effect research on SROs was virtually nonexistent, despite the millions of dollars spent hiring, training, and placing them in schools.[159]" According to a criminal justice researcher who studies SROs, Tom Mowen at Bowling Green State University, "[f]or someone to suggest that SROs prevent school shootings is absolutely unfounded in terms of science. There's no support for that statement at all."[160] The United States Congressional Research Service concluded in 2013 that, "[t]he body of research on the effectiveness of SRO programs is noticeably limited, both in terms of the number of studies published and the methodological rigor of the studies conducted. The available research draws conflicting conclusions about whether SRO programs are effective at reducing school violence. "[161] The study ended with, "the body of research on the effectiveness of SROs does not address whether their presence in schools has deterred mass shootings."[162]

Research published within the last year used rigorous research methods to estimate the effect of SRO presence on reducing various forms of violent crime. The Annenberg Institute at Brown University partnered with researchers at the University at Albany - SUNY and RAND Corporation on a study that used four years of school-level data from 2014-2018 to estimate the impacts of SRO placement using a quasi-experimental technique. They found that SROs do not prevent school

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[158] Irwin, V., Wang, K., Cui, J., Zhang, J., and Thompson, A. (2021). Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2020 (NCES 2021-092/NCJ 300772). National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, DC.

[159] Sawchuk, S. "School Resource Officers Explained," EdWeek, 11/16/21.

[160] Schlemmer, L. "Do SROs Prevent School Shootings?" WFPL, 08/16/21.

[161] James, N., McCallion, G. "School Resource Officers: Law Enforcement Officers in Schools," Congressional Research Service, June 26, 2013, p. 3.

[162] Ibid, p. 26.

shootings or gun-related incidents but are associated with reductions in some forms of school violence such as fights. However, these reductions are also associated with unintended impacts that include increased use of suspensions, expulsions, police referrals, and student arrests. Further, the researchers note that "these effects are consistently over two times larger for Black students than White students" and that "SROs increase chronic absenteeism, particularly for students with disabilities.[163]"

The U.S. Department of Justice and National Institute of Justice provided funding to the National Police Foundation to develop and maintain an Averted School Violence database, which tracks the number of shootings, bombings, stabbings, and other violence before the perpetrator arrived on school grounds and before any loss of life occurred at a school. Data is submitted by law enforcement officials, education officials, and mental health professionals on a continuous basis, and supplemented through news articles. This database, which tracks information beginning after 1999 when the Columbine massacre occurred, cites that 230 cases of averted school violence have occurred.[164] A descriptive analysis of two years' worth of data (2018-2020) was done by the National Police Foundation staff. Findings include:

- **The most common security measures that were in place by schools where potential attacks were averted were security officers or police officers at schools (45.8% of schools had either of these in place), security cameras (26.7%), controlled access to school buildings during school hours (24.2%), and locked entrance or exit doors (18.3%)**.[165] One out of three of the schools that had an averted violent incident did not have any security measures in place whatsoever, making it hard to discern what factors are correlated with being able to avert a school shooter. Also, this study did not disentangle the role of district-hired unarmed security staff versus armed police officers employed by law enforcement agencies (the study lumped both together).

- **The warning signs most frequently heeded include the suspect "researching, planning, [preparing and implementing] an attack" (105 incidents); communicating to a third party of an intent to do harm (100 incidents), and direct communication of a threat prior to an attack (62 incidents).[166]** In these averted incidents, the suspects' peers were most likely to discover the plot (59 incidents). Among school personnel, administrators discovered the plot in six cases and the SRO discovered the plot in five cases. One implication of this is that preventing school shootings means being intentional about facilitating positive student relationships with one another, parents/guardians, and school staff. Another implication is the importance of creating systems of communication to identify students' calls for help or causes for concern early.

- **In two cases, the SRO was the intended target.[167]** This finding is explored further in a February 2021 article published in JAMA Network, a public health publication. Researchers reviewed 133

[163] Sorensen, Lucy C., Montserrat Avila Acosta, John Engberg, and Shawn D. Bushway. (2021). The Thin Blue Line in Schools: New Evidence on School-Based Policing Across the U.S. (EdWorkingPaper: 21-476). Retrieved from Annenberg Institute at Brown University: https://doi.org/10.26300/heqx-rc69.
[164] National Police Foundation. 2021. Averted School Violence (ASV) Database: 2021 Analysis Update. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid, p. 17.
[167] Allison, Jeff, Mo Canady, and Frank G. Straub. 2020. School Resource Officers: Averted School Violence Special Report. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

cases of school shootings and attempted school shootings between 1980 and 2019. They found that "armed guards were not associated with significant reduction in rates of injuries" and, the death rate was 2.83 times *higher* in schools with an armed guard present compared to schools without an armed guard.[168] Though this finding may be counterintuitive for some readers, the researchers shared the following insight:

> *"Prior research suggests that many school shooters are actively suicidal, intending to die in the act, so an armed officer may be an incentive rather than a deterrent. The majority of shooters who target schools are students of the school, calling into question the effectiveness of hardened security and active shooter drills. Instead, schools must invest in resources to prevent shootings before they occur."*[169]

In the absence of decades worth of unassailable research,[170] anecdotes typically drive perceptions of SRO effectiveness in reducing gun violence. A summary of case studies of notable school shootings below provides a mixed record of SROs preventing or immediately stopping the shootings. These anecdotes provide one clear example of where SROs were thought to have been a vital response (Reynolds). There are two examples of SROs engaging with the suspected shooter, but both were unable to stop the rampage (Santa Fe and Columbine). There are two additional examples of SROs coming under scrutiny for allegedly failing to act to prevent the loss of life (Parkland and Uvalde).

- **Reynolds High School (Troutdale, Oregon):** Following the 2014 school shooting that killed one student and injured a teacher, Multnomah County noted in its incident review that the two SROs on-site that day "likely interrupted the shooter," causing him to flee to the bathroom where he remained and, ultimately, shot himself.[171]

- **Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (Parkland, Florida):** Following the school shooting that killed 17 people in 2018, the SRO is facing criminal negligence charges for allegedly hiding during the attack.[172]

- **Robb Elementary (Uvalde, Texas):** Like Parkland, the law enforcement response to the second deadliest school shooting in May 2022 that killed 19 fourth-grade students and their two teachers is under scrutiny. The school district has its own police department, and SROs had conducted an active shooter training just two months prior to the shooting, with clear guidance that suggested officers must confront the shooter immediately.[173] However, state law enforcement officials called the school district police decision to downgrade the active shooter emergency the "wrong decision" [174] and overall, an "abject failure"[175] particularly in light of numerous 911 calls from children and a teacher in the affected classroom. Over an hour went

[168] Peterson J, Densley J, Erickson G. Presence of Armed School Officials and Fatal and Nonfatal Gunshot Injuries During Mass School Shootings, United States, 1980-2019. *JAMA Network Open.* 2021;4(2).
[169] Ibid, p. 3.
[170] Blad, E. "Impact of School Police: Many Unanswered Questions." EdWeek. 01/24/17.
[171] Reynolds High School Active Shooter Response: An Analysis of the Response to the Reynolds High School Shooting on June 10, 2014.
[172] Barton, E. "Scot Petersen Sleeps at Night." Men's Health. 5/19/22.
[173] Noor, P. "Uvalde Police Were Trained to Quickly Confront an Active Shooter. So Why Did They Wait?" The Guardian. 6/4/22.
[174] Fecher, J. and Oxner, R. "'The Wrong Decision: Texas DPS Says Local Police Made Crucial Error As School Shooting Continued." The Texas Tribune. 5/27/22.
[175] "Head of Texas Police Says Uvalde Officers Could've Ended Shooting Early," PBS News, 06/21/22.

by between when the shooter entered the school and when he was finally shot and killed by federal law enforcement, with many officers assembled outside the classroom during that entire time with weapons. Police officers in Texas, nationally, as well as other school safety experts have lambasted the SRO police chief for waiting for additional protective equipment, including ballistic shields, to protect law enforcement officers from the semi-automatic rifle that the 18-year-old had legally obtained.

- **Columbine High School (Littleton, Colorado):** During the Columbine massacre in 1999 that killed 13, there was an SRO on-site who engaged with two shooters, but the SRO was unable to stop the shooters in their rampage; the shooters ultimately committed suicide.[176]

- **Santa Fe High School (Santa Fe, Texas):** Despite the district's active shooter plan which garnered the district a statewide safety award and the presence of two SROs during the incident, 10 people were killed when the shooter opened fire in 2018 with a shotgun and handgun taken from his father.[177] One of the SROs was shot but survived.

[176] Wanton Violence at Columbine High School. U.S. Fire Administration.
[177] Frankel, T., Martin, B., Craig, T., and Davenport, C. Santa Fe High School had a shooting plan, armed officers and practice. Ten people still died. The Texas Tribune. 5/20/18.

Outcomes related to SROs

What does the literature cite as positive impacts of SROs in schools on students?

There is little rigorous empirical evidence to understand the effectiveness of SROs. The research that does exist is mixed, often relying on case studies or anecdotes rather than empirical evidence.[178] One can find evidence to support either end of the spectrum of perspectives - those who strongly favor police in schools and those who strongly favor an end to police in schools. However, the rigor and nuances of these studies should be examined as every community context is different based on local demographics, policy context, and priorities.

Amongst the range of perspectives that favor police in schools, SROs themselves, through the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), provide an overview of the evidence that demonstrates the value of SROs.[179] The evidence summarized refers to two studies:

- One study reviewed the use of SROs in one region of Canada, stating that for every dollar invested in the SRO program, "a minimum of $11.13 of social and economic value was created" by the program including preventing and minimizing property damage, preventing student injuries and death, reducing calls to 911, and increasing feelings of safety among students and staff.[180] While not reported on the NASRO website, the actual study carefully states that the conditions in which an SRO program exists are essential, suggesting that a nuanced look at SRO programs is warranted. The researchers state that the "benefits rely on having programs that are well-designed, that the right officers are selected for SRO roles, and that the initiative has support from major stakeholders."[181] To NASRO's credit, they define SROs as "carefully selected and specifically trained,"[182] meaning that even NASRO recognizes the details of program implementation matter for the benefits to bear fruit.

- The other study cited by the NASRO is the Averted School Violence reports, discussed earlier regarding the question about whether SROs prevent school shootings.

Aside from what NASRO shares about the effectiveness of their programs, there is scarce other research to support this claim. Focus groups and interviews with students, parents, school staff, SROs, and other law enforcement officials for this review offered a glimpse of the benefits of SROs. For example, students often spoke of SROs breaking up fights, school staff often spoke of positive role model images for students, and some SROs spoke of how they can build relationships with students. To what extent are these perceptions and anecdotes supported by research? The following section provides a brief review of the research.

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[178] James, N., McCallion, G. "School Resource Officers: Law Enforcement Officers in Schools," Congressional Research Service, June 26, 2013.
[179] "Frequently Asked Questions." NASRO.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Duxbury, L., & Bennell, C. (2019). Police in Schools: An Evidence-based Look at the Use of School Resource Officers (1st ed.). Routledge.
[182] "Frequently Asked Questions." NASRO.

Outcomes related to SROs

What are SROs' effect on violence, discipline rates, arrests, & incarceration rates?

There are two poles of belief related to whether SROs are associated with increases in exclusionary discipline in school, arrests, and incarceration in juvenile justice or adult carceral systems. This response will begin by articulating the poles of belief regarding SROs' roles in contributing to these outcomes, followed by an examination of the evidence.

- **On one end of the spectrum are people and organizations who unequivocally believe that SROs do not contribute to a "school-to-prison pipeline,"[183] such as the NASRO.** NASRO's position on whether SROs contribute to a school-to-prison pipeline is published on their website as follows:

  > *"No. Carefully selected, specially trained school resource officers who follow NASRO's best practices do not arrest students for disciplinary issues that would be handled by teachers and/or administrators if the SROs were not there. On the contrary, SROs help troubled students avoid involvement with the juvenile justice system. In fact, wide acceptance of NASRO best practices is one reason that the rates of juvenile arrests throughout the U.S. fell during a period when the proliferation of SROs increased.*[184]

  It is unclear what NASRO means by "wide acceptance of NASRO best practices," is correlated with reductions in juvenile arrests. Their best practices are wide-ranging (as detailed earlier in the report),[185] and there is no systematic data collection mechanisms to identify which practices were adopted, at what scale, and at which schools. There is also little guidance by NASRO as to what "carefully selected" means and it is not clear whether their 40-hour basic training for SRO sufficiently prepares SROs for all they need to know. By contrast, in Oregon, a certification program for canine officers requires over 240 hours of basic training.

- **On the other end are people and organizations who unequivocally believe that there is ample evidence that SROs are associated with higher rates of exclusionary discipline, arrests, and incarceration that disproportionately harm students of color and students experiencing disabilities.**

Evidence to support both ends of this debate exists, so a brief review and analysis of the research is explored here. Due to the limited research base, much of the research shared below is based on individual case studies or impacts in one state, making it difficult to know whether the research findings are generalizable to a context like Beaverton.

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[183] This concept describes associations between systems enforcing student discipline, arrest in school, and incarceration in ways that disproportionately target youth of color, Black youth in particular. The existence of this concept is denied by many, including NASRO.
[184] "Frequently Asked Questions." NASRO.
[185] Best Practices: School Resource Officer Program Recommendations. (2021). NASRO.

Limitations to interpreting research findings

The "gold standard" for research is a randomized controlled experiment which would randomly assign identically trained SROs to a nationally representative sample of schools. Outcomes would be compared, such as the use of school discipline, arrests, and crime. Since this is impractical, studies often compare outcomes before placing an SRO in the school to outcomes after an SRO was placed in the school. Others use sophisticated research methods to create sample populations of similar schools to study. Even in these instances, the type of officers selected, the training they receive, how administrators and other educators engage with SROs, under what protocols, and the unique school and student characteristics could impact the results of studies. These variables create confounding effects that make it hard to disentangle cause and effect relationships. Each approach has its limitations, including the generalizability of findings to school contexts with vastly different characteristics than those included in the studies.

Findings

Below is an overview of the prevalent claims in debates about whether SROs contribute to positive or negative outcomes, with notes on what the research says. Detail of each study may be found in Appendix C. For those readers who wish to confirm the neutrality of the summaries, it is worth noting that the nonpartisan researchers for Congress also did a literature review on SRO effectiveness, explored many of the same questions, and found similarly mixed results.[186]

Claim 1: SROs decrease violence in schools

Key takeaway: The research is mixed on this. Three studies examined for this report state that SROs are associated with a decrease in either serious violence or "misbehavior." However, these reports also cite unintended negative impacts that include increases in exclusionary discipline and arrests.

Claim 2: SROs decrease crime

Key takeaway: Four studies related to this claim were examined for this report. Three of these found that police presence in schools *increased* crime rates related to drugs or weapons, but one of these studies found that police presence was associated with *reductions* in violent crimes (Zhang, 2019). A fourth study (Viano, Curran, & Fisher, 2021) provides insight into why an increase of crime is often associated with SRO use. Some may interpret this data positively to mean that SROs reduce crime (by removing drugs and weapons from school campuses); others may interpret this data negatively as more policing occurring on school grounds.

Claim 3: SROs increase discipline, including expulsion

Key Takeaway: Six studies were reviewed. Of these, five found SROs are correlated with increases in school discipline. Only two of these studies had a clear racial equity analysis; one found that there was a disproportionate impact on students of color (Weisburst, 2019) and another found no disproportionalities and no increased discipline use (Na and Gottfredsen, 2011).

Claim 4: SROs increase arrests of youth, particularly among youth of color

Key Takeaway: Five studies are reviewed here, all of which suggested increased arrests associated with SRO presence at school. One study made a distinction - while total arrests did not increase following SRO presence, the arrests for disorderly conduct did increase (Theriot, 2009). This charge is made with

[186] James, N. and Dragoo, K. School Resource Officers: Issues for Congress. (2018). Congressional Research Service.

considerable discretion of an individual officer and therefore subject to implicit bias. This same study noted that schools with higher percentages of students of color and economically disadvantaged students were more likely to have an SRO. Another study explained, "the presence of police officers helps to redefine disciplinary situations as criminal justice problems rather than social, psychological, or academic problems" (Na and Gottfredson, 2011).[187]

Analysis

There is evidence to support the claims of those who favor SROs in schools and those who do not. While the research is limited and specific to school contexts that may differ from Beaverton School District, this research offers more unintended negative consequences of SROs than it does intended positive consequences. For example, two research studies show that the presence of SROs is associated with reductions in some violent crimes. However, this research base is not exhaustive nor is there consensus. One of the two studies says serious violent crime is reduced while another suggests the type of violence is mostly "scuffles" between students. Further, this latter study suggests the negatives might outweigh the positives with increased exclusionary discipline and arrests resulting from the presence of SROs. Several studies, even some that indicate positive effects of SROs, suggest that the presence of SROs is correlated in many settings with increased use of exclusionary discipline, more arrests, and may negatively impact students' education outcomes, particularly for students of color.

In totality, the evidence points to the existence of a school-to-prison pipeline, though the research is arguably not as long-standing (most research has occurred in the past decade) as some might expect. In 2015, the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing[188] released an implementation guide that, among other issues, acknowledged the school to prison pipeline and the role that SROs may play. Among their recommendations were:

- "Review school policies and practices that may have unintended consequences of pushing children and young people into the criminal justice system and advocate for strategies that are more effective at prevention and early intervention" (p. 11).
- "Review the use of School Resource Officers (SROs) and examine policies to ensure that the use of SROs is not increasing the school-to-prison pipeline but providing effective alternatives to incarceration through constructive interventions." (p. 19).
- "Collect data to monitor the use of school disciplinary practices (detentions and expulsions), including demographic data on students and the nature of offenses to develop more youth development appropriate strategies" (p. 19).

[187] Ibid, p. 24.

[188] Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. 2015. The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing Implementation Guide: Moving from Recommendations to Action. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

Recommendations

According to the intended purpose of this SRO review, co-developed by representatives from the Beaverton School Board (BSD) and Beaverton City Council, this review sought to conduct a student-centered comprehensive review of Beaverton School District's SRO program and to provide recommendations for "actionable next steps to guide the District and the City in the development and delivery of the best model for ensuring student and community safety and support."[189] The recommendations seek to offer this guidance, elevating where there is common ground across a diversity of perspectives. This section begins by providing an overview of the primary findings of this review, followed by two complementary recommendation packages.

Summary of Findings

Key Finding 1: Most people are not formally and proactively provided with any information about what SROs' roles are and what to expect from them. SROs themselves say there is a wide range of variations in the direction they get from school leaders.

Key Finding 2: There is a wide range of perspectives about whether police have a place in schools, and for what safety concerns. Despite the breadth of perspectives, there is common ground that police are needed for active shooter threats and situations of extreme violence.

Key Finding 3: Most school administrators and many school counselors, social workers, and psychologists find value in partnerships with police officers to address the prevention and intervention of school violence, act as a consultant/advisor on law enforcement topics, and educate students about the law.

Key Finding 4: While police based in schools has supported many people's sense of safety, police have threatened the safety of others including many nonbinary, LGBTQIA+, Black, and other students of color. There is evidence of this threat in the disproportionate discipline, arrests, and referrals for some of these populations, impacting their ability to learn in school.

Key Finding 5: Creating school cultures that prioritize students' emotional safety in addition to their physical safety will require a district-wide culture shift that offers guidance for all schools. This work requires verbal and resource-backed commitments from District leadership, professional support for school-level leaders and staff, and dedicated time.

These recommendations support the growth of a system of safety supports that includes a limited role for law enforcement, more mental health resources, investment in positive relationship development, and enhanced communication and partnership with students and parents.

[189] Request for Proposals, issued August 2021 by Beaverton School District, written in collaboration with representatives from the Beaverton City Council, p. 3.

Summary of Recommendations

Package 1:

Continue to expand access to mental and behavioral health and wellness services, and practices that promote positive relationships between and among students, school staff, parents, and community members. Use these guiding principles from the District's Behavioral Health & Wellness Project to guide the expansion:

Guiding principles:[190]

- Foster and maintain healthy relationships
- Student voice and self-empowerment
- Climate, culture, and values
- Culturally and linguistically relevant, anti-racist, and anti-biased
- Commitment to system-wide collective responsibility
- Family and community partnerships
- Proactive planning and data-based decision-making

a. Fund and implement the Behavioral Health & Wellness Project recommendations, developed by district staff, school staff, students, and parents from various school communities. The Beaverton School Board directed staff to develop recommendations for enhancing district-wide support for students, educators, and other school staff in 2021. In May 2022, the Behavioral Health & Wellness Project team proposed a comprehensive set of recommendations grounded in trauma-informed and anti-racist practices.[191]

Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:

- As noted extensively through this report, parents, students, and school staff notions of safety include more than physical safety. It includes emotional safety as well. All stakeholder groups recognized the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' mental and emotional well-being, which has impacted how they interact with peers and adults and ultimately, their ability to learn. For numerous reasons, unmet needs often manifest in behavioral challenges that existing staff are unable to effectively respond to, often relying on SROs.
- Additionally, experts agree that one key to preventing school shootings - a common fear among many in the Beaverton community - is by increasing access to a range of supports that help students build positive relationships with others and a positive sense of self.

b. Make it a district and board priority to define when and how restorative practices will be used as an alternative to discipline and when discipline is more appropriate. Standardize district-wide protocols and practices. Prioritization should include the launch of a restorative practices committee

[190] Behavioral Health and Wellness: Curriculum Adoption Project Team Report (Phase 1). Shared at Beaverton School Board meeting on May 23, 2022, p. 4-11.
[191] Ibid.

with the ability to assess the district's current practices, develop shared protocols, and create a plan for training staff and providing coaching when needed.

Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:

- Among staff, there are a variety of opinions about what it means for students to be accountable for their actions. Some staff prioritize compliance and punishment. Others prefer to prioritize supporting students to take accountability for their actions through restorative practices that focus on building and sustaining positive relationships.
- While, overall, the community sees a place for both approaches, there is not a district-wide clear vision or plan for defining the relationship between restorative practice and discipline - when they should and should not be used. Without a consistent message about what responsibility and accountability look like across the district, a student's experience of discipline and interactions with police on school grounds may vary greatly depending on the wide discretion of individuals, which may contribute to the manifestation of implicit bias in discipline disproportionalities.
- The move toward restorative justice requires a system that supports engagement, authenticity, recognition of power and privilege, and the prioritization of community and relationship.

c. **Increase the number of dedicated staff and staff capacity to build relationships with students during the school day and support students in addressing challenges.** Consider establishing and resourcing a district-wide level of service for mental and behavioral health professionals and social workers. Prioritize providing equitable access to these professionals across schools and provide regular public reports about implementation of this effort accessible via web and School Board meetings.

Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:

- "The National Association of School Psychologists recommends a ratio of one psychologist to 500 students and the American School Counselor Association recommends a ratio of one school counselor to 250 students."[192] While these recommendations are not prescribing specific ratios, this information may be used as guidance to inform future investments.
- Behavior and mental health support staff expressed a need for more people and more capacity to meet the needs of students and staff. They also acknowledged that the district has grown its capacity over the past several years (e.g., more social workers). However, the District has not yet defined how the new resources can be used as a complement to other various safety and support resources.
- Many staff alluded to using SROs because staff are not available, not because SROs are best suited to respond.
- Over the medium-term (two years) and long-term (three or more years), the District should seek to budget for the staffing ratios for best practices of social workers, mental health specialists, and behavioral health specialists from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds and with ample training in culturally affirming, trauma-informed, and de-escalation approaches.
    i. These professionals should be provided equal access to all schools to ensure that inequities in resourcing is not left to individual school budgets. Budgeting for

[192] Riser-Kositsky, M. (2022, June 1). *Data: Does your state have enough school psychologists and counselors?* Education Week. Retrieved June 20, 2022.

these positions should be coordinated through a District-wide planning approach closely connected to the existing Behavioral Health & Wellness strategies. This approach should consider emergency response teams that could be deployed to schools quickly, particularly regarding mental health issues and more.

- Over the short-term (1 year), campus monitors could play a role in supporting and building relationships with students temporarily. Any increase or investment in campus monitors should be done in conjunction with the rollout of a comprehensive behavioral health, wellness, and school safety plan.
- According to research on police and mental health in schools, "Schools that employ more school-based mental health providers see improved attendance rates, lower rates of suspension and other disciplinary incidents, expulsion, improved academic achievement and career preparation, and improved graduation rates. Data shows that school staff who provide health and mental health services to our children not only improve the health outcomes for those students, but also improve school safety."[193]

d. Convene a diverse stakeholder group to develop a long-term strategy for deploying professionals trained in mental health first aid specifically among youth and who are representative of the diversity of the District's student population.

Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:

- Many staff currently feel unprepared to manage physical fights or other expressions of physical violence toward students and staff. A strategy that pairs immediate response with de-escalation and support, rather than punishment, would help to address staff concerns *and* align with school cultures that prioritize every student's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being.
- Staff, students, and parents mentioned the need for more accessible mental health support.
- There is common ground, even among SROs, that SROs are not best suited to respond to mental health issues.

e. Engage students, parents, and school staff in the design and implementation of initiatives that support positive identity development and peer relationships. This includes conflict resolution training, anti-bullying support, and culturally sustaining curriculum. Resource and support district-wide integration of these initiatives, partnering with community-based organizations and training providers who are experienced in culturally specific and responsive approaches.

Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:

- Many staff, students, and families, regardless of their support for SROs, agree that more proactive support for students to address conflict and engage in appropriate peer relationships would reduce the need for SRO intervention.
- About one-third of LGBTQIA+ students and Black students expressed that they feel less safe because of their race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, or the perception of their identity.

[193] "Cops and No Counselors: How the Lack of School Mental Health Staff Is Harming Students," American Civil Liberties Union, https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/030419-acluschooldisciplinereport.pdf

- Students are most likely to go to a family member first if they have a safety concern. Families and students are likely the most aware of what students' need to feel safe and have a sense of belonging. As such, building and sustaining bridges that engage parents as full partners in their child's education is critical for supporting student and school safety.

f. Regularly engage staff associations to ensure that the mental health needs of teachers and school staff are addressed in valuable and meaningful ways.

Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:

- A school culture that disregards adults' mental health needs cannot sufficiently support the mental health needs of students. A school community is interconnected and adults' capacity to support each other is essential.
- Many teachers experience stress from managing student behaviors and the pressure to make up for missed school during the pandemic.

Package 2: Law Enforcement Relationship

Redefine Beaverton School District's relationships with law enforcement agencies to be limited in scope and intentionally designed.

This would occur through a single new IGA with all three agencies. The IGA should clearly structure and limit the role of law enforcement in schools to the specific law enforcement activities that represent "common ground" or shared interests among an overwhelming majority of the BSD community - including among people of color, those who identify as LGBTQIA+, and/or who identify as experiencing a disability. IGAs were described earlier in this report as a nearly unanimous best practice for fostering positive relationships between law enforcement agencies and school districts. A clear and limited IGA also provides the School Board and City Council with more transparency into the role of law enforcement, which is necessary for evaluating whether the relationship is meeting its intended purpose and functioning in support of student safety.

Law enforcement does not need to have offices within schools for these functions/roles to occur, nor do they need to be in any one school full-time (this does not happen anyway). These officers' duties will be significantly more limited in scope than the current SRO program allows. To acknowledge that the recommended limited and specific role for law enforcement is substantially different from current practice and that it differs from traditional SRO programs, it is recommended that this program be referred to as something like a Youth Services Officer, Community Service Officer, or Law Enforcement Liaison Program. We recommend developing and implementing a communication and public information strategy to ensure that people are informed with accurate information about changes and the rationale behind the changes. The IGA should include the components below and emphasize a limited and specific role for law enforcement for the duties outlined below.

Table 21. Comparison Chart of Recommended changes to IGAs

Current SRO Program	IGA Component	Recommended Changes
Broad duties are defined in the IGA: 1. Provide "positive image of law enforcement" 2. Be a "role model" for students 3. Serve as an "extension of principal's office" 4. Act as "designee of campus administrator" 5. Create "atmosphere of safety and security…" 6. Work with school and district on safety threats 7. Provide "informal counseling" to students 8. Educate on drugs, alcohol, sexual assault 9. Serve as liaison with other law enforcement 10. Serve as resource for students 11. Serve as resource for teachers, parents, staff 12. Attend site council, parent groups, etc. to educate	**Purpose of District's partnership with law enforcement**	Limit law enforcement role to specific, structured needs where there is common ground amongst diverse community members: 1. Active school shooter training and response 2. Response to calls for service for extreme violence (i.e., imminent risk of severe bodily harm). This must not be used for minor fights and protocols should be developed with school staff to determine what the boundaries are. 3. Collection of illegal substances 4. Consultant specifically for staff involved with behavioral health and safety committees, threat assessment teams, and school administrators with an explicit goal to prevent violence
SROs typically have a desk space in the high schools within portfolio, but also visit other schools with the above duties.	**Home Base**	Police will not maintain desk space at schools except for as needed to prepare for follow up from #4 above.
• Role is unclear and subject to misunderstanding and inconsistent application of practices • SROs currently arrest students, albeit less than 40 a school year, for disorderly conduct and other crimes.	**Role in Discipline**	• Specify that violations of school code that are not also a violation of the law should not have officer involvement. • Initiate cross-agency, multi-disciplinary team to make recommendations about narrowing or prohibiting the use of disorderly conduct as a charge for student behavior when no other crime is alleged.
There is no limitation about participation in these emergencies.	**Role in Mental Health**	• The IGA should specify that law enforcement will have a limited role, including participating in Behavioral Health & Wellness teams and other multi-disciplinary prevention-based strategies. • Separately, the City should also consider the non-law enforcement public safety services it provides the District, investing in greater EMT staff capacity. For example, consider developing a cadre of EMTs trained to work with youth in mental health crises anywhere in City limits.
• The District defers to the training requirements of the individual law enforcement agencies and does not prescribe anything additional related to school- or district-specific policies or practices. • Among all three agencies that serve the district, there are no standard SRO training requirements that are prescribed in the IGA, policy, or protocol. It is up to individual law enforcement agency leaders to encourage SROs to take trainings and to offer the resources (e.g., funding for travel, registration fees), and it is up to individual SROs to follow through. • No training requirements are in job descriptions for SROs that serve Beaverton School District.	**Training**	• Require training for any officer likely to work with youth to have training in active shooter responses in school settings (including review of lessons learned from After-Action Reports from recent school shootings); trauma-informed approaches to working with youth; information and knowledge about the IGA's specific and limited role for law enforcement; and student and parent rights related to searches and arrests. • District should leverage existing student and family committees to develop student and parent rights information guide related to searches, arrests, and other law enforcement actions. Representation must include those identities over-represented in discipline and arrest data.

continued

Current SRO Program	IGA Component	Recommended Changes
• IGAs specify that SROs wear standard uniforms. • In practice, officers typically carry a full range of force (including taser and gun) and an externally worn vest.	**Uniforms & Weapons**	• IGA should encourage law enforcement partners to wear "dressed down" uniforms when they are attending schools for meetings, presentations, or educational sessions. • Dressed down version includes a polo shirt with badge and officer name, department. These would include a concealed weapon and vest on the inside of the shirt. (This is similar to what Hillsboro School District has, though weapons are not concealed.)
No prohibition exists in the current IGAs	**Immigration enforcement**	Local law enforcement officers are explicitly prohibited in the IGA from conducting or assisting immigration investigations.
• The IGAs with Beaverton Police and Washington County Sheriff specify that SROs are employees of those agencies and that the agencies "supervise and control the SROs." Further, the agencies have the power and authority to hire, discharge, and discipline employees. • The IGA with Beaverton Police notes that a "joint committee of representatives from the City and School District shall make recommendations for the SRO positions to the City's Chief of Police. After receiving the recommendations, City's Chief of Police shall determine which officers to assign as SROs." • It also allows for a principal to request that the Chief assign a different SRO if "dissatisfied" with the assigned officer. This review is not able to discern the extent to which this written guidance occurs in practice on a consistent basis.	**Hiring & Selection**	• Though recommendations include that law enforcement officers should be employed by independent law enforcement agencies and not the school district, the IGA should reflect that the District and law enforcement will have an opportunity to co-develop the qualifications for law enforcement officers who work routinely in District schools or with school officials. • Qualifications may include a desire to work with youth; demonstrated positive experience working with youth of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds effectively; good listening skills; ability to demonstrate empathy for experiences other than one's own; and previously completed anti-bias training. Candidates should be free from sustained disciplinary actions or substantiated public complaints for bias incidents (this provision exists in the IGA between Hillsboro Police and Hillsboro School District).
• The District's IGAs with all three law enforcement agencies provides little direction as to what data should be collected and reported to the school board, district administration, school staff, students, and families.	**Data Collection & Reporting**	• All officers who work in district provide brief monthly reports. • District produces a semi-annual/annual public report. • Data needs should be specified in the IGA (e.g., count of referrals; arrests; disaggregation by race/ethnicity and gender; disaggregation by disorderly conduct charges, etc.). • At least annual reports to School Board and City Council

Recommendations for a new IGA with law enforcement

These recommendations cover the purpose of the District's partnership with law enforcement (in the form of specific and limited duties), role in discipline and mental health, training, uniforms, and weapons, and more.

ACTIVE SHOOTERS: Provide immediate response to active shooters on school grounds.

- This revision should also: a) outline the frequency with which district and school leaders and law enforcement officials review safety protocols with a trauma-informed lens; and b) create at least annual training and table-top exercise opportunities to review After-Action Reports from prior school shootings nationally (e.g., Sandy Hook, Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Robb Elementary in Uvalde, Texas [review underway]). Discuss lessons learned from those reports and if/how those might apply to the District context to foster continuous improvement practices. Consider reviewing specific challenges faced by first responders during these and other prior school shootings and proactively developing regional solutions to problems including but not limited to: a) lack of police and paramedic radio frequency within school buildings that may have slowed response times; b) lack of immediate access to keys and/or other equipment to access rooms with locked doors; c) lack of clear command structure and communication protocols when multiple agencies are responding to a scene; and d) lack of communication/marking procedures to clear rooms that have been cleared by previously responding officers.

  Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:
  - Surveys and focus groups revealed that one of the most common safety and law enforcement threats relates to active shooters.
  - In current IGAs, there is no specific mention of expectations for response related to active shooter emergencies. Though law enforcement agencies in the area would presumably respond to active shooter threats regardless of the presence of an IGA, it is important to memorialize specify the expectation. Not only will law enforcement respond, they will also respond with having been provided the appropriate training and knowledge to be able to *effectively* respond to threats within District schools. Part of effective response means having familiarity with school/district safety procedures and with knowledge of how to integrate learnings from prior school shootings from across the country.
  - It is important to ensure this training is provided not just to officers who tend to work with youth or in school settings. In an active shooter situation, a large share of the agency's force may be required to respond. Therefore, the intention of this recommendation is to ensure that the expectation is documented and communicated to law enforcement agencies, district leaders, school leaders and their staff, parents, and students.

EXTREME VIOLENCE: Provide immediate response to extreme violence at school, involving weapons and/or imminent threats of severe physical harm to students, school staff, volunteers, or others. As part of implementation, District leaders, school leaders, and law enforcement officials should collaboratively determine a shared agreement about what situations are deemed "extreme violence"

and talk through "gray areas" to avoid over-reliance on law enforcement, to delineate staff roles, and determine how data about SRO involvement in these incidents will be tracked consistently.

- This standard should be embedded into the IGA. Communication and training should be integrated in standard operating procedures to all school administrators, school-assigned officers, counselors, social workers, and school psychologists and part of their continuous training and new employee onboarding.

  Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:
  - Surveys and focus groups revealed that one of the most common safety and law enforcement threats relates to extreme violence.
  - In current IGAs, there is no specific mention of expectations for response related to extreme violence. Though the current IGA has several provisions that are broad enough to include active shooter responses, this expectation should be explicit.

COLLECTION OF ILLEGAL/PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES: Law enforcement may take possession of large quantities of illegal or prohibited substances found on school grounds that cannot be disposed of safely and legally by school or district personnel. District leaders, school leaders, and law enforcement officials should collaboratively determine a standard volume of illicit substances that represents a threshold that warrants law enforcement collection.

- This standard should be embedded into the IGA. Communication and training should be integrated into standard operating procedures for all school administrators, school-assigned officers, counselors, social workers, and school psychologists as part of their continuous training and new employee onboarding.

  Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:
  - Focus groups particularly with school administrators revealed a strong desire to honor a boundary between the administrator's role and law enforcement's role. Collecting drugs of large quantities is seen as a functional need by school administrators of law enforcement. It is important that this function is retained.
  - In current IGAs, there is no specific mention of expectations for duties related to collecting illegal substances found on school grounds.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONSULTANT: Most students, parents, and school staff may not know of the valuable role that law enforcement may play in the prevention of violent incidents at school or regarding the investigation of crimes that are beyond the reach of the student code of conduct. The IGA should specify the role of a Law Enforcement Consultant specifically to school administrators, counselors, social workers, and psychologists. This role shall also be available to schools' "Behavioral, Health & Wellness Teams," "Care Teams," and threat assessment review teams.

Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:
- School staff noted that SROs are most helpful when they provide consultation and advice for diversion programs and referrals. In 2020, there were 2,351 school safety

incidents that required suicide prevention, student threat assessments, sexual incident responses, social work referrals, and flight team responses.[194]

- Administrators rely on SROs as consultants/advisors on crime and safety incidents, and as connectors to information and resources for school staff, students, and families. These often happen behind the scenes and are not something school staff, students, or parents are aware of but are viewed as a valuable function that supports violence prevention and school safety, more broadly.

LIMITED ROLE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT IN DISCIPLINE: The IGA should specify that violations of school code that are not also a violation of the law should not have officer involvement. Additionally, the District should consider convening a multi-stakeholder group to make recommendations about narrowing or prohibiting the use of disorderly conduct as a charge for student behavior, when no other crime is alleged/committed. This would reduce "grey areas." This specificity should be documented in a future IGA. To support implementation of this change, the District should develop training for all school administrators, providing them with clear policy direction and expectations from District leadership. The District may also use the stakeholder group to develop short-term crisis response teams of behavioral, mental health, and social support staff to minimize the use of law enforcement (which should only be deployed in the limited circumstances listed in the recommendations herein).

Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:

- As is stated in the current IGAs, the District's IGAs with law enforcement indicate an intention to ensure that law enforcement generally does not play a role in school discipline, except for those student actions that may be both a violation of school code (warranting school-issued discipline) *and* a violation of the law (warranting law enforcement action, too). However, the current IGAs include contradictions that may contribute to the day-to-day inconsistencies that interview and focus group respondents shared about how police officers become involved in school situations.

- There is nearly universal agreement in best practices (among SROs themselves, the FBI, and civil rights organizations) that SROs should not be involved in discipline. The best practice review recommends that this should be clearly codified in written agreements.

- The FBI offers a similar recommendation while going a step further to specify that the district and law enforcement agency should talk through possible "gray areas" and specific scenarios where it might not be clear whether issues are strictly criminal or strictly discipline-related.[195] This is a practice that, based on interviews, focus groups, and information requests, does not occur within Beaverton School District.

- Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Pacific Islander students are disproportionately overrepresented among students referred for a criminal offense. When compared to all

[194] Beaverton School District SRO Report, 2020. Beaverton School Public Safety Department. https://www.beaverton.k12.or.us/departments/public-safety/school-resource-officer-report.
[195] Schweiz, K., and Mancik, A. "School Resource Officers and Violence Prevention: Best Practices (Part One)," April 11, 2017.

juvenile referrals to WCJD from across the county,[196] District SROs refer Black and Hispanic students for criminal offenses at a higher rate, and White students at a lower rate. The median age of students arrested for criminal offenses is 14 years old.

- Among the students arrested, 8 (40%) were for non-criminal offenses (e.g., truancy, running away from home) and 12 (60%) were for criminal offenses. The most common criminal offense is disorderly conduct, composing 19% of referrals. This charge is subject to considerable discretion and may include offenses that are violations of school code.

- The above trends are mirrored in decades of national data and research, and in Beaverton School District exclusionary discipline data. Research indicates that disproportionalities are a product of implicit bias at play within the school and law enforcement systems, not of higher rates of misbehavior or criminality of any racial/ethnic group.[197]

LIMITED ROLE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT IN MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY RESPONSE: The IGA should clearly delineate the limited circumstances in which a police officer would be called for a mental health emergency. The City of Beaverton should also consider the non-law enforcement public safety resources it provides to the District, resourcing Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) or mental health first aid experts that could be made available to District schools (perhaps through partnerships with Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue).

Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:

- Overwhelmingly, there is common ground across racial/ethnic identity, gender, role (students, parents, staff) and support for SROs that law enforcement is not appropriate for most mental health responses.
- SROs acknowledge that this is not their expertise, but state that they often are called as a first responders when there are no other professionals available for crisis response.
- The recommendations in package 1 regarding additional mental health and behavioral health resources is a supplement to this recommendation. Those resources must be made available to ensure that school staff have appropriate access to trained experts instead of relying on police.

TRAINING: Require training for any officer likely to work with youth to have training in active shooter responses in school settings (including review of lessons learned from After-Action Reports from recent school shootings); trauma-informed approaches to working with youth; information and knowledge about law enforcement role (specified above) in mental health emergencies; information and knowledge about the IGA's specific role and limited role for law enforcement; and student and parent rights related to searches and arrests.

[196] Washington County Youth & Referrals Data and Evaluation Report (2021). Juvenile Justice Information Steering Committee, Oregon Youth Authority. https://www.oregon.gov/oya/jjis/Reports/2021WashingtonYouthReferrals.pdf

[197] Skiba, Russell & Michael, Robert & Nardo, Abra & Peterson, Reece. (2000). The Color of Discipline: Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment. Indiana Education Policy Center.

Consider supplementing police academy training for new recruits with additional training about how to work with youth and at least annual trainings for continuing officers. Those who already work with youth may serve as trainers for other officers to enhance law enforcement's ability to effectively work with youth.

When selecting trainers, demeanor and expertise should be considered. Qualifications may include a desire and experience in working with youth; demonstrated experience working with youth of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds effectively; good listening skills; ability to demonstrate empathy for experiences other than one's own; and anti-bias training.

Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:

- Many people expect that officers who work in schools have specialized training. While this may be true for many SROs, individual law enforcement agencies and officers are offered wide discretion.
- In the City of Beaverton, approximately 20% of residents are under 18 years of age, but few police are specifically and extensively trained in working with youth.[198]
- The District currently offers no guidance for what demeanor, competencies, or skills that officers have. Many school staff, even those who support SROs, have shared examples of previous SROs not having the correct demeanor or skills to work with youth.

UNIFORMS & WEAPONS: The process of updating the IGA should consider "dressing down" traditional law enforcement uniforms in favor of uniforms that cause less intimidation and fear. There are many other agencies - including in neighboring Hillsboro - that allow officers to wear polo shirts with clear law enforcement markings, name, and badge. Also consider keeping firearms concealed, reducing the number of weapons carried, and wearing protective vests under shirts. There is a tension between this recommendation and the recommendation to limit the role of police in schools. When police know they will be serving a school community, the preference is for a "dressed down" uniform.

Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:

- It is notable that Hillsboro PD serves Hillsboro School District and Beaverton School District with two different SRO uniforms. For Hillsboro School District, the SROs wear "dressed down" uniforms which consist of a polo shirt with the police department logo and officer name, a duty belt, department-issued uniform pants, and department-issued footwear. The IGA specifically notes that "[d]rop holsters and load bearing vests are not preferred wear in the school setting."[199]
- Many community members - students, staff, and parents - said that even though they support police in schools, they do not feel the current uniform and weapons are necessary or appropriate for when they are educating students, consulting with school staff, or even intervening an a particularly violent fight (as fears about students obtaining the officers' weapons is a real fear by some staff, parents, and students).

[198] U.S. Census Quick Facts for the City of Beaverton. (2021).
[199] IGA between Hillsboro School District and Hillsboro Police Department, p. 8.

IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT SHOULD NOT BE A ROLE FOR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT: The IGA should clearly specify that it is not the role of local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration laws.

Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:

- In 2017, the Beaverton City Council passed resolution 4429 declaring the City a "Sanctuary City."[200] This resolution affirms that the City will follow state law (Oregon Revised Statue 181A.820) that prohibits State and local law enforcement agencies from using their personnel, equipment, or resources to enforce federal immigration law.
- Some comments from participants included perceptions, namely from White individuals, that police presence may intimidate immigrants and refugees. There is a perception that police officers may attempt to enforce immigration law or ask questions about immigration status.
- While this has not been substantiated by anyone impacted directly in this review, other districts across the country have integrated an explicit prohibition for police involvement in immigration law in their IGAs.

DATA COLLECTION & REPORTING: Require brief monthly reports from any officers who work in District schools. These reports would be provided to and reviewed by the Sergeant.

Why this is important & how it relates to the findings:

- The District's IGAs with all three law enforcement agencies provide little direction as to what data should be collected and reported to the school board, district administration, school staff, students, and families.
- Best practice guidance includes regularly collecting data and reporting it publicly to inform the public, students, parents, district administration, and the school board.

Recommendations for the District

ENHANCE COMMUNICATIONS WITH STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND SCHOOL STAFF: The above recommendations propose a substantial redefining of the current relationship that the District has with law enforcement. Given that there have been misconceptions about what this relationship is to date and how it operates, it is advised that the District develop a robust communication plan and process for regularly informing the District community about this new IGA, if adopted, and implementation progress.

EXPAND TRAINING FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND OTHER SCHOOL STAFF: The District should provide all school administrators clear expectations, training, and guidance about when to involve law enforcement in a school setting. This training may also be made available to the school staff who are most accustomed to working with police in schools including social workers, counselors, psychologists, and campus monitors. The District should also establish a consistent point of contact who hears feedback from administrators and coordinates with administrators to identify ways to improve implementation of changes and develop consistency around approaches to school safety.

[200] City of Beaverton Resolution 4429.

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT DATA COLLECTION, REPORTING, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PRACTICES REGARDING USE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT: The District should produce an easily accessible, translated, legally compliant (i.e., FERPA) summarized version of the monthly reports of officers' work in the District. This report should be made available for school administrators, students, parents, and the public through an easily accessible District webpage on a bi-annual or annual basis. Reports should also be presented to the School Board. At a minimum, data collected would follow the best practice guidance detailed earlier.

Why the above actions are important & how they relate to the findings:

- The District's IGAs with all three law enforcement agencies provide little direction as to what data should be collected and reported to the school board, district administration, school staff, students, and families.
- Community members do not feel well-informed about what the relationship between law enforcement and schools is "supposed to" look like. Those who have day-to-day interactions with law enforcement in schools may have a limited perspective into the full breadth of law enforcement's work and impact in schools, particularly of those who are not traditionally served well by systems. Regular data collection and information sharing, including in public board meetings, can create more understanding of how law enforcement supports school safety *and* shed light on what other safety systems need to be in place.
- Most staff (78%) are not aware of any written protocols that guide the use of SROs. Administrators and SROs use significant discretion.
- Staff shared experiences of inconsistent use of SROs and a lack of district-wide standards and expectations for how and when SROs are engaged. This variability and discretion have significant consequences for students' involvement with the juvenile justice system. SROs themselves referenced variability between schools in how they typically get involved in law enforcement situations.

Why does the District need an IGA with law enforcement agencies if the officers' role is limited?

Given that many students do not feel *more* safe at school because of police, and that students from some identity groups may feel *less* safe with police at schools, it may be natural to wonder what purpose a written agreement between the District and law enforcement serves at all. Some community members may be tempted to have the District follow the track of many districts across the country, which have ended the SRO program with no stated relationship between Districts and law enforcement. This recommended approach to have a written agreement with law enforcement, but not officers stationed in schools, serves these primary purposes:

1. **To mitigate unintended harm by establishing clear boundaries.** Unintended harm is mitigated by limiting when and why police interact with students.

2. **To ensure that law enforcement officers who respond to school situations and provide consultation to school staff have the demeanor, skills, and knowledge that District community members believe is best for all students.** A written agreement helps ensure that when officers need to respond to limited, specific situations, they have existing relationships with school staff, have the appropriate training to interact with youth, and have clarity on their

role in the situation.

3. **To apply learnings from other districts and anticipate pendulum swings in whose voices are heard by policymakers.** As noted earlier, there are examples from other districts that removed SROs only to reinstate them within short periods. These extreme shifts may be mitigated by thoughtful planning for alternative measures if SROs are removed (e.g., plans to address school shootings or students bringing weapons to school), and by an intentional consideration of which voices should be centered in decision-making.

4. **To align with best practices from multiple sources (including the FBI).** Best practice, as noted earlier, guides districts to have a relationship with law enforcement regardless of whether police are “stationed” in schools all or most of the time.

A clear IGA is intended to strike a balance of protecting students' emotional and physical safety needs at school by limiting the presence of law enforcement and having an appropriate law enforcement response in limited circumstances.

Appendix A | Participant Demographics

Table A1. Student survey participation rates by school and grade level

	Total Enrollment	Percent of Total Enrollment	Number of Survey Responses	Percent of Survey Responses	Survey Response Rate
Middle School (6-8th grade)	***9197***	***100%***	***1657***	***100%***	***18%***
Aloha-Huber Park	175	2%	1	0%	1%
ACMA	324	4%	89	5%	27%
Arco Iris Spanish Immersion	73	1%	0	0%	0%
BASE	382	4%	122	7%	32%
Cedar Park	633	7%	105	6%	17%
Conestoga	850	9%	199	12%	23%
Five Oaks	759	8%	140	8%	18%
FLEX Online	343	4%	0	0%	0%
Highland Park	700	8%	111	7%	16%
Hope Chinese Charter	50	1%	0	0%	0%
International School	473	5%	106	6%	22%
Meadow Park	693	8%	136	8%	20%
Mountain View	887	10%	104	6%	12%
Raleigh Hills	75	1%	1	0%	1%
Springville	86	1%	1	0%	1%
Stoller	1039	11%	197	12%	19%
Tumwater	874	10%	213	13%	24%
Whitford	781	8%	132	8%	17%
High School (9-12th grade)	***12567***	***100%***	***2040***	***100%***	***16%***
ACMA	369	3%	110	5%	30%
Aloha	1779	14%	203	10%	11%
BASE	446	4%	125	6%	28%
Beaverton	1472	12%	203	10%	14%
Community School	87	1%	25	1%	29%
FLEX Online	385	3%	0	0%	0%
International School	384	3%	96	5%	25%
Mountainside	1765	14%	225	11%	13%
Southridge	1517	12%	222	11%	15%
Sunset	2003	16%	343	17%	17%
Westview	2360	19%	488	24%	21%
Total (6-12th grade)	***21764***	***100%***	***3697***	***100%***	***17%***
Middle School (6-8th grade)	9197	42%	1657	45%	18%
High School (9-12th grade)	12567	58%	2040	55%	16%

Source: Survey of middle and high school students, Feb-Mar 2022; Oregon Department of Education SY 2021-22 "At-a-Glance" Profile for Beaverton School District (https://www.ode.state.or.us/data/reportcard/reports.aspx)

Table A2. Student survey participation rates by social demographics

	Total Enrollment	Percent of Total Enrollment	Number of Survey Responses	Percent of Survey Responses	Survey Response Rate
Race or ethnicity					
Asian	4437	18%	645	17%	15%
Black, African American	747	3%	97	3%	13%
Hispanic, Latino/a/x	6637	27%	475	13%	7%
Multiracial	2053	8%	535	14%	26%
Native American, Alaska Native	112	0%	23	1%	21%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	218	1%	20	1%	9%
White	10617	43%	1692	45%	16%
Did not disclose	--	--	246	7%	--
Gender					
Female	--	--	1539	43%	--
Male	--	--	1596	43%	--
Nonbinary	--	--	278	7%	--
Did not disclose	--	--	266	7%	--
Sexual Identity					
LGBTQIA+	--	--	1039	28%	--
Not LGBTQIA+	--	--	2253	60%	--
Did not disclose	--	--	441	12%	--
Disability					
Experiences a disability	4939 (est)	13%	376	10%	--
Does not experience a disability	34576 (est)	87%	3037	81%	--
Did not disclose	--	--	320	9%	--

Notes: The estimated counts for students with disabilities include elementary students, who were not included in the student survey for this project. Enrollment data by gender and sexual identity were not available for this analysis.
Source: Survey of middle and high school students, Feb-Mar 2022; Oregon Department of Education SY 2021-22 "At-a-Glance" Profile for Beaverton School District (https://www.ode.state.or.us/data/reportcard/reports.aspx)

Table A3. Parent survey participation rates by the demographics of their children

	Number of Survey Responses	Percent of Survey Responses
Total survey participants	**3991**	**100%**
Race or ethnicity of their children		
Asian	605	15%
Black, African American	135	3%
Hispanic, Latino/a/x	467	12%
Multiracial	365	9%
Native American, Alaska Native	51	1%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	58	1%
White	2279	57%
Did not disclose	527	13%
Gender		
Female	2294	57%
Male	2499	63%
Nonbinary	65	2%
Sexual Identity		
LGBTQIA+	369	9%
Not LGBTQIA+	2990	75%
Does not know/Did not disclose	632	16%
Disability		
Experiences a disability	691	17%
Does not experience a disability	2997	75%
Does not know/Did not disclose	303	8%
Grade Level		
Elementary school	2150	54%
Middle school	1484	37%
High school	1566	39%

Notes: Total response rates per demographic category might add to more than 100% due to participants having Multiple children enrolled in the District.

How to read this table (example): 57% of parents who responded to the survey have a female child enrolled In the District and 63% have a male child enrolled in the District.

Source: Survey of Beaverton School District parents, Mar 2022

Table A4. Staff survey participation rates by role and grade level

	Number of Survey Responses	Percent of Survey Responses
Main Role		
School Administrator	25	3%
Classroom Teacher	361	42%
Counselor, Social Worker, School Psychologist	56	6%
Campus Supervisor	9	1%
District administrator or staff	61	7%
Other school-based staff	354	41%
Grade level (school-based staff only)		
Elementary school	271	31%
Middle school	136	16%
High school	243	28%
Options school	55	6%
Multiple grade levels	96	11%

Source: Survey of Beaverton School District staff, Mar 2022

Table A5. Staff survey participation rates by social demographics

	Number of Survey Responses	Percent of Survey Responses
Total	**870**	**100%**
Race or ethnicity		
Asian	36	4%
Black	8	1%
Latino	52	6%
Multiracial	18	2%
Native American, Alaska Native	5	1%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	5	1%
White	630	72%
Did not disclose race/ethnicity	136	16%
Gender		
Female	598	69%
Male	192	22%
Nonbinary	5	1%
Did not disclose gender	75	9%

Notes: Total response rates for the race/ethnicity category might add to more than 100% due to some participants identifying with multiple racial/ethnic categories.
Source: Survey of Beaverton School District staff, Mar 2022

Appendix B | SRO School Assignments by Agency

These assignments were true for the 2021-2022 school year as provided by the School District.

School Level	City of Beaverton Police	Washington County Sheriff	City of Hillsboro Police
High Schools	Arts & Community Magnet Academy (ACMA) Beaverton HS Sunset HS Southridge HS Mountainside HS Merlo Station/Bridges/ Community School	Aloha International School Westview	Beaverton Academy of Science & Engineering (BASE)
Middle Schools	Cedar Park Conestoga Five Oaks Highland Park Raleigh Hills Tumwater Whitford	Aloha Huber Park K-8 Meadow Park Mountainview Springville K-8 Stoller	N/A
Elementary Schools	Chehalem Cooper Mountain Elmonica Hiteon Fir Grove Greenway McKay McKinley Montclair Nancy Ryles Raleigh Hills K-8 Ridgewood Scholls Heights Sexton Mountain Vose William Walker	Aloha Huber Park K-8 Barnes Beaver Acres Bethany Bonny Slope Cedar Mill Errol Hassell Findley Hazeldale Jacob Wismer Kinnaman Oak Hills Raleigh Park Rock Creek Sato Springville K-8 Terra Linda West Tualatin View	N/A

Appendix C | SRO Literature Review Detail

This appendix expands on the "What the Research Says" section regarding SROs' effect on violence, discipline, arrests, & incarceration.

Claim 1: SROs decrease violence in schools

Key takeaway: The research is mixed on this. Three studies examined for this report state that SROs are associated with a decrease in either serious violence or "misbehavior." However, these reports also cite unintended negative impacts that include increases in exclusionary discipline and arrests.

Research:

Sorensen, Shen, and Bushway (2021)

- Researchers found in North Carolina middle schools that "SROs not only decrease the incidence of serious violence but also increase the use of out-of-school suspensions, transfers, expulsions, and police referrals" (p. 1).[201]

Zhang (2019)

- The study found that there was an increase in drug-related crimes and out of school suspensions, but also found that SROs tended to deter violent crimes.[202]

Owens (2017)

- SROs were associated with reductions in recorded student "misbehavior" and an increase of arrests of youth under 15 years of age for incidents that mostly involve "scuffles" rather than serious violence. "I find that arrests are for violent crimes that could be reasonably characterized as scuffling, rather than acts of life-threatening violence" (p. 34).[203]

Claim 2: SROs decrease crime

Key takeaway: Four studies related to this claim were examined for this report. Three of these found that police presence in schools *increased* crime rates related to drugs or weapons, but one of these studies found that police presence was associated with *reductions* in violent crimes (Zhang, 2019). A fourth study (Viano, Curran, & Fisher, 2021) provides insight into why an increase of crime is often associated with SRO use. Some may interpret this data positively to mean that SROs reduce crime (by removing drugs and weapons from school campuses); others may interpret this data negatively as more policing occurring on school grounds.

Research:

Viano, Curran, and Fisher (2021)

- This research represents a case study of a suburban county that added SROs to all elementary schools

[201] Sorensen LC, Shen Y, Bushway SD. Making Schools Safer and/or Escalating Disciplinary Response: A Study of Police Officers in North Carolina Schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. 2021;43(3):495-519.

[202] Zhang, G. The Effects of a School Policing Program on Crime, Discipline, and Disorder: A Quasi-Experimental Evaluation. *American Journal of Criminal Justice,* 44, 45–62 (2019).

[203] Owens, E. (2017). Testing the school-to-prison pipeline. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 36(1), 11–37.

following the Sandy Hook Elementary school shooting. The study explains why the number of crimes and arrests might *increase* with the presence of SROs. "In speaking with SROs, we found that almost any act of misbehavior could be considered at least a misdemeanor; bullying is harassment, fighting is assault, and disrespect against a teacher is disorderly conduct. One study found that the cases in which SROs became involved with student discipline primarily included cases of 'disorderly conduct' - a highly subjective charge that likely would not have been made in the absence of police in the school (Nolan, 2011)" (p. 44-45).[204]

Gottfredson, Crosse, and Tang (2020)

- "Consistent with prior research on SRO effects…this study found that when SRO dosage [the number of SROs and the time they spend in schools] increases, weapon- and drug-related offenses increase immediately following the dosage increase. These effects persist through 20 months following the dosage increase. The number of exclusionary disciplinary actions also increase…and this effect persists for 11 months post-intervention" (p. 23).[205]

Zhang (2019)

- "Findings indicated that while the presence of school police officers increased drug-related crimes and out-of-school suspensions for drug crimes regardless of whether they were present in schools for a single year or multiple years, there were deterrent effects observed for violent crimes and incidents of disorder when police officers were present in schools during all school years" (p. 1).[206]

Na and Gottfredson (2011)

- "[T]his study found no evidence suggesting that SRO or other sworn law-enforcement officers contribute to school safety. That is, for no crime type was an increase in the presence of police significantly related to decreased crime rates. The preponderance of evidence suggests that, to the contrary, more crimes involving weapons possession and drugs are recorded in schools that add police officers than in similar schools that do not" (p. 24).[207]

Claim 3: SROs increase discipline, including expulsion

Key Takeaway: Six studies were reviewed. Of these, five found SROs are correlated with increases in school discipline. Only two of these studies had a clear racial equity analysis; one found that there was a disproportionate impact on students of color (Weisburst, 2019) and another found no disproportionalities and no increased discipline use (Na and Gottfredsen, 2011).

Research:

Sorensen, Shen, and Bushway (2021)

- Researchers found in North Carolina middle schools that "SROs not only decrease the incidence of serious violence but also increase the use of out-of-school suspensions, transfers, expulsions, and police

[204] Viano S, Curran FC, Fisher BW. Kindergarten Cop: A Case Study of How a Coalition Between School Districts and Law Enforcement Led to School Resource Officers in Elementary Schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. 2021;43(2):253-279.
[205] Gottfredson, D.C, Crosse S., Tang Z, et al. Effects of school resource officers on school crime and responses to school crime. *Criminology & Public Policy.* 2020;1–36.
[206] Zhang, G. The Effects of a School Policing Program on Crime, Discipline, and Disorder: A Quasi-Experimental Evaluation. *American Journal of Criminal Justice,* 44, 45–62 (2019).
[207] Na, C. & Gottfredson, D.C. (2011): Police Officers in Schools: Effects on School Crime and the Processing of Offending Behaviors, *Justice Quarterly, 30*(4), 1-32.

referrals" (p. 1).[208]

Gottfredson, Crosse, and Tang (2020)

- "Consistent with prior research on SRO effects…this study found that when SRO dosage [the number of SROs and the time they spend in schools] increases, weapon- and drug-related offenses increase immediately following the dosage increase. These effects persist through 20 months following the dosage increase. The number of exclusionary disciplinary actions also increase…and this effect persists for 11 months post-intervention" (p. 23).[209]

Zhang (2019)

- The study found that there was an increase in drug-related crimes and out of school suspensions, but also found that SROs tended to deter violent crimes.[210]

Weisburst (2019)

- Using middle school student-level data, the researcher found that the presence of an SRO increased the risk of receiving school discipline, especially for low-level offenses. In addition, the impact of SROs on suspensions and other disciplinary actions were over 50% greater for Black students compared to White students. Schools with SROs were associated with a 2.5% reduction in high school graduation rates and a 4% decrease in college enrollment. Longer periods of SRO exposure led to decreased student likelihood of graduation.[211]

Fisher and Hennessy (2016)

- This study did a systematic review and meta-analysis (a review of other studies) about the association between SROs and exclusionary discipline. Based on their review of seven reports, "we found that the pattern of …evidence that—consistent with theories of criminalization—the presence of SROs in high schools is associated with higher levels of exclusionary discipline, although only one of the two models achieved statistical significance." The presence of SROs was associated with one additional exclusionary discipline incident per week in a school of 1500 students, which the authors contextualize as "not a trivial amount."[212]
- The researchers of this study cautioned that their work is subject to several limitations (e.g., findings may be due to other factors, not just SRO presence).

Na and Gottfredson (2011)

- Researchers did a study using three years of data from the national School Survey on Crime and Safety, which asks principals to report on incidents of crime in school and the presence of police in schools. In part, the study found arrests increased when schools placed an SRO in the school within the three-year study period. The study population may be limited in that it over-represents large schools, high schools, and schools that are not in rural areas. In addition, the study does not disentangle the effects of SRO presence compared to the presence of other security features.
- "Contrary to speculations that the presence of SRO officers may unjustly rob students of their right to a

[208] Sorensen LC, Shen Y, Bushway SD. Making Schools Safer and/or Escalating Disciplinary Response: A Study of Police Officers in North Carolina Schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. 2021;43(3):495-519.
[209] Gottfredson, D.C, Crosse S., Tang Z, et al. Effects of school resource officers on school crime and responses to school crime. *Criminology & Public Policy.* 2020;1–36.
[210] Zhang, G. The Effects of a School Policing Program on Crime, Discipline, and Disorder: A Quasi-Experimental Evaluation. *American Journal of Criminal Justice,* 44, 45–62 (2019).
[211] Weisburst, Emily. (2019). Patrolling Public Schools: The Impact of Funding for School Police on Student Discipline and Long-term Education Outcomes. Journal of Policy Analysis and Management. 38. 10.1002/pam.22116.
[212] Fisher, B. and Hennessy, E. (2016). "School Resource Officers and Exclusionary Discipline in U.S. High Schools: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," Adolescent Research Review, vol. 1, pp. 217-233.

public education through increased use of suspension and expulsion or may contribute to civil rights violations by disproportionately impacting minority or special education youth, our study found that students in schools that add police officers are no more likely to be removed, transferred or suspended from school as a result of an offense than are students in schools that do not. Last but not least, no evidence of adverse impact of police officer presence on minority groups or special education populations was observed" (p. 24). This study also found "no evidence suggesting that SRO or other sworn law-enforcement officers contribute to school safety."[213]

Claim 4: SROs increase arrests of youth, particularly among youth of color

Key Takeaway: Five studies are reviewed here, all of which suggested increased arrests associated with SRO presence at school. One study made a distinction - while total arrests did not increase following SRO presence, the arrests for disorderly conduct did increase (Theriot, 2009). This charge is made with considerable discretion of an individual officer and therefore subject to implicit bias. This same study noted that schools with higher percentages of students of color and economically disadvantaged students were more likely to have an SRO. Another study explained, "the presence of police officers helps to redefine disciplinary situations as criminal justice problems rather than social, psychological, or academic problems" (Na and Gottfredson, 2011).[214]

Research:

Gottfredson, Crosse, and Tang (2020)

- "Consistent with prior research on SRO effects…this study found that when SRO dosage [the number of SROs and the time they spend in schools] increases, weapon- and drug-related offenses increase immediately following the dosage increase. These effects persist through 20 months following the dosage increase. The number of exclusionary disciplinary actions also increase…and this effect persists for 11 months post-intervention" (p. 23).[215]

Homer and Fisher (2020)

- This study analyzed 92,620 schools using data provided by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. The study compared how arrest rates in schools were associated with police presence in schools. They found both that arrests tended to be higher in schools with police presence compared to those who did not. They also found that Black students tended to be arrested more than White and Hispanic students.[216]

Theriot (2009)

- This research compared arrest rates in schools with an SRO and schools without an SRO in the same district. "Having an SRO did not predict more total arrests, but did predict more arrests for disorderly conduct. Conversely, having an SRO decreased the arrest rate for assault and weapons charges" (p.1).[217]
- The distinction that the study makes regarding an increased arrest of disorderly conduct is important, since disorderly conduct can mean a wide range of actions that allow police officer discretion in charging

[213] Na, C. & Gottfredson, D.C. (2011): Police Officers in Schools: Effects on School Crime and the Processing of Offending Behaviors, *Justice Quarterly, 30*(4), 1-32.
[214] Ibid, p. 24.
[215] Gottfredson, D.C, Crosse S., Tang Z, et al. Effects of school resource officers on school crime and responses to school crime. *Criminology & Public Policy.* 2020;1–36.
[216] Homer, E.M., & Fisher, B.W. (2019). Police in schools and student arrest rates across the United States: Examining differences by race, ethnicity, and gender. *Journal of School Violence, 19*, 192 - 204.
[217] Theriot, M. (2009). "School resource officers and the criminalization of student behavior," *Journal of Criminal Justice*, Elsevier, vol. 37(3), pages 280-287, May.

a student compared to an assault or weapons charge, which is relatively more objective. In addition, the study found that student characteristics in schools with SROs were different categorically unique compared to those that didn't have SROs. A larger share of students at schools with an SRO were socioeconomically disadvantaged and had greater amounts of students of color compared to schools without SROs. Though the researchers use their findings to debunk a hypothesis that having an SRO at school predicts more total arrests, their findings indicate that students of color and economically disadvantaged students are more likely to be arrested for a charge that has considerably more discretion- disorderly conduct. This could suggest, though not mentioned in the study findings, a role that implicit bias may play in schools with SROs.

Na and Gottfredson (2011)

- Researchers did a study using three years of data from the national School Survey on Crime and Safety, which asks principals to report on incidences of crime in school and the presence of police in schools. In part, the study found arrests increased when schools placed an SRO in the school within the three-year study period. Adding SROs recorded 29% more weapons and drug incidents compared to the same school prior to the presence of an SRO in that school. This suggests increased detection rather than increased amount of the underlying behavior.
- "The analyses also showed that as schools increase their use of police officers, the percentage of crimes involving non-serious violent offenses that are reported to law enforcement increases. These findings are consistent with the conclusions from previous qualitative research (Kupchik, 2010, p. 115) which found that the presence of police officers helps to redefine disciplinary situations as criminal justice problems rather than social, psychological, or academic problems, and accordingly increases the likelihood that students are arrested at school" (p. 24).