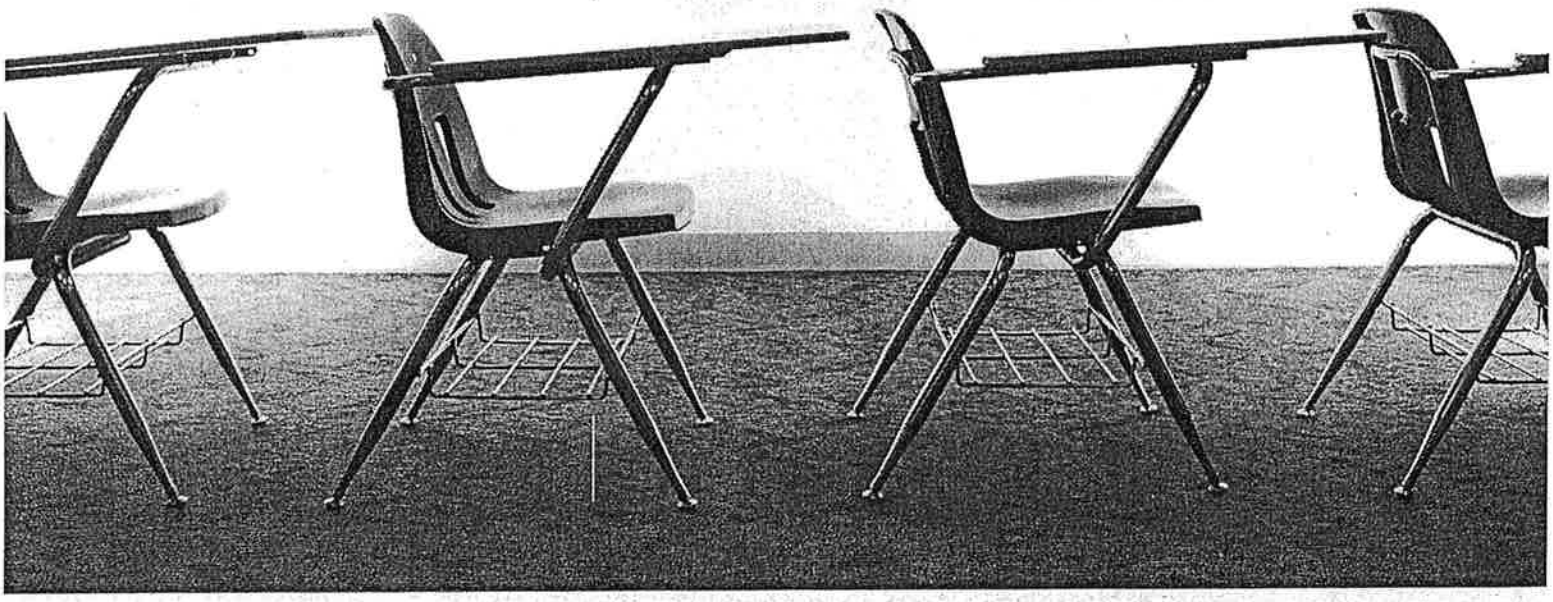
THE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CONSENSUS REPORT:

Strategies from the Field to Keep Students Engaged in School and Out of the Juvenile Justice System



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Strategies from the Field to Keep Students Engaged in School and Out of the Juvenile Justice System

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SCHOOL-POLICE PARTNERSHIPS

SUMMARY OF POLICY STATEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

POLICY STATEMENT I

School districts and individual schools engage in a collaborative process with law enforcement, the school community, and other stakeholders to consider the most appropriate school-police partnership.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Review the types of school-police partnership models being used in the district or jurisdiction and examine additional options to engage with law enforcement.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Involve a diverse group of stakeholders and review multiple data sources to evaluate the need for officers on a school campus to maintain school safety while contributing to a supportive learning environment and minimizing students' involvement in the juvenile justice system.

POLICY STATEMENT II

Educators and school officials do not call on officers to respond to students' minor misbehavior that can be appropriately addressed through the school's disciplinary process, and officers use their discretion to minimize arrests for these offenses when possible.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Ensure that policies clearly define officers' roles and the criteria for when to engage police in non-emergency situations that will help minimize arrests while addressing victims' needs.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Train teachers, administrators, staff, and police about when to directly involve officers with student misconduct on campus and about available alternatives to arrest.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Collect and analyze school-based arrest and referral data to help determine whether school and police personnel are adhering to policies regarding the involvement of officers and responses to student misconduct.

POLICY STATEMENT III

In collaboration with school authorities, police leaders develop recruitment and selection processes to ensure that school-based officers are suited for the position and receive comprehensive training, support, and supervision.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Recruit and select officers who are committed to maintaining safety while promoting supportive learning environments and helping reduce youths' risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Ensure that law enforcement agencies and training authorities, in collaboration with school leaders, provide appropriate training for officers on school policies, practices, and working with youth in a school setting.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Tailor school-based officers' supervision and evaluation to their defined roles and goals to effectively support officers' efforts and to monitor their progress.

POLICY STATEMENT IV

Written agreements formalize key elements of the school-police partnership that are periodically reviewed and refined based on data and feedback from a diverse group of stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Understand the legal issues that school-based officers and other police personnel serving schools encounter.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Ensure that school-police information-sharing principles advance school safety goals and facilitate the provision of services and supports to students, without increasing stigmatization or violating privacy mandates.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Outline in writing officers' roles and authority as defined through the collaborative process for determining the parameters of the school-police partnership.

INTRODUCTION

THE TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS that police have with schools in America vary by district and even among individual schools within a district. Although all school officials can simply call their local law enforcement agency for an emergency response or routine assistance, there are many ways in which officers interact with students and staff. These interactions can range from the formal involvement of full-time, specially trained school-based officers to officer-led education programs offered periodically on drug use and crime prevention, or there may be no regular on-campus presence of officers at all.

There is growing awareness among policymakers and practitioners that schools and communities have distinct needs and goals that should be considered when developing or revising plans for engaging officers on school campuses. When police are assigned to schools, there is considerable debate about their roles and level of engagement, which is inextricably tied to how these officers are selected, trained, and supervised. This debate also focuses on schools' policies regarding how educators and other staff request officer assistance, as well as school personnel's expectations for how officers should interact with students. The extent to which the recommendations in the Conditions for Learning and Targeted Behavioral Interventions chapters are effectively implemented can also influence officer involvement in schools.[1] Although there are multiple paths for schools, police, and the school community to take together, the goal should be the same: to help schools provide safe and nurturing environments that promote students' academic success and reduce behaviors that put them at risk for juvenile justice involvement.

A Road Map to the Section

This chapter examines the factors that have contributed to various school-police partnerships. It reviews the research and perceptions associated with school-based officers' engagement with students, and it discusses how police interactions with youth can be influenced by the circumstances under which school personnel ask officers to intervene.

Although many school authorities are already working with police agencies to determine what type of partnership works best, a process template has not yet been developed to guide jurisdictions in making full use of available data and engaging a diverse group of stakeholders. To address this gap, this chapter's policy statements and recommendations are organized to help readers follow such a process for determining what type of partnership police can have with schools, including deciding whether to place officers on particular campuses. This chapter recognizes that not every school in the nation will need, request, or be able to support a school-based officer.

The proposed decision-making process can help school and law enforcement officials prioritize resources among campuses and take into account the best fit for their particular community. Because decisions about officers' involvement in schools, and the success of any school-police partnership, is linked to the responsibilities officers assume and whether they are properly recruited, selected, trained, and supervised, these topics are explored as well. This chapter also stresses the importance of strong relationships between school administrators and officers, including articulating how expectations and policies can be formalized in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to help ensure proper implementation and accountability.

Particular attention is paid to ensuring that police are not used for classroom management and routine discipline. School officials and police alike should ensure that roles are defined and understood to minimize arrests of students for minor misbehavior.* A scuffle between students in line for the bus does not need to be treated as an assault, and a student who heckles a speaker at a school event does not need to be charged with disorderly conduct.[2] The research is clear that there are serious long-term consequences for setting youth on a path toward juvenile justice involvement. Negative outcomes are particularly compelling for youth of color, students with disabilities, LGBT youth, and other student groups who tend to be disproportionately represented among disciplined and arrested students. Every effort should be made to avoid having police arrest students for minor misconduct that can be appropriately dealt with through the school's disciplinary process.

At its core, this chapter is meant to provide insight into what communities can do through school-police partnerships to keep all students in a safe and productive classroom and out of the juvenile justice system whenever possible. It also stresses the need for school and police personnel to divert youth who have violated school code of conduct violations or minor offenses to appropriate restorative programs, supports, and services when possible.

Police clearly play an important role in any school's overall critical incident response plan, which is vital to student and staff safety. As essential as emergency response planning is, however, there are extensive resources already available.[3] The focus here is only on how those critical incident responses relate to school climate and officers' potential range of responsibilities. Many of the activities that officers can conduct in schools could be built into the safety and crisis planning that schools are already conducting, or through the expansion of special teams.[4] School-based officers are used best when they are integrated into more holistic school climate and safety plans and activities.

* See the Introduction to the report for definitions of misbehavior that constitute violations of codes of conduct, status offenses, and minor offenses. Some state statutes make disruption of an educational institution or classroom a misdemeanor (see, e.g., Florida Title XLVI, Chapter 877, Section 13) and include interference with teaching as "disorderly conduct" (see, e.g., North Carolina § 14-288.4. holding that disorderly conduct includes "disturbs or interferes with the teaching of students at any public or private educational institution").

This chapter focuses primarily on the roles of officers in non-crisis situations (that is, not incidents involving active shooters, natural disasters, or outside threats to safety). There are also important, but already well documented, topic areas that simply cannot be fully explored in this chapter. For example, police engagement in problem solving related to truancy and various forms of bullying are only briefly considered in this report in the narrow context of officer responses to various types of students' misconduct and risk of victimization.[5]

Background on School-Based Officers

The placement of officers in schools is not a recent phenomenon. Municipal and county law enforcement have been formally engaged with public schools for more than five decades,[6] from the first school resource officer (SRO) program in the 1950s to the dramatic expansion of the practice in the 1990s, which reflected community policing principles and collaborative child welfare-based partnerships.[7] School districts also can create their own police departments if authorized by law.* As of 2008, there were an estimated 250 school police agencies operating under the authority of school districts.[8]

School-based officers continue to perform a wide variety of activities on campuses. For example, in addition to mentoring and enforcement duties, on-site officers have engaged youth in the classroom to help improve students' awareness of stranger danger/safe havens and to prevent drug use, gang involvement, and youth violence.[9] Many prevention programs conducted by law enforcement that address risky behaviors and positive decision making have taken deep root in public schools and continue to operate in many districts today.[10]

Although many municipal and county police agencies continue to assign officers to school campuses, others partner with schools using off-campus officers to provide school safety and after-school programs.[11] Other collaborative activities include participating in projects to reduce juvenile arrests and confinement; serving on school safety committees, advisory boards, and planning bodies; providing expertise for school safety surveys; conducting drug and gang prevention programs and staff training; leading problem-solving activities; acting as guest speakers for classes and assemblies; and assisting with school events.[12] The majority of activities undertaken by off-campus municipal and county police officers, however, are traditional policing functions, such as patrolling the school campus, student travel routes, and drug-free zones in the immediate area of the school, as well as responding to calls for service.[13]

* These agencies have officers with the powers to arrest, carry firearms, and conduct other activities allowed peace officers in the state. These agencies report to the school district directly, but typically coordinate with local law enforcement agencies where there is overlapping jurisdiction.

Defining Officer and Security Personnel Terms

There are many titles and definitions used for police and security personnel assigned to public schools that can generally be sorted into four categories:

TABLE 1. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Personnel Characteristics	Common Titles
1. Local (municipal and county) law enforcement agency officer with sworn authority assigned to school(s).	School resource officers (SROs), school safety officers, school police, and school liaison officers.*
2. School district police department officer with sworn authority.	
3. Security firm employee. (The school district can contract with a firm for sworn personnel with arrest powers or for civilian security.)	School security officers, guards (armed and unarmed), and aides.
4. School security officer hired directly by the school district. (Arrest powers determined by state law, but typically personnel do not have the arrest powers afforded sworn law enforcement officers.)[14]	

Although some of these terms are meant to distinguish between sworn officers authorized to carry firearms and make arrests and non-sworn personnel without such authority, they are often used interchangeably.[15] Some terms are defined in state statutes that blur this distinction and others create other less-recognized titles. For example, Texas's legislature created a new category of school law enforcement in 2013: A "school marshal" can be an employee of the school district or charter school to act as school security and may make arrests and exercise all authority given peace officers.[16] In New York City, school-based officers are known as "school safety agents."[17] To confuse matters further, the term "SRO" has come to be used colloquially as a generic term to refer to any personnel who provide safety activities for a school, even if they are only there for brief periods, lack state law enforcement certification, and do not perform the full functions of a specially trained SRO.

* Note that school district police agency officers are often referred to as "school police officers" (SPOs). Although the term SRO has been used primarily to refer to municipal and county law enforcement officers assigned to schools, some school district police officers also refer to themselves as SROs.

DEFINITION OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER (SRO)

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) define an SRO as a career law enforcement officer with sworn authority who is deployed in community-oriented policing and assigned by the employing police department or agency to work in collaboration with schools and community-based organizations

- to address crime and disorder problems, gangs, and drug activities affecting or occurring in or around an elementary or secondary school;
- to develop or expand crime prevention efforts for students;
- to educate likely school-age victims in crime prevention and safety;
- to develop or expand community justice initiatives for students;
- to train students in conflict resolution, restorative justice, and crime prevention and awareness;
- to assist in the identification of physical changes in the environment that may reduce crime in or around the school; and
- to assist in developing school policy that addresses crime and to recommend procedural changes.[18]

For the purposes of this report, "school-based officers" include both sworn school district police agency officers and sworn local law enforcement officers (municipal and county) who are assigned to schools, have arrest powers, and meet state training/certification standards for any law enforcement officer in that state.

Factors Traditionally Related to Placing Officers in Schools and Defining Their Roles

Political, social, and economic factors have shaped the extent to which officers are assigned to schools and the nature of their engagement. Among these policy and social pressures have been the "tough on crime" movement, reactions to fears of juvenile "super-predators,"[19] and the community-policing/problem-oriented policing movements. The increase of on-campus officers in response to high-profile shootings in the early 1990s and other incident data was accompanied by policies to address growing concerns around violence at schools.[20] The widespread acceptance of zero tolerance policies to address guns, drugs, gangs, and violence in and around public schools had a clear impact on officers' presence on school campuses and expectations for stricter enforcement of offenses.

In addition, zero-tolerance policies often led school officials to call on municipal and county off-campus patrol officers to enforce student misconduct. Evidence suggests that during this era of strict enforcement, a significantly increased number of students of color came into contact with school disciplinary systems and the juvenile justice system.[21] As officers and security personnel became a familiar presence in schools, their enforcement roles sometimes expanded beyond addressing serious criminal acts to misconduct traditionally handled by principals or other school leaders.[22] This may be due, in part, to the effects of strict compliance policies and a lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities of police personnel, school administrators, and teachers.

Economic considerations have also contributed to the prevalence of school-based officers and the evolution of their role. State, city, and county revenues declined during tough fiscal times, causing reductions in police staffing in large numbers of local schools.[23] Those cuts were felt not only by local police and sheriffs' departments, but also by school district police departments. A 2010 survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools found that many schools had extensive SRO layoffs, furloughs, and cuts to their programs.[24] As school districts faced deep budget cuts, many looked to local police agencies to pick up the costs of school security and safety, but municipal and county agencies were facing similar reductions in funding as a result of the recession.[25]

The availability of federal grants to support officers in schools can also affect the number and type of police partnerships with schools. During the recent economic downturn, funding from a number of federal agencies that had supported officers and security was cut.[26] School and law enforcement officials who see a need for officers in schools continue to be concerned about how to support officers funded by remaining federal programs when those grants end, and about the ebb and flow of funds that often seem tied to high-profile incidents.

What the Research and Surveys Say about Officers in Schools

There have been numerous evaluations of school-police curriculum-based programs, such as GREAT or D.A.R.E.-Plus, as well as other crime prevention and truancy programs.[27] Recent interest in research, however, has been focused more on whether it can reveal the impact of school-based officers on specific outcomes, such as crime rates, arrests, and feelings of safety, rather than on the success of particular officer-led educational programs.

There are extremely strong and often opposing opinions about whether officers should be placed in schools. For decades, there have been requests for SROs that seem to outpace funding and personnel capacity. At the same time there has also been vocal opposition to their presence, particularly in some large urban schools. Given these opposing views it is somewhat surprising how relatively little research has been conducted on officers' impact on a number of important

measures. The studies that have been conducted are often dated (by a decade-old or more) and have yielded conflicting results. The studies also have uneven methodological standards,[28] such as a lack of comparison groups (SROs vs. no SROs).[29] Another limitation of the research is that it often does not distinguish school security personnel from full-time, sworn SROs, or note differences in training, roles, or other attributes that may affect findings.[30] It is also not always clear what the contributions are of off-campus patrol officers who have been called to the school compared with school-based officers.

The interpretations of the findings also vary. Some study authors warn readers that there may be factors unrelated to the presence of SROs that may have affected the findings. Other researchers conclude that SROs "cause" a problem without accounting for intervening factors. For example, some studies look at the numbers of school-based officers increasing at the same time as higher student arrest rates and conclude that more officers cause more arrests. Yet they fail to consider the seriousness of the offense (felony arrest vs. enforcement of a misdemeanor) and zero-tolerance or other policies that may affect when officers are called to respond to student misconduct. Similarly, some analysts attribute decreases in crime to officers in schools without considering other relevant factors as well.

Surveys on perceptions of officers in schools can provide additional information and context for research. They can reveal the full range of perspectives and concerns that can be valuable for shaping school-police partnerships. It is clear that survey respondents' views differ based on the district, school, or even individual experiences outside of school. There are surveys that have found strong parent, student, and school personnel support for school resource officers.[31] In contrast, other reports highlight that parents and students feel threatened by or oppose the presence of police, particularly in communities of color.[32] Perceptions of safety when officers or security personnel are present in a school also vary. Some surveys indicate that having an officer makes individuals in the school feel safer (although this is generally more true of adults than youth),[33] while others indicate that armed officers can make students and teachers feel less safe.[34]

Some reports on particular programs have indicated that SRO efforts are contributing to a number of positive outcomes, including reducing crime through problem solving, improving student behavior, and increasing feelings of safety on campus and comfort with reporting crimes among students and faculty.[35] Some SRO programs also report a decline in truancy when schools and SROs collaborate.[36] Other relevant program reports note that SROs can help maintain order during students' arrival and departure time and can head off fights and bullying.[37] In contrast to these findings, there are a number of reports that indicate that officers on campuses contribute to increased ticketing and arrests of students for minor offenses such as disorderly conduct or disruption of class. These reports indicate that officers make schools feel less welcoming and criminalize typical adolescent misbehaviors.[38]

Examples of issues for which the small pool of available research cannot provide adequate direction include these (see also Table 2):

1. ***School safety/reductions in reported crimes:*** As underscored in the Introduction to this report, schools are generally safe places,[39] but data collected on school crime and feedback on victimization indicates that some schools continue to deal with violent and nonviolent crimes, including bullying.[40] The level of school-based officers' impact on school safety is difficult to quantify because of the lack of rigorous research that can control for other factors affecting crime rates and reporting practices.[41] Factors that can influence the number of reported crimes include changes to school policies, such as a movement toward or away from zero tolerance for particular offenses, changes in how teachers are told to involve officers, and measures to encourage crime reporting.*
2. ***School-based arrest rates:*** There has been increased attention to and concern about the number of students who are arrested for minor offenses or ticketed by officers. Despite overall decreases in juvenile crime, there are jurisdictions that still report high numbers or even increases in school-based juvenile court referrals.[42] Some reports suggest that zero-tolerance policies have contributed to these increases, often for infractions that may not previously have been considered dangerous or threatening enough for courts to address.[43] Even with the movement away from zero tolerance, some policy analysts and other groups posit that more officers on site would naturally detect more offenses. Proponents of officers in schools contend that this assertion does not take into consideration whether officers have received proper training and supervision regarding preventing crimes and how they use their discretion when a minor offense is detected.[44] For example, school-based officers are increasingly trained to use referrals and diversion when appropriate (in keeping with community-policing principles) instead of arresting students for minor offenses. Some police agencies are tracking arrest reductions and engaging with community groups to increase officer training, diversion options, and efforts to chart progress on reducing disproportionate impact.[45]

   Disproportionate Impact: Concerns about increases in discipline and arrest rates are especially pressing in regards to students of color, given their overrepresentation in the disciplinary and juvenile justice systems for minor misconduct, without any research support that they misbehave at higher rates.[46] There is also a disparate impact of disciplinary actions on students with disabilities (particularly those with emotional behavioral disorders)[47] as well as LGBT youth,[48] which puts those disciplined students at greater risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system. School-based officers note that even in schools with no on-campus officers, there can be a disproportionate impact of disciplinary policies on students of color and youth with disabilities, an issue that everyone involved with students should be working to redress.

* Sometimes increases in reported crimes indicate that a trusting relationship is established with officers that encourages reporting. Additional inquiries are required to determine if actual incidents of crime are increasing or if reporting is up.

There is very limited research on school-based arrest factors. Future research will need to take into account the interplay of officers' discretionary actions, school policies, level of training for officers and security personnel, victims' complaints, and other potential factors.

TABLE 2. EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH FINDINGS ON OFFICERS IN SCHOOLS

Indicator	Examples of Positive Findings	Examples of Negative Findings[49]
Safety/Reductions in Reported Crimes	■ A four-year study of Chicago's school-police partnership program indicated that crime fell nearly 50 percent over the study period.[50] ■ A study that compared schools with and without an SRO found that the presence of an SRO was related to fewer assault and weapons charges.[51] ■ A 1999 study that compared rates of arrest and delinquency before and after program implementation found that the total number of intermediate and major offenses decreased from 3,267 in the year before program implementation to 2,710 for the year after SRO assignment.[52]	■ A national study of schools with SROs did not find lower reported violent crime and had higher reports of weapon and drug offenses.[53] ■ An evaluation of New York City's Impact School Initiative indicated that heightened police presence in the most dangerous schools in the district did not result in significantly safer environments.[54]
School-Based Arrest Rates	■ Schools with an SRO had fewer arrests for more serious charges, such as weapons possession and assault, as compared with schools without an SRO.[55]	■ Having an SRO was not associated with an increase in total arrests but did lead to more arrests for disorderly conduct, even when controlling for factors such as school poverty.[56]

Although the body of research and survey findings taken together have sometimes conflicting results and are open to different interpretations, they do offer insights into how programs are being conducted and provide a foundation for developing a well-defined research agenda for evaluating future school-police partnerships. Even with all the caveats about studies to date, the research and program reports have highlighted promising practices, elements of successful programs, common goals, and areas where implementation concerns should be addressed.[57]

How officers are perceived in the school is often linked to how they are perceived in the community. A survey of National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) board and members indicated that one of the barriers to effective partnerships is students' previous negative experiences with officers out of school.[58] These experiences extend to how students' family members and friends have described their interactions with police as well. SROs routinely talk about their hope that by building a trusting relationship with students in schools, they are fostering longer-term positive interactions with officers. Police need to be prepared to address issues of trust, mutual respect, and other concerns both inside and outside the schools' walls.

MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S STOP PROGRAM MILWAUKEE, WI

In an effort to keep students safe and on track for personal and academic success, the Community Prosecution Unit developed a "youth prevention program" for young leaders (ages 12–17).[59] Students Talking it Over with Police (STOP) is a seven-week program in which officers meet with students for an hour each week. SROs and School Patrol Officers co-facilitate discussions with youth, with the goal of improving relationships between young people and law enforcement. Through ongoing dialogue, the police department works to reduce youths' anxiety related to interactions with officers, and helps both youth and officers better understand how to interact appropriately with one another.

The STOP program was piloted in 2010 in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club as an after-school program for 180 students. In 2011, STOP expanded to an in-school program and as of April 2014, the STOP program is in 45 schools across Milwaukee, with 50 Milwaukee Police Department officers as trained facilitators.

Results from STOP's 2012 outcome evaluation found that program participants made statistically significant improvements in their 1) general knowledge about the police, 2) knowledge about what to do if stopped by the police and what the appropriate behavior is for an officer during a stop, 3) general perceptions of the police, 4) willingness to cooperate with the police, and 5) perceptions of procedural fairness.

For more information about STOP, visit stopbash.com/about-stop/.

Much has also been written about the costs of hiring officers,[60] and on whether those investments are having an impact on staffing school counselors and others who can help address misbehavior and its underlying causes.[61] SROs interviewed for this report indicated the value of the partnerships they have with school counselors and student support teams. Those officers believe that they can be a component of a comprehensive approach to helping students and also feel that investments should be made for more counselors and behavioral healthcare providers.[62] Often there are different funding streams for school counselors, psychologists, or other behavioral health staff (education or mental health resources) than for officers (public safety resources), which means that funding for one may not be related to support for the other, although budgets differ by district. In other cases there may be issues of prioritization and allocation of resources that should be considered in collaborative discussions about school-police partnerships.[63]

In some cases, law enforcement can help supplement or better connect schools to resources. For example, for the past 40 years, the Hayward, CA Police Department has employed a cadre of mental health counselors who provide prevention and counseling interventions in coordination with the SRO program. The counselors, supported by the police department and a combination of grant and contract funding, provide family-focused outpatient mental health services from within their offices at the police department. Additionally, as part of their school-based program, Hayward Police Department counselors are assigned to two schools, two days a week. Through this placement, they serve as a liaison between the school and the police department to provide counseling services and school climate and prevention support alongside school staff.

The Current Status of Officers in Schools

The lack of a clear definition for the types of law enforcement that serve students and staff on campus makes it difficult to determine the total number of officers and security personnel assigned to schools. Officers may be assigned to schools full-time, part-time, or as part of their routine patrol. There is no central source of data that disaggregates the number of sworn officers from school district and municipal or county law enforcement agencies and from non-sworn security personnel assigned to schools.[64]

- In the 2009–10 school year, 43 percent of schools reported they had one or more "security staff" at their school at least once a week. "Security staff" includes school security and guards who are not law enforcement officers, SROs, and law enforcement personnel who are not SROs.[65]
- As of 2006, "an estimated one-third of all sheriffs' offices and almost half of all municipal police departments assign[ed] nearly 17,000 sworn officers to serve in schools."[66]
- NASRO estimates that in 2013 there were about 10,000 SROs around the country, mostly in junior high and high schools.[67] Those numbers appear to be growing following the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.[68]

Even before President Obama's January 2013 executive actions to make schools safer,[69] many cities, counties, states, and individual school districts had already reallocated resources to provide more law enforcement and security personnel in schools.[70] As a result of the executive action to "provide incentives for schools to hire school resource officers," in September 2013, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services awarded 144 local agencies support for an additional 370 SROs.[71] Also as of September 2013, at least 29 states introduced more than 90 bills in the preceding eight months related to SROs and school security personnel; at least 17 were enacted in state legislatures.[72] Some of these laws authorized law enforcement agencies to provide school districts with SROs, permitted the creation of school district police agencies or units, and provided guidance on training and certification standards for school-based officers. Some states have passed legislation to shape officers' roles in schools; for example, Texas now prevents school police officers from issuing citations for Class C misdemeanors, such as disruption of class, disorderly language, and in-school fighting.[73] California passed legislation that requires school safety plans to include clear guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of SROs and/or police officers on school campus.[74] Colorado also adopted legislation that adds SROs to the list of community partners defined in Colorado law as most essential in helping schools develop and improve their safety plans, train in multi-hazard emergency response, and ensure compliance with the national incident management system.[75] The Newtown shooting also prompted other school safety proposals around the country that included installing a broad range of security equipment, putting security guards and officers in all primary and/or secondary public schools, and even arming teachers or other staff.[76]

The movement towards having a greater security presence in schools has come with increased attention to making sure that school-police partnerships are developed using a transparent and informed process that takes into account the distinct needs and concerns of individual schools. When officers are placed on campus, there is growing pressure to have mechanisms for ensuring their proper selection, training, role definition, and supervision. At the same time, communities are calling on school personnel at every level to properly engage officers and not call on them to respond to and enforce minor code of conduct violations that may also be considered arrestable offenses. These issues are addressed in the policy statements that follow.

POLICY STATEMENT 1

School districts and individual schools engage in a collaborative process with law enforcement, the school community, and other stakeholders to consider the most appropriate school-police partnership.

It was clear from Consensus Project participants and interviews with those in the field that there are strong feelings on both sides about whether officers should be placed in schools and about the role of officers serving students and staff. There was general agreement, however, that it is appropriate for the decisions about school-police partnerships to be made at the local level.

A local collaborative process for defining the school-police partnership and making the decision about officer placement will help the school community and police determine the best approach for their jurisdiction. For those school districts that determine they want officers in schools but lack the resources to support police assignment in all of them, such a collaborative process would help prioritize where officers may be most effectively deployed. The reality is that not every school or district in the country will feel officers are needed on campus. Others will be clamoring for them. Ultimately, through a decision-making process that engages a broad group of stakeholders, school and law enforcement leaders will decide how schools should partner with police. The process should take into consideration data from multiple sources and feedback that represents a wide range of perspectives.

The process outlined in this chapter is meant to be helpful for jurisdictions that do not have formal school-police partnerships as well as for jurisdictions that are looking to reassess or evaluate the effectiveness of their current partnership. School systems should begin by working with police to conduct an analysis of their environment, including persistent issues of crime and disorder, disaster and emergency preparedness, and the physical state of their buildings and campuses. They should also take into account the requests, needs, and concerns of parents, students, teachers and other school staff, behavioral health personnel; juvenile justice practitioners; and other adults who are involved with school-aged youth. Police and school leaders should also consider whether the functions that properly trained SROs provide on crime prevention, mentoring, education on the law and good citizenship, and other non-enforcement activities, align with the school's goals and climate.

The ways in which schools decide to engage in a partnership with police vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. According to a 2013 survey of NASRO members and other interviews in the field, the decision to place a local police officer on campus can take into account a variety of factors, including available funding for officers; teacher, administrator, student and/or parent requests; reports of crimes; and perceived safety issues or prior calls for service.[77]

In a national study of school-based officers, police involvement in schools was also "significantly and positively" influenced by three factors: school level (i.e., elementary, middle, or high school), amount of school crime, and the previous presence of officers.[78] A later study found three other factors associated with daily police presence on campus: school size, percentage of children receiving reduced-price school lunches, and school location.[79] It is also more common for schools that enroll high populations of students of color to have a greater police or security presence.[80]

Interviews conducted for this report revealed that in some cases these decisions are often politically driven, at least in part, in reaction to high-profile critical incidents in schools. In other cases, officer-placement decisions are being made by school district administrators who request officers for all middle or high schools in the district. These decisions can also be made based on a school principal or superintendent observing a successful SRO or school police officer program in another school or district. Although many districts, schools, and police agencies are making cogent decisions on how to engage officers on and off campus, these decisions are often not data-driven, lack specific goals, or narrowly focus on action plans related to threats to school safety.

Schools typically engage with police, at minimum, to determine how officers will respond to calls for service and prepare for critical incidents. Beyond those functions, police personnel across the nation when serving schools assume a number of roles and conduct a broad range of activities. School and police leaders are increasingly working with communities to examine these roles and activities, including making decisions about whether to assign officers to schools, revise the role of officers currently assigned to schools, reassign officers from one campus to another, or engage in a different type of partnership using only off-campus officers. The following recommendations and related discussions are meant to help guide these decision-making processes. The factors that can affect the ability of police to maintain school safety while supporting nurturing learning environments are also considered.

RECOMMENDATION 1: **Review the types of school-police partnership models being used in the district or jurisdiction and examine additional options to engage with law enforcement.**

Although this report focuses on the roles of sworn police officers from municipal, county, or school district police agencies, schools may also want to consider whether to use private security personnel.[81] Schools often have hybrid approaches for using school-based officers and security personnel. Some school districts have local law enforcement officers, school district police officers, and security personnel in their schools, in various combinations. It is also possible to bifurcate enforcement and prevention duties. For example, Milwaukee, Wisconsin has two sets of school officers serving together in schools: SROs and School Patrol Officers (SPOs). The SPOs' primary responsibility is responding to calls for service from schools and enforcement, whereas the SROs deal with more of the relationship building, mentoring, and classroom presenting.[82] More important than the labels are the actual roles and responsibilities of officers.

TABLE 3. POSSIBLE TYPES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT/SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR SCHOOLS

Officer or Security Presence	Description	Authority	Examples
Local municipal or county law enforcement agency officer assigned to school campus*	Officer reports within the local law enforcement agency's chain of command Typically assigned to work full time in a particular school	Sworn officers have full arrest powers and are armed The most common model is SRO	Rutherford County (TN) Sheriff's Office School Resource Officer Division, rutherfordcountytn.gov/sro/whatis.htm Garland (TX) Police Department, ci.garland.tx.us/gov/lg/safety/police/unit/school.asp
School district police department officer assigned to a school campus	Officer reports within the School Police Department's chain of command Typically assigned full time to a campus or patrol assignment The department is operated by the school district	Sworn officers have full arrest powers and are armed Tasks are typically the same as municipal/county SROs	Miami-Dade Schools Police Department, mdspolice.com Los Angeles School Police Department, laspd.com
Security firm employees contracted by school for on-campus assignment	The school district contracts with a security firm The officer reports to the authority designated in the contract	Typically non-sworn officers from a security firm, but may include sworn off-duty officers from a local police agency[83]	Alexandria City (VA) Public Schools (ACPS),† acps.k12.va.us/

* SROs may also be provided by state police agencies. For example, the Delaware State Police has a State Police School Resource Officers unit. The Red Clay School District alone has a public safety department with five full-time Delaware State Police School Resource Officers and one Delaware Constable who serves as the supervisor for the program. All secondary schools are assigned an officer. The emphasis is on integrating SROs into the culture of the schools and helping students succeed, while avoiding arrest whenever possible. For more information, see redclayschools.com/pages/RedClay/Parents_and_Students/PS_Documents/Red_Clay_Public_Safety_Departm.

† In addition to using contracted security personnel from a firm, ACPS also hires its own security who are ACPS employees. School district police department officers also may be assigned to a secondary school campus.

TABLE 3. *(continued)*

Officer or Security Presence	Description	Authority	Examples
School security officer employed by the school district	Non-sworn official working under the direction of a local school administrator In some states, security personnel may need to meet a certification program	Limited arrest powers depending on state laws[84] Generally responsible for ensuring safety and maintaining order and discipline in a school, though duties vary within and among districts Officers may monitor visitors and may detain students violating the law and notify local law enforcement officials	Virginia School Security Officer Programs, dcjs.virginia.gov/vcss/ssod.cfm Mesa (AZ) Public Schools *
No on-campus officer School district agency (if applicable) and/or local law enforcement agency responds to calls for assistance	Local police agency provides routine patrols/ responses or assigns officers to be at schools for the start and end of the school day May also provide after-school and education or other programs and other non-emergency services Responds to critical incidents and reports of crimes May be formal or informal partnership	Sworn officers are assigned by police agency supervisors or as part of routine patrol duties to provide a full range of policing services	Sausalito Police Department (CA),† ci.sausalito.ca.us/index.aspx?page=154

* The Mesa Public School District hires security officers to work in two middle schools and six high schools. There are also 10 security officers who primarily respond to elementary schools, but patrol the district as secondary responders to middle and high schools. Security officers do not have arrest powers and do not need to be certified. The Mesa Public Schools and the Mesa Police Department also place SROs in middle and high schools through district and state grant funding. The district supplements these SRO positions with part-time off-duty police officers as well.

† The Sausalito Police Department's "Recess Patrol" program requires officers to visit schools during recess to provide opportunities for positive interactions with the students. For more information on similar school visitation programs, see, e.g., schoolsecurity.org/2014/03/school-visitation-programs-beef-police-presence-budgets/.

A critical factor that helps schools determine the type of school-police arrangement to make can be the types of available funding. According to a review of state education statutes as of September 2013, 8 of the 50 states provide some kind of state-level funding specifically available for SROs or other school-based police, including grant programs and available matching funds. Four states had county-specific funding mechanisms, such as tax levies, county general funds, and various permit fees. The majority of states leave the funding of school-based police to the individual school districts.[85]

Potential funding sources for placing officers in schools include the following:[86]

- ***Grant funding:**** Federal and state grant programs can provide support for school-based officers, but plans must be made for retaining officers, as needed, when those funds are exhausted, particularly when facing persistent budget constraints.[87] A police department, school, district, or some combination can apply for grants to fund a school officer program.
- ***School district funding:*** If a school district has its own police agency, or is interested in creating one, the agency's funding can be used to support officers in the school. In addition, school district funds can be used to contract for services or pay the costs for employing a school security officer, depending on the needs of the school.
- ***Police department funding:*** If the school district does not have its own police agency, school leaders can determine if the municipal or county law enforcement agency has the budget to staff requested positions for individual schools. Typically the municipal law enforcement agency incurs the costs from its operating budget or any grant funds if the school district cannot support the positions.
- ***Shared or blended funding:*** Some school district and municipal agencies share the costs of officers in schools, drawing on their operating budgets and grant funds. The Ohio School Resource Officers Association identified a number of funding sources that could be used to support officers in schools (sometimes for prescribed activities such as drug prevention), including the Ohio Attorney General's Drug Use Prevention Grant, the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program (JAG); possibly asset forfeiture monies (depending on allowable uses for the department); and the state's Department of Education.[88] Other federal sources include the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative and the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Healthy Students.

* For more on potential federal grant programs to support officers in schools, see csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/FederalGrantProgramsChart.pdf.

The most important decisions in determining the type of school-police partnership typically relate to whether to assign officers to a particular campus, to all schools within a district (or a particular level such as all middle or high schools), or to rely on municipal/county police responses and joint programs without an officer based on campus.

RECOMMENDATION 2: **Involve a diverse group of stakeholders and review multiple data sources to evaluate the need for officers on a school campus to maintain school safety while contributing to a supportive learning environment and minimizing students' involvement in the juvenile justice system.**

To evaluate the type of partnership that would meet a school's or district's needs and goals, education and police leaders need to engage a range of stakeholders and analyze available data on a number of dimensions.[89] Much of the data described below is already being compiled or can be readily collected, including through school climate surveys that provide information on student, staff, and family perceptions of safety. Student and school-level data should also be available from state data systems and any early warning data systems that may be in use in the district.[90] There also may be information from school safety audits. There are a number of committees that already exist in schools that can help lead this effort—whether it is a school leadership team, a school improvement planning team, or a school safety planning committee, or some combination.

SCHOOL SAFETY PLANNING

In the wake of tragedies such as the shootings in Newtown and Columbine, school safety plans have focused on increased security measures and emergency responses. As of October 2013, 33 states have statutes that specifically require every school or district to have a comprehensive school safety or emergency plan.[91] In 2013 alone, 11 states passed legislation that revised existing policies and 2 states passed legislation creating new policies for safety planning.[92]

Plans typically detail specific procedures for responding to threats against the school including intruders in the building, natural disasters, and medical emergencies. Common elements of state legislative-directed school safety plans include the following:[93]

- Requirements for various safety drills including fire drills, tornado drills, and active shooter drills
- General school building and infrastructure requirements for school safety
- Procedures for responding to school emergency or crisis situations
- Involvement by teachers, students, families, and community members in the creation of the plans
- Involvement in the development and implementation of the plan by state departments of education and specific school safety entities
- Procedures for distribution of school safety plans and/or confidentiality of such plans

School safety plans are typically stand-alone documents and most states require their development in partnership with local law enforcement and/or school district police agencies. Because safety is an integral part of school climate, some plans may include goals and activities for improving the environment and sense of safety, but the emphasis is typically on enhanced security of the physical facility, student and school personnel responses, and law enforcement protocols.[94]

School-police partnerships should consider how school safety plan provisions will affect the school climate, particularly installing safety equipment and running safety drills, and how to mitigate fears and concerns proactively. They should also examine how school safety plans can be coordinated with school climate strategies and school improvement plans to leverage the work often being done on parallel tracks.[95]

This recommendation requires that data analyses and stakeholder discussions focus on a number of considerations to assess what type of activities police might carry out on school campuses and how they could be implemented. The same process should also be used by jurisdictions with current school-police partnerships to reassess their success and effectiveness in achieving identified goals.[96] Many of the issues require engaging students, their families, and the adults in the school who have contact with students, as well as service providers or community members.

The key considerations and questions that are provided below can be used as a self-assessment tool to stimulate discussion with stakeholders on school safety and the presence of officers on campus and off-campus responses. Information gleaned from conversations about these questions can also be used as an advocacy tool by schools and districts to garner support for improving school-police engagement.

There is no simple equation for determining the best school-police partnership model, including whether to put an officer on a particular campus. No set of questions and weighted responses could be fashioned to yield quantifiable results that could accurately direct these actions. It became clear that such a metric is not yet possible, in part because the research base is not yet there to draw these types of conclusions. In the interim, some advisors have proposed that although there is no single indicator that determines the need for police in a particular school, a critical consideration would be the seriousness of the offenses that take place in school and the overall proportion of department calls for service by the school. The severity and impact of offenses could also be gauged, in part, by student and staff perceptions of safety. Decisions on whether to place an officer on campus should also be based on concerns about specific risks (e.g., gang or weapons problems).

The steps suggested below are designed to get closer to a formal process for determining the best school-police partnership by outlining four distinct steps to consider incident and perception data in making these decisions:

1) Review safety data from police, school, and other sources
2) Consider stakeholder perceptions
   - **a.** emotional and physical safety
   - **b.** officers in schools
   - **c.** appropriate roles for officers
3) Determine the goals of the school-police partnership
4) Determine the best partnership model

OFFICERS IN SCHOOLS: A COLLABORATIVE DECISION-MAKING TOOL

I. **Review Safety Data:** School leaders and police should use measurable and observable data from a variety of sources that can provide a clear and accurate picture of the school's safety needs. Quantitative data can include numbers of crimes reported by students and school personnel; arrests; tickets (where applicable); calls for service to law enforcement agencies; crime data on and around the school grounds; and disciplinary data including suspensions and expulsions. Any survey or incident data that has been collected on bullying incidents, student drug or alcohol use, or gang activity should also be reviewed.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

School safety needs are important factors in determining whether routine patrol responses, more formal school-police interactions, the placement of officers on campus, or other types of partnerships between schools and police are needed. The consideration of the police role should be made in the context of other school- and district-wide initiatives as well. The school safety data that can be collected is extensive, but may be readily available from existing police or school sources. Local leaders can prioritize data on arrests, police calls for service, and disciplinary actions stemming from conduct that resulted in physical harm if capacity for more extensive data collection is limited.

Data collection is merely a first step in assessing baseline crime and disorder. Information from surveys and assessments of school climate, behavioral health interventions, and other strategies that improve safety should also be considered. Although schools are generally safe environments, the questions provided in this self-assessment tool can help identify the extent of individual schools' criminal and gang/drug activity, as well as the need to address students' risky behaviors and behavioral health.

A. Does the school have a safety/security plan?

- **1.** If so, when was this plan developed, and how often is it reviewed and/or revised?
- **2.** Are school-based officers part of the safety/security plan, and if so, in what way?

B. What does the data say about the crime and safety problems a school may have based on the following potential indicators?

- **1.** Total number of arrests on campus
  - **a)** any information on frequent locations for incidents (e.g., cafeteria, parking lot, classrooms)
  - **b)** offense types
- **2.** Number of calls for service and/or arrests at school events off campus and/or at bus stops or on school buses
- **3.** Number of calls for service from school to local/county law enforcement agency (off-campus officers)
  - **a)** through 911 vs. non-emergency assistance (if available)
  - **b)** by offense type (if available)
- **4.** Number of calls to school district police agency (if applicable)
  - **a)** offense type (if available)
- **5.** Number of on-campus officer interventions (if applicable)
  - a) numbers of arrests or tickets (if applicable)
  - b) offense types

6. Number of tickets issued on campus (from off-campus police or school-based police, where applicable)
7. Number of weapons confiscated
8. Number of incidents where drugs were confiscated
9. Number of office referrals, disaggregated by reason for referral
10. Number of in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions, disaggregated by type offense/violation
11. Police reports on gang and drug activity on campus
12. Student attendance and truancy rate[97]

C. What do these data suggest about particular crime or safety issues?

D. Is it possible for the data to be disaggregated to reveal any disproportionate impact on particular populations?

E. What factors might explain the overall or specific data results or affect their accuracy?

F. How does the school compare with others in the district?

II. **Assess Perceptions of School Safety and of the Presence and Potential Roles of Officers in Schools:** In addition to collecting and analyzing quantitative data, school leaders should gauge perceptions of school safety held by staff, parents, and students. They should then consult with police officials about how these perceptions compare to the data collected. School and police leaders should also discuss how students, parents, and others in the school community feel about having officers on campus and what they perceive their role should be if placed in a school.

Perceptions of safety and feelings about the presence of officers in the school can be gathered through interviews, community and school-based forums, and surveys. Many validated school climate surveys already collect this information.[98] When validated school climate surveys do not cover school safety perceptions, schools and districts can administer additional surveys at the same time as the validated climate survey that focus on perceptions of safety and officers in school. Perception data and feedback can reveal the conditions under which teaching and learning occurs at the school. Research shows that feeling unsafe in school is a significant barrier to learning, and students who report these feelings are less likely to be engaged and have lower academic achievement outcomes.[99] Although there are mixed results from research on whether officers make students and staff feel safer, the discrepancies may come down to the selection, training, and role definition of the particular officer assigned to a school, as well as to how police are perceived in the greater community.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

A number of sources and mechanisms can be used to gauge the school community's feelings of safety and its perception of police partnerships. Some researchers caution that perceptions are not always accurate and may change after data on actual incidents or other issues is discussed. Nonetheless, perceptions must be taken seriously and may help explain why statistics do not tell the whole story about school conditions (e.g., under-reporting of crimes).

It is important to also recognize when negative interactions with officers in the community carry over into the school.* Many police practitioners believe that specially trained officers building positive relations with youth in schools can help develop mutual respect that can begin to address tensions and build relationships outside school.

It is critical that all voices are heard in this step of the planning process, particularly as the roles of police officers on and off campus are defined. Questions on three key areas are meant to help inform the partnership plan: 1) perceptions of safety, 2) perceptions of police, and 3) the role that officers should play in school partnerships.

Perceptions of Safety

A. What do school climate and other surveys, and discussions with stakeholders reveal about the following?

1. Overall sense of student and staff safety (from in-school or external threats and harm)
2. Perceptions of physical safety
   - **a)** students' sense of physical safety in the school
   - **b)** adults' sense of physical safety in the school
3. Perceptions of emotional safety (e.g., intolerance for bullying and harassment, and support for sharing feelings)
   - **a)** students' sense of emotional safety in the school
   - **b)** adults' sense of emotional safety in the school
4. Feelings about the presence of security equipment (e.g., cameras, metal detectors, bars on windows)
5. Perceptions of student and adult safety in particular areas of the school or during certain types of activities (e.g., cafeteria, hallways, sporting events)
6. Whether students of color, those with disabilities, English language learners (ELL's), youth who self-identify as LGBT, or other populations feel they are less safe or disciplined or treated differently by officers than their peers

Perceptions of Police

B. What do surveys, discussions, and other feedback from students, families, teachers, other staff, and adults working in the school reveal about whether those responding perceive that police in schools increase or decrease these measures:

1. Actual school safety
2. Feelings of safety and security
3. Level of disorder and drug use in school
4. Arrest rates

* NASRO officers who were surveyed for this report listed this as one of the barriers that SROs in schools face.

5. Referral rates to services and diversion programs
6. Positive school climate indicators (e.g., school feels welcoming, secure, caring adults)
7. Attendance
8. Rates of bullying
9. Constructive officer relationships with parents, students, and community members
10. Students' positive decision-making/avoidance of risky behavior
11. Students' good citizenship

Roles of Officers Engaged in Partnership

C. Knowing that law enforcement officers must respond to serious crimes, threats to the safety of teachers and students, and charges filed by victims, what additional roles should officers have (whether based in the school or responding to calls or requests from the school)?

1. Crisis preparation (natural disasters, critical incidents)
2. Participation on school safety committees
3. Facility security planning and implementation (including crime prevention through environmental design)
4. Risky behavior intervention and prevention including drugs, weapons, gangs, and bullying
5. Other crime prevention and education activities (e.g., driving under the influence, texting while driving, or the impact of graffiti)
6. De-escalation of fights or threats to safety
7. Connections to diversion programs, supports and services in school, and referrals to school discipline personnel to help minimize arrests for minor misconduct
8. Mentoring (in-school or after-school)
9. Event and facility security, such as security at the start and end of school and traffic control
10. Encouraging reporting of sexual or child abuse
11. Monitoring of "spill-over" crimes from the community to the school and from the school to the community[100]
12. School-police athletic programs and other structured positive programming
13. Safe passage programs for students to and from school for high-gang and violence areas
14. Problem-solving partnerships to resolve crime and safety problems on campus
15. Coordination with local juvenile justice service providers to provide reentry assistance for students on probation or returning from detention facilities or alternative programs
16. Attendance and truancy reduction through problem solving
17. Liaison with community- and faith-based organizations and other service providers
18. Others

PREVENTION RESOURCE OFFICERS WEST VIRGINIA

The West Virginia Division of Justice and Community Services developed the Prevention Resource Officer (PRO) program in which state-certified police officers with at least one year of experience serve in middle and high schools. PROs work to maintain school safety while improving students' relationships with officers and their knowledge of criminal justice and law enforcement. As of March 2014, there were 68 schools with one PRO each.

The three main components of the PRO Program reflect shared school-police goals:[101]

- **Prevention**—The officers used a PRO-developed curriculum to teach classes on non-traditional educational topics such as criminal and civil law, domestic violence, drug and alcohol prevention, gang prevention, and bullying.
- **Mentoring**—Officers are taught conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques, as well as provided training on mentoring to build positive relationships with the students with whom they interact daily.
- **Safety**—Officers are trained to maintain school safety and prevent violence, as well as to respond to critical incidents and emergencies. Program guidelines specifically outline that PROs should not be employed to enforce discipline.

PROs are on duty a minimum of 35-40 hours per week. In addition to the regular school day and the requirement that they teach at least one non-traditional class per week, PROs typically attend extra-curricular activities throughout the school year. For more information on the PRO program including program guidelines, visit djcs.wv.gov/pro/Pages/default.aspx.

OFFICERS IN SCHOOLS: A COLLABORATIVE DECISION-MAKING TOOL *continued*

III. **Determine the Goals for a School-Police Partnership:** Based on the data and stakeholder feedback, school and police leaders should develop specific goals to address the identified safety and crime prevention concerns and the appropriate responses to help alleviate them. In addition, the school should determine if there are other services on-campus or off-campus police provide that would benefit the school.

In all cases, it is important to determine what types of activities are needed and which school personnel already conduct these activities. In most cases, school safety concerns require multiple responses from a variety of entities (including behavioral health services), with officers as a part of a comprehensive solution.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

Goals should be as clearly articulated as possible with discrete activities associated with each goal.[102] For example, if data reveal that the school and the community surrounding the school have a gang issue, one of the school's goals should be directly tied to reducing gang activity on school grounds, perhaps with the creation of a safe passage program for students having to cross gang territory, and working with at-risk youth to prevent gang involvement.[103]

Additionally, goals should be measurable so that schools and police can evaluate the effectiveness of the partnership, and make adjustments as needed.[104] At this early point, it is not necessary to determine if the activities would be carried out by a school-based officer or by a municipal, county, school district agency, or some combination. It is more important to stay focused on the school's safety and youth development goals—and whether officers can help schools achieve those goals.

A. What are the school's top safety, crime prevention, and youth development goals that might benefit from police involvement?*

1. Specific crimes or safety and disorder problems revealed by the data and school community surveys
2. Prevention programs deemed most important based on data or other feedback
3. Support for positive student decision making, good citizenship, and other youth development goals
4. Programs to facilitate positive interactions and increase comfort with law enforcement

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IV. **Determine the most appropriate partnership for school-police engagement to achieve safety and crime prevention goals for the school campus:** School-police partnerships should be built on a foundation of a shared vision and goals, ongoing communication, and positive interaction. When all levels of school personnel, students and their families, communities, and police work together to creatively tackle problems, a number of positive outcomes can be expected—including fewer arrests for minor offenses, greater connection of students to needed services and supports, reductions in particular crime problems, more frequent reporting of problems to officers, and decreased fear of crime and violence.

In determining the most appropriate partnership for a particular jurisdiction, it is helpful to explore four areas of inquiry:

- Has the school had previous experience with a school-based officer or a school-police partnership with off-campus officers?
- What is the school and police capability to address the identified problems and goals?
- What is the appropriate level of police involvement on campus to achieve identified goals and priorities?
- What are the principles and levels of commitment that are needed to ensure that schools and police agencies are fulfilling their responsibilities in the partnership?

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

This is the most difficult step in the process. The capacity of schools to address identified goals and the potential benefits that police could provide to supplement the work of school staff must be considered. It is important to understand the availability of police resources and the community and political issues that may be involved in deploying them.

The previous discussions about which activities would support a positive school climate and enhance school safety/crime prevention will help determine the type of partnership a school may benefit from and the level of officer involvement in various activities. Answering a single question or a combination of questions in previous sections of this tool in a certain way does not automatically translate into the need (or lack of need) for police officers on campus. Rather, the self-assessment tool is meant to shape a productive conversation among various stakeholders that can result in an effective data-driven school-police partnership plan. The tool should facilitate the identification of goals and help local leaders and school communities understand how police can help achieve those goals.

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* For more information on setting measurable goals, and for examples of school safety and law enforcement goals and data collection to measure improvement, see Raymond, B., *Assigning Police Officers to Schools: Problem-Oriented Guides for Police Response Guides Series No. 10, (Washington DC:* Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice, 2010): 27. (e.g., Goal: Reduce crime and disorder in and around the school; Data to collect: crime incidents by type in and near school, non-criminal disorder incidents in and near school, victimization in and near school).

Previous Experience with Officers Serving School

A. What prior experiences have there been with officers?

1. Does the school have a prior history with police officers on campus? If so, what was the level of engagement?
2. If the engagement ended, why did it end and were there consequences?
3. If the school district never had an on-campus police partnership, was there a specific reason not to engage in this type of relationship?
4. Were other partnership activities performed by school district, municipal or county officers who were not assigned full-time to the school (or who were part-time among several schools)?
5. Do other schools in the district have school-based officers affiliated with a school district police agency or municipal/county law enforcement agency; if so, what was their experience?

School and Police Capacity

B. What school and police capacity issues should be considered?

C. What funding does the school district have to support officers' efforts?

1. Are there school district police agency resources?
2. Is there funding to contract with local police agencies for on-campus assistance?
3. Is there funding for police-led or sponsored activities that may involve officers not assigned to the campus?

D. What funding do local and municipal agencies have to support officers in schools? Can adjustments be made to free up patrol or other officers to provide services and programming at schools?

E. How do the school-police partnership activities fit with other efforts to improve school climate, school safety, and behavioral health?

F. Are there school counselors, school psychologists, social workers, student support teams, or other in-school (or external partner) behavioral health staff with whom officers might coordinate to help support students and minimize their involvement with the juvenile justice system?

Making the Decision about Partnership Models

G. What is the appropriate level of police involvement on campus to address the identified goals and priority needs?

1. What did the analyses of data, surveys, and feedback from previous questions reveal about safety and prevention-related needs and goals?
2. What did the findings of the previous questions on the capacity of the school and police agencies reveal?

H. What are the best ways to achieve the goals using a combination of school and police personnel?

1. What remaining concerns or perceptions need to be addressed?

Commitment and Principles

I. Is there agreement on the level of commitment from school and police leaders to support the partnership?

1. What structures and supports do schools need to make the partnership work?
2. What structures and supports do the police need to make the partnership work?
3. Is there specific and clear communication of the commitment by law enforcement agency leader(s) to officers? And the same from education leaders to the school staff and community?
4. Are there clear and consistent communication plans that provide the opportunity for police and school officials to resolve problems that may emerge in the partnership?

COMMUNICATION PLANS

A strong commitment by police and schools must be reflected in communication protocols. School and police leaders need to communicate to their own personnel and to the school community a shared vision for the partnership at the start of an agreement and at the beginning of every school year. Police leaders should plan to meet regularly with key school personnel and other stakeholders to understand any fears and safety matters that exist on campus and how to best respond to issues as they arise. School and police leaders should establish protocols for regular communication and develop processes to review and help update school safety and improvement plans to achieve mutual goals.

At a minimum, school and police personnel communications should include the following:

- At the beginning of the school year, school-based officers and police and school leaders discuss the roles and responsibilities for on-campus and responding patrol officers. An orientation meeting should be held between identified officers, teachers, and all school staff as well as an assembly with students. To facilitate communications and common understanding of roles, school-based officers, educators, and school officials should participate in joint training with facilitated discussions about how student misconduct will be handled and when officers will be engaged with students.
- Regularly scheduled in-person meetings should be held between an on-campus officer and/or police leaders and the school principal to share information about safety issues and officer activities, and to review campus and related community incident data and other concerns. Officers and principals should also meet regularly to discuss follow-up actions regarding incidents and overall threat and security assessments.
- Regular conversations should be encouraged between officers, teachers, specialized instructional support staff, and student support teams to build a cooperative relationship that will help de-escalate situations, maintain safety, and result in lower arrest rates.
- Officers should also provide students and families with opportunities at school events to build positive relationships. They should participate in discussions with parents and community leaders through in-school forums and PTA meetings.
- Police relationships with the greater community clearly affect perceptions and openness to the presence of police in schools. Officers should be encouraged to meet with community members to discuss school-based efforts. The 2013 Intergovernmental Agreement signed between Denver Public Schools and the Denver Police Department, for example, requires that SROs meet with community stakeholders at least once per semester. School-based police officers and officers responding to schools should take this opportunity to expand their understanding of resources available in the school and community to support students as well.

OFFICERS IN SCHOOLS: A COLLABORATIVE DECISION-MAKING TOOL *continued*

J. Are school and police officials committed to taking the following steps needed to shape an effective partnership?

1. Developing and structuring a role for officers that fosters positive relationships with students, focuses on safety and prevention efforts instead of routine student discipline, minimizes the use of arrest for minor misconduct, and supports the goals and needs of particular schools identified through the collaborative process
2. Ensuring that officers working with students are properly selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated
3. Training teachers, administrators, staff, students and their families, and other adults serving students on the proper role of officers while present on school campuses
4. Establishing oversight and review processes to ensure that school personnel are appropriately asking officers to intervene
5. Using data to assess the effectiveness of the school-police partnership and to guide decision making
6. Entering into an MOU to ensure that there is a common understanding of when officers will be asked to respond to incidents, what activities they will conduct, and what information can be shared

The policy statements that follow include detailed discussions and recommendations that relate to each of these steps.

POLICY STATEMENT II

Educators and school officials do not call on officers to respond to students' minor misbehavior that can be appropriately addressed through the school's disciplinary process, and officers use their discretion to minimize arrests for these offenses when possible.

There is general agreement that officers engaged with schools should maintain or increase the safety of students, teachers, and other personnel through crime prevention, problem solving, education, and enforcement for serious offenses.[105] The greatest controversy about a police presence in schools relates to the arrest of students for minor offenses. Among the factors that should be considered in examining arrests are the extent to which school personnel are requesting officers to arrest or to respond to incidents on the school campus, the seriousness of the offense (including injury/harm and threats to safety), victims' complaints, and current school and law enforcement policies.

Concerns about arrests that occur in schools are especially significant for students of color and youth from other disproportionately impacted populations. Black and Hispanic students in particular are overrepresented in minor and discretionary-based ticketing and arrests.[106] When measuring impact, it is important to look at the racial breakdown of the full student

body to determine disproportionality. As with suspensions and expulsions, racial and ethnic disproportionality in school-based ticketing and arrest is experienced in many jurisdictions across the country.

- In New York City, 95 percent of all arrests in public schools studied in 2011–12 involved Black or Hispanic students. Their representation in the student population was approximately 30 percent of students.[107]
- In Connecticut in 2011, White students comprised 62 percent of the student population, and 35.3 percent of students arrested. Black children represented 13.2 percent of the state's students, and 27.6 percent of those arrested, while Hispanic students were 18.6 percent of the state's students, and 34.2 percent of those arrested.[108]
- In Florida, a 4-year study revealed that Black youth represented 22 percent of the overall youth population, and 47 percent of school-based delinquency referrals to the juvenile justice system.[109]
- In North Carolina, 43 percent of all delinquency referrals to the juvenile system were school-based; 46.2 percent of these were filed against Black students who made up 26.8 percent of public school students.[110]

The disparate impact of school-based arrests and ticketing on youth with disabilities and students who identify as LGBT is also an issue of great concern.[111] Data on arrests within LGBT or other populations may be difficult to attain because a number of schools and police departments do not have the mechanisms in place to collect such data; some groups are concerned about the collection of data that is not the result of self-identification, and fear that the information will not be used appropriately (especially individual-level data). Still, a number of examples have emerged that point to disparate impact on these groups:

- In Pennsylvania, a study revealed that students with an identified disability and in need of special education were disproportionately represented in school-based arrests. Though students with disabilities comprised only 13 percent of the school-aged population, they comprised 24 percent of the referrals to the police or juvenile justice system. In some schools, more than 50 percent of referrals to the police were for students who had a disability.[112]
- In Florida in 2011–12, youth identified as requiring an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program accounted for 29 percent of all school-based referrals to the juvenile justice system (a 5 percent decrease from 2010–11),[113] but represent approximately 18 percent of the student population.[114]
- A study published in the medical journal *Pediatrics* found that LGBT youth are more likely to be harshly punished by schools and courts than their non-LGBT peers; nonheterosexual adolescents had between 1.25 and 3 times greater odds than their heterosexual peers of experiencing a disciplinary sanction.[115]

There is certainly recognition that arrest is the appropriate response for serious offenses, particularly those involving violence or threats to student or teacher safety on a school campus. Officers also must be responsive to charges made by a victim or victim's parents/guardians. Officers increasingly recognize, however, that in many incidents involving minor offenses where they have broad discretion, students will have better long-term outcomes if they are referred to other school or community-based services rather than arrested. Accordingly, many agencies embrace an SRO/community policing philosophy in which problem solving and partnerships are used to engage students and their families in both preventing and resolving minor school-based incidents.[116]

Clear policies to minimize arrest are only effective, however, if they are backed up by access to alternative programs for students whose actions put them at risk. As the previous chapters on Conditions for Learning and Targeted Behavioral Interventions outline, many schools are developing alternative programs that keep students engaged in school and attempt to modify the types of behavior that increase the likelihood of arrest. It must be clear to all officers under what conditions these alternatives can be used to divert students to school-based services, supports, or restorative programs.

There is little doubt that some officers are arresting and/or ticketing students for minor offenses taking place on school campuses.[117] It is unclear how many of these arrests or tickets are related to victim complaints, calls to 911 from school officials for responding patrol officers, or school administrators' or teachers' requesting on-campus officers to enforce minor misconduct. Police officers have reported that teachers and school staff are not always aware of what will happen once officers are called to intervene, including the possibility of an arrest, or of the long-term consequences that a student may face if arrested. It is also unclear how many arrests are the result of off-campus patrol officers' or on-campus officers' direct observation and action.

In response to concerns about student arrests for minor misconduct, many police officials and a growing number of school administrators have expressed their opposition to expectations that officers should be classroom disciplinarians or arrest students for misbehavior that the school should resolve. Officers, teachers, and all adults working with youth in the school need to be clear on the appropriate role of officers in schools, particularly in regard to enforcement activities. This is best achieved by training officers, educators, and school officials together.

To formally address concerns about the use of arrests for minor offenses, many school districts and police are working together to develop policies and procedures. These policies may be prompted by judges, legislatures, advocacy groups, concerned parents and students, or by the school-police partners themselves. The policies outline specific roles that school and police personnel should take to minimize arrests and promote positive alternatives.[118] These policies may be memorialized in school codes of conduct and in MOUs between police agencies and school districts. Police efforts may also be part of larger collaborative efforts to improve outcomes for youth.

THE CAMBRIDGE SAFETY NET COLLABORATIVE CAMBRIDGE, MA

In Cambridge, Youth Resource Officers (YROs) not only interact with youth in schools, they also participate in the Cambridge Safety Net Collaborative in which they help "foster positive youth development, promote mental health, support a safe community and schools, and limit youth involvement in the juvenile justice system through coordinated services for Cambridge youth and their families."[119]

Partners include the Department of Human Service Programs, Cambridge Public Schools, and the Cambridge Health Alliance as well as other community-based service providers and the courts. Officers in the Youth Family Services Unit (YFSU) volunteer for the assignment; they are selected by a panel of collaborative partners and are trained to assume case management and diversion activities. Since the formation of the police department's YFSU, which includes school-based officers, the agency reports that there has been a 59 percent decrease in juvenile arrests for criminal offenses. Risk and needs assessments are conducted for those youth entering Safety Net and a Youth Service Plan is developed that outlines attainable, measurable goals designed to reduce the risk of future delinquency. YROs' jurisdiction extends from the school setting and school-sponsored activities to the "community involving students of the Cambridge Public Schools ...for incidents involving violence, attempted violence or threatened violence, the use, abuse and/or distribution of alcohol or other drugs, or other incidents."[120]

For more information, visit cambridgema.gov/cpd/communityresources/safetynetcollaborative.aspx.

The recommendations that follow include discussions of three central problems that emerged from the debate about officers in schools and that can be addressed by effective school-police partnerships:

1. The lack of clear criteria for when school personnel should involve officers in enforcement activities
2. Insufficient understanding among police and school personnel about the roles of officers, even when some criteria for their involvement have been established
3. Inadequate mechanisms for routinely tracking adherence to policies

RECOMMENDATION 1: **Ensure that policies clearly define officers' roles and the criteria for when to engage police in non-emergency situations that will help minimize arrests while addressing victims' needs.**

School districts and police often lack clear policies on the role of on-campus officers and guidance on when arrest or alternative actions should be used in response to student misconduct. The distinction between disciplinary matters for the school to handle and

misdemeanor criminal acts for police to handle can be blurred. Teachers, administrators, other school personnel, and police need a shared understanding that achieves school safety goals but also minimizes students' risk for arrest for minor offenses.[121] It is important for all students, parents, school personnel, and police officers assigned to school campuses to know who is responsible for addressing disciplinary matters such as dress code violations, cell phone use, or disrupting a class.[122] Similar clarity is needed about circumstances under which police will be called—for example, for possession of weapons, distribution of drugs, violence, and threats of violence. By reducing officers' involvement in classroom management matters, school administrators and police can help ensure that student and staff safety and crime prevention are the highest priorities.

Requesting Police Involvement

The first step is to make clear to all adults in the building, parents, students, and police personnel under what circumstances to involve officers in incidents with students. A growing number of agreements between police and school districts say "police involvement should not be requested in a situation that can be safely and appropriately handled by the District's internal disciplinary procedures."[123]

Policies related to when to involve officers and a clear definition of their roles in the school should be reflected in the school code of conduct and any formal written agreements between police and schools.[124] Consistent compliance with the related policies can build trust with both the school administrators and staff, and also with students and their families who know what to expect from the officers and what officers can expect from them.

Some codes of conducts have matrices that instruct when school personnel should involve police in student misconduct.* Increasingly, the levels of responses to student behavior are based on the student's age, grade, number of prior violations or offenses, and seriousness of the act. Examples of matrices that are meant to guide school personnel on when to involve police include the following:

- Baltimore City Public Schools' revised code of conduct (2012–13) contains a chart that lists inappropriate, disruptive, and/or illegal behaviors and the corresponding levels of disciplinary responses, including when it is appropriate to involve a law enforcement official.[125]
- In 2013, Buffalo Public Schools revised its Code of Conduct to include a chart listing specific offenses that "may" and "must" be reported to law enforcement. It states that law enforcement must be notified by the school principal or his/her designee for violations that "constitute or may constitute a crime, and which, in his or her judgment,

* School-police partnerships that formalize officer roles in MOUs are discussed in Policy Statement IV. Some police practitioners caution that overly broad exclusions of properly trained school-based officers preclude them from using their connections with youth to help de-escalate a situation before a safety threat arises.

substantially affect the order or security of a school, its students and/or its staff, as soon as practicable." When a student is referred to law enforcement, the principal/designee must submit a report describing how the student's conduct violated the Code of Conduct and constitutes or may constitute a crime.[126]

- Chicago Public Schools' Code of Conduct includes a chart distinguishing when the Chicago Police Department "may" be notified and when it "must" be notified about particular misconduct.[127]
- In Fort Wayne, Indiana, SROs are involved in student misconduct when specifically required by the Code of Conduct. The code lists a series of offenses and behaviors that require school officials to request SRO intervention based on grade level and seriousness of the offense.[128]
- The San Diego Unified School District's 2012 Uniform Discipline Plan stipulates that any municipal law enforcement personnel working on school grounds are "encouraged to exercise their authority to arrest in a manner that is consistent with the goals and requirements of the plan." The plan articulates six levels of graduated responses to misbehavior, in which typically only levels 5 or 6 may result in referral to law enforcement, and in those cases arrest should only be used as a last resort.[129]

This type of guidance is much more likely to be accepted when police and the school community are involved in its formulation. For example, in Chicago, parents, families, and community partners, including police, are invited to provide input on the revisions to the code of conduct every year. Similarly, Baltimore City Public Schools assembles annually a code of conduct committee led by the Superintendent (CEO) of the school district to review the code in partnership with students, families, police, and other school-based partners. This review helps ensure that the code is in compliance with state and municipal laws and offers the opportunity to approve or revise it before the school year.

Schools that do not have school-based officers should develop agreements with local law enforcement officials on when it is appropriate to contact them.[130] The Sacramento City Unified School District, for example, has instructed school officials who do not have their own SROs about the appropriate response to school events and safety needs (with options for calling an SRO from another school, municipal police non-emergency, or emergency response/911).[131] Although school principals or administrators typically make the decision to involve officers, all teachers and school staff should be aware of when to contact the police directly. If two students in the cafeteria exchange pushing and harsh words, school-based officers would be called to intervene and de-escalate the situation if the students did not respond to a teacher's, staff member's, or principal's instruction to stop. According to some code of conduct provisions, off-campus emergency police would be called only if there was an imminent threat to students' safety and/or the involvement

of weapons. As a result, most of these incidents would be kept within the school's disciplinary system rather than risking arrest of the students. If the school has an SRO, he or she may de-escalate a situation at the scene, or may also be informed of the incident if not present and be involved subsequently in discussions with the students involved. The ability of off-campus officers to de-escalate the scene or make an arrest may depend in large part on their training and whether there are clear policies for responding to students' misbehavior. Policies may also be developed to provide officers with alternatives to arrest or ticketing for students' truancy offenses. Some school districts have developed attendance resource centers/truancy diversion programs where students are assessed to determine why they are skipping school. Youth and families have the opportunity to meet with school staff and counselors, as well as community-based providers and police officers, to address any family challenges that may contribute to the student missing school.[132]

In identifying factors that may be keeping students from attending school, it was discovered that fear for their own safety was keeping some youth away. In some places such as Los Angeles, CA; Chicago, IL; Bridgeport, CT; and Detroit, MI, where there are areas with high levels of gang activity, police have provided safe passage to students who were not going to school because they feared crossing a rival gang's territory to reach the campus.[133] Attendance or truancy centers and safe passage programs have emerged across the country as ways to encourage attendance and keep students safe while reducing involvement with the juvenile justice system due to truancy.

Providing Guidance on Police Arrest or Alternative Actions

No universal or nationally accepted standards exist that explicitly state when a law enforcement officer should or should not be involved in enforcing student misconduct on school campuses.* School officials cannot dictate when officers can investigate or enforce laws on school campuses (so long as they meet legal standards) any more than officers can require school officials to suspend or expel students.[134] Both can, however, work together with other stakeholders to develop criteria that guide actions to address student misbehavior, minimize contact with the juvenile justice system when possible, and serve the needs of all students and staff for safe and productive classrooms. Based on feedback from project participants, consensus emerged on general guidelines as follows:

* The model MOUs and governance documents described in Policy Statement IV reflect the range of proposed approaches, but there is not a standard that has been universally implemented and evaluated.

ENFORCEMENT GUIDELINES

School-based officers should

- enforce the law for serious offenses and investigate or assist in the investigation of criminal offenses and threats to safety occurring on campus;
- be provided with guidance for using their broad discretion when responding to school-based incidents and use alternatives to arrests whenever possible; and
- not enforce school codes of conduct for violations that may also be considered minor offenses, but can be appropriately addressed through the school's disciplinary process.*

School administrators, police officials, and other school staff working on safety, student health, and school climate must work together to ensure that criteria to involve officers in incidents with students and the use of alternatives to arrest are clear and reflect their collective priorities.[135] The resulting policies on involving police should be reflected in school codes of conduct, MOUs, and training.

RECOMMENDATION 2: **Train teachers, administrators, staff, and police about when to directly involve officers with student misconduct on campus and about available alternatives to arrest.**

Police and school personnel must have a shared understanding of the school's mission and policies on the limited use of arrests and exclusionary discipline. In addition to the information conveyed by school leaders at the start of each academic term, all staff and police assigned or responding routinely to the school should be trained on when staff is to involve officers and on diversion programs or other alternatives to arrest. Ideally, this should be done jointly to ensure that everyone is getting the same information, although it may be more difficult for patrol officers than for school-based officers to coordinate training times. It is also an opportunity to talk through concerns and potential scenarios. The Montgomery County, MD Police Department, for example, conducts biannual joint training of public school administrators, SROs, and school district security staff that is coordinated by the Police Department's Patrol Services Bureau. When possible, school leaders should also be encouraged to attend training for school-based officers to understand how police are being prepared to work with students and staff. School-based officers are also encouraged to attend school staff training on positive behavioral interventions, creating a positive school climate, and effective responses to student misconduct.[136]

* As mentioned earlier, some state statutes have included disruption of class or interference with public education as misdemeanors, which can apply to a broad range of student misbehavior. These may also be listed as violations of the students' code of conduct. (Officers do not enforce code of conduct violations that are not crimes.)

Officers should have full knowledge of the incidents or behaviors that trigger a mandatory suspension or expulsion, particularly if it is also an arrestable offense. For example, drinking alcohol on campus may trigger a suspension, but an officer may still have the discretion to arrest or to recommend (or connect) the student to counseling services or a diversion program. Patrol officers specifically assigned to work with schools in their district need to know what resources are available to them for diversion rather than arrest.

A recent survey showed that SROs often refer youth to student support teams and/or restorative justice programs as alternatives to arrest.[137] One alternative to arrest that officers frequently have at their disposal is to involve school support staff and propose referrals to community-based organizations if warranted. In most instances, when an officer identifies a youth who needs support and services, the officer will either reach out to the teacher or guidance counselor to inquire about possible resources or send a student directly to the school counselor to receive these referrals. Although some school-based officers get involved in making referrals for support services for students and families, officers generally prefer to engage school personnel on these matters. Typically officers do not get directly involved with direct service agencies, although they may encourage youth to get involved in police-supported athletic or after-school programs. In many schools, youth who are consistently truant are not typically brought to the attention of the officer, but instead are referred by school counselors to programs and interventions aimed at reengaging the youth in school and working with the family to ensure their support.

Police departments are increasingly emphasizing crisis intervention training (CIT) for their officers.[138] Although typically focused on adults experiencing a mental health crisis, some agencies provide training for crisis intervention with juveniles.[139] For example, the Connecticut Alliance to Benefit Law Enforcement has established the Crisis Intervention Team—Youth (CIT-Y) training curriculum, developed by police officers for police officers to address youth-specific issues. The one-day voluntary training is provided by the Alliance to law enforcement officers who interact with youth (both SROs and county police). The training topics include adolescent development; trauma education and trauma-informed responses; youth crisis intervention, de-escalation and communication techniques; and community resources to link youth to supports and services.[140] In addition, some school districts, such as Bexar County, TX, and Oklahoma City, OK, are providing this training to school-based officers. All the SROs in Fort Wayne, IN, are also CIT-trained officers.[141] Officers are taught to de-escalate and stabilize a situation when possible so that the school and family can address the student's needs and behavior.

When the San Diego Unified Police Department recognized that calls for mental health-related issues were increasing across the district, it partnered with the local Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT), whereby officers can connect students to mental health clinicians when appropriate rather than arresting them. Officers receive specific training on when and how to refer cases to PERT.[142] In Anne Arundel County, MD, the police department has contracted with Partnership Development Group, Inc. to create a mobile crisis team that is available to every middle and high school in the county. When SROs or other school personnel call in the team for a student in crisis, the team first meets with the counselor and other school staff to discuss the situation and can then connect students with additional services and supports.[143]

There are times when a student may respond to a confrontation in a way that can escalate the problem or spark an arrest if officers are not properly trained.[144] For example, a teacher asks a student to stop talking on her cell phone during class. The student refuses, speaks disrespectfully to the teacher, and pushes the teacher away when he attempts to take the phone. The teacher asks a school-based officer to help remove the student or take the phone away. The officer reaches for the phone and the student also pushes the officer away. If not de-escalated, the encounter could continue to deteriorate and result in arrest. Many school-based officers are trained to use de-escalation techniques (oftentimes separate from CIT training) and to stabilize the situation and determine with school personnel what the appropriate course of action should be to resolve the situation.[145] In some cases the officer will simply write up an information report so the incident is on record, and then advise school staff about the problem, with the intention that the event will be handled through the appropriate disciplinary and support channels within the school.

RECOMMENDATION 3: **Collect and analyze school-based arrest and referral data to help determine whether school and police personnel are adhering to policies regarding the involvement of officers and responses to student misconduct.**

Once policies are in place to help minimize the use of arrests for minor misconduct and cross-training on procedures has been completed for school and police personnel, it is important to know if these policies are being followed and having the intended impact. It is also critical to see if they are contributing to an unintended disproportionate impact on particular groups of students. Collecting and analyzing data on the outcomes of police responses to student misconduct can help to accomplish this. The data can help determine whether officers and school staff may be "over-enforcing" in their responses to misbehavior in schools; whether there are diversion programs or other alternatives available to officers when they have discretion to arrest or not; and the types of offenses for which arrests are being made.

DATA TO TRACK REDUCTIONS IN SCHOOL-BASED ARRESTS AND DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT BRIDGEPORT AND HARTFORD, CT

In 2009, Connecticut launched the School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI) to reduce suspensions, expulsions, and arrests by diverting cases to the appropriate school and community-based support services. Initially funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change Mental Health/Juvenile Justice Action Network, SBDI is now overseen by Connecticut's Juvenile Probation Department of the Court Support Service Division (CSSD) and the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF).

As part of the SBDI in Bridgeport and Hartford, schools, police, and community partners are working with the Center for Children's Advocacy and the Center for Children's Law and Policy to track data on the reduction of school-based arrests for minor student misbehavior and the disproportionate impact on students of color. The following are among the reported strategies undertaken in these two cities:

- Creating school-police collaboration teams to monitor school-based arrest data
- Training for the Bridgeport Police Department on local diversion programs that are alternatives to arrest
- Arranging in Bridgeport for the Juvenile Review Board to review all misdemeanor arrests for possible diversion[146]
- Training for Hartford police officers on using Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services as an alternative to arrest for students in crisis[147]

These, and other efforts, are demonstrating results. Hartford's school-based referrals declined 78 percent from March through June 2012 when compared with the previous year. Bridgeport's school-based referrals declined almost 40 percent. The Bridgeport Police Department also reports referring more students to diversion options, particularly for minor offenses. Although almost all students arrested in Hartford and Bridgeport schools before the SBDI were youth of color, many of them are no longer involved with the juvenile justice system for minor misconduct.[148]

School administrators, law enforcement leaders, police officers, and school staff should review what data is available and which data may need to come from other sources.[149] Typically, an examination just of arrest and referral practices could include school data (e.g., incident, referral, attendance, disciplinary, and repeated offense) and police data (e.g., calls for service to local police agency, crime reports, and arrests). School administrators and police supervisors may also need to review or establish school-based officer activity logs and reports that include the desired information in a readily retrievable form.[150] Information should be collected on race, gender, age, grade in school, and offense type. To the extent possible, schools can provide additional information on students with disabilities and other specific populations. Additional guidance on data collection can be found in the Data Collection chapter of this report.

If officers are primarily employing alternatives to arrest or addressing incidents informally for minor offenses, over time there should be lower arrest numbers for student misbehavior, although the informal handling of incidents or de-escalation/prevention efforts may not appear in data collection efforts. Fewer cases being refused by the courts for lacking prosecutorial merit because they are school disciplinary matters may also reflect adherence by both the school and officers to new policies that minimize arrests.* Increases in referrals to restorative programs and behavioral health services can also be positive indicators of adherence to new policies. If arrest rates for minor offenses are not declining after the implementation of these policies, school and police partners need to examine what other factors might be affecting these outcomes.

School-police partners should schedule regular meetings to discuss the data, review particular incidents that provide context, and address any needs for change based on the information presented. These meetings can also focus on improving reporting processes. The data analysis may also reveal that a particular officer, teacher, or other school staffer is experiencing difficulty with the policy. This should be an opportunity for police supervisors and school leaders to learn more about the reasons why this is happening and to help with problem solving and additional supports. For example, an educator may need clarification on when and how to involve an officer in student misconduct and when to refer a student through the school discipline system, or an officer may need more training on employing alternatives to arrest that are available through the school. Alternatively, the analysis may reveal that the school does not offer enough alternatives to arrest, in which case the school should work with stakeholders to develop more options or programs for youth to reduce the use of arrest for low-level incidents.

An examination of the extent to which officers are employing alternatives to arrest is only one aspect of an assessment of how school-police policies are working. The measures on school-based arrests should be analyzed comprehensively as to whether conditions for learning also improve or worsen, how other partnership goals are being met, as well as other measures of a safe and supportive school climate.

* As the Data Collection chapter indicates, it is important to look at a number of measures to ensure, for example, that if arrests are down, serious school crimes and fear of crime are not escalating as a result.

POLICY STATEMENT III

In collaboration with school authorities, police leaders develop recruitment and selection processes to ensure that school-based officers are suited for the position and receive comprehensive training, support, and supervision.

The recruitment, training, and supervision of school-based officers are of tremendous importance to their successful placement on campuses. This is particularly true when trying to implement school-police partnerships that go beyond traditional enforcement activities. Much has already been said about the role of police in schools being largely dependent on the individual officer and how he or she is trained, supervised, and evaluated.[151] Research has shown that the quality and intensity of processes for selection, training, and supervision of school-based officers is highly variable.[152] Some states have passed statutes that mandate minimum requirements and training for school-based officers. For example, in Connecticut, the statute requires school security personnel to be law enforcement or retired law enforcement officers. The statute also requires that school resource officers receive training in children's mental, social, emotional, and behavioral health needs.[153] The parameters set out in state statutes, however, still allow for significant flexibility and discretion on what additional training individual districts and police agencies or even individual schools might provide.

Much of the discussion about officer selection and assignment in this chapter relates most directly to municipal and county SROs. School district police agencies may well use some of the same criteria and approaches during the interview process when candidates are considered for school police officer positions. Although some municipal and county police agencies may have rigorous processes to ensure that school-based officers have the desired qualities and experience, others may simply assign officers to schools through a rotational method. To ensure school-based officers are suited to working with youth in schools and are committed to supporting student success, jurisdictions have started to establish more rigorous criteria and systematized selection processes.

Still there is tremendous variation in how officers are trained before being placed in schools. Sworn officers in municipal police or county sheriffs' offices must meet state Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certification standards for any law enforcement officer in that state, but they may not receive training that prepares them for serving the school community. The standard academy training for state and local police officers does not fully prepare officers to work with youth or in a school setting. Officers assigned to schools either full or part time should receive training aligned with their specific school roles and responsibilities, including working with students and understanding issues related to cultural competence and equity. School district and municipal agencies use a variety of briefings and training that can range from an orientation by school officials on an officer's first day to 40 or more hours of intensive training specifically on working

with youth and school issues. Non-sworn security personnel must also typically complete certain training requirements before being allowed to work in a school. As with sworn officers, the content of training should align with their specific roles and responsibilities.

According to an analysis of state education statutes, states typically require school-based officers to meet the POST authorities' requirements for law enforcement officers in the state. Some states require additional training for working in schools and others authorize school boards and police training authorities to establish specific requirements.[154] States do not typically require that security personnel have the same training that sworn officers (or former officers) bring to the position. Although security officers may have different roles in schools than sworn officers, there is concern that security officers are not always trained to de-escalate incidents with students and to help minimize their contact with the juvenile justice system when appropriate. Virginia has addressed concerns about training and qualifications through a certification program for school security officers.

There are typically very limited opportunities for new school-based officers to gain practical knowledge from other SROs, as they are often somewhat isolated in assigned schools. This makes the supervisor's role that much more important to an officer's success. Supervisors can supplement formal training by helping municipal and county officers address the challenges of working on a school campus. Supervisors can positively influence the commitment and skill of school-based officers and other officers who work with youth, and are critical to implementing department goals and policies by communicating and translating priorities and information along the chain of command. Supervision for school-based officers varies significantly across the country. Officers typically need to report to both school and police agency leaders. Supervisors in municipal or county police agencies may oversee both SROs in various schools and officers conducting traditional policing duties in the community, which can make it difficult to remain connected closely enough to help officers navigate the policies and priorities of both schools and law enforcement.

The recommendations that follow draw from the vast amount of information that has been amassed on recruitment, selection, training, supervision, and evaluation of school-based officers, as well as promising practices from the field.

RECOMMENDATION 1: **Recruit and select officers who are committed to maintaining safety while promoting supportive learning environments and helping reduce youths' risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system.**

Police and school administrators should articulate a clear set of criteria to ensure that officers who are placed in schools have the appropriate background, experience, and interest in carrying out the responsibilities of the position. When developing selection criteria, school-police partnerships should refer back to the results of the local collaborative decision-making tool in Policy Statement I for defining how school-based officers will operate. Depending on the goals, the roles already articulated may include some or all of the following:[155]

- Student and staff safety/law enforcement officer
- Critical incident first-responder
- School facility and event security
- Teacher/leader on crime prevention, safety, and avoidance of risky behaviors
- Partner to school counselor or school-based teams in supporting youth and connecting them to services
- Positive role model and mentor
- Liaison to local law enforcement agency and programs for at-risk youth

To facilitate personnel matches, municipal and county police agencies should have written criteria for school-based officers that have been reviewed with schools. The literature and practitioners' reports of their selection processes indicate that criteria should take into account the specific skills, motivation, experience, and temperament needed for working in a school environment. School district police agencies should be working with school leaders to ensure that entry standards are also being met, but this is done primarily at the hiring stage and when making assignments for particular schools.

Most baseline selection criteria for municipal or county SROs include the following personal characteristics:[156]

- ***Experience working in a police force***

  Most agencies require officers to have at least 2 to 3 years of street experience to ensure that they are familiar with law enforcement protocols and statutes, and can apply the relevant knowledge to the school setting, including answering students' questions about policing and the law.

- ***Interest in working with youth within the age range of the school***

  Officers applying for school-based positions should express strong interest in working with students. Existing engagement in youth activities, such as mentoring and involvement in the police athletic league (PAL), is a useful indicator.

- ***Strong interpersonal skills***

  School-based officers should be able to build and maintain productive relationships and communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders, including parents, students, teachers, and administrators.

- ***Appropriate demeanor***

  Students, families, and school staff should see officers as approachable, likeable, and patient.

- ***Capacity to work independently***

  SROs can be isolated at times, functioning largely without direct daily supervision or collaboration with other officers. They must be comfortable working with minimal contact with their department and immediate supervisor. This is especially important for officers working in rural areas.

- ***Flexibility and an understanding that each situation is distinct, with a willingness to consider a range of factors in making decisions***

  Successful school-based officers examine all sides of a situation before determining action. Officers should have a desire to problem solve with others and consider all courses of action.

- ***Ties to the community***

  Familiarity with the school and community makes it easier for the officer to establish credibility and rapport. An officer who has had positive relationships with youth served by the school is especially beneficial for this role.

- ***Cultural competence and knowledge of bias issues in policing***

  The officer has shown sensitivity and understanding of racial, gender, and cultural differences and a knowledge and commitment to addressing issues of bias that can be present in policing.

There are also skills and expertise that officers either bring with them from previous assignments or that they can gain through training and field experience, such as the following:

- Knowledge of school-related/juvenile legal issues, including information sharing, how to interview youth, and the disproportionate impact of actions on particular groups of students
- Knowledge of the juvenile justice system
- Familiarity with school and social service resources
- An understanding of child/adolescent development and psychology, particularly trauma-informed care
- Sensitivity to the needs and culture of particular groups of students, including English language learners (ELL), LGBT, and students with disabilities or behavioral health issues
- An understanding of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), school safety technology, and implementation of security measures
- Trained in mediation and other conflict management strategies, including the application of de-escalation techniques for youth
- Proficient teaching and public speaking skills
- Experience using and analyzing data
- Trained in other areas identified as relevant to roles of new and in-service school-based officers[157]

Depending on the role and goals set out in the collaborative process for determining whether an officer should be placed on campus, officers' skills, training, and even personal characteristics may vary or be weighted differently. For example, if the local group determines an officer is needed on campus and should focus on addressing gang activity, that expertise and experience may be weighted more heavily than other factors. Any psychological evaluations and background/reference checks should be completed early enough in the process that significant training investments are not made for candidates who are not suited for placement in a school.

Recruitment

Once criteria are established, school-police partners can use them to recruit and select appropriate candidates. Researchers and practitioners believe that officers assigned to schools from municipal or county agencies should volunteer for the assignment to ensure that applicants are motivated to work with youth.[158] Allowing officers to volunteer has been shown to yield higher levels of commitment to the program.[159] There is consensus that officers assigned to schools should not be there because their department devalues them.[160] Officers under consideration should understand that school-based positions serve an important function in their local law enforcement agency. Officers should be aware of how their role would vary from that of a traditional officer, including possibly longer hours and different functions. They should be given details of the assignment that takes place during the school year, as well as in the summer, when the officer is engaged with the police department while taking a break from school-year work.[161]

Although police agencies use a range of recruitment strategies, most school-based officer candidates are identified and referred by their supervisors or fellow officers. Typically supervisors have a good sense of which officers fit the profile for a school-based position and would be successful in that role. Additional recruitment strategies include more traditional approaches such as announcements in police department job bulletins, internal newsletters, or email blasts; however, interviews revealed that these methods often do not yield the most qualified applicants. Most police agencies agree that the best way to recruit school-based officers is through direct referrals.

Some programs have also found that focusing on the positive elements of the position is useful in recruiting applicants. Incentives include working with youth and having the opportunity to make a difference in their lives, to gain access to specialized training and skills development, and to enjoy more favorable schedules with holidays and weekends off. Police departments should be very clear when recruiting and offering incentives to ensure that candidates are positively motivated by the work itself when considering and or applying for school-based positions.

SRO Selection Process

Municipal and county police officials should involve school leaders in the officer selection process to ensure that any specific concerns or expectations are addressed. Experience shows that buy-in from school leaders makes for an easier transition for officers and results in a stronger working relationship from the start.[162] A scan of SRO programs confirmed that when school district and school-level administrators were involved in the screening process, their acceptance of the program and the officers significantly increased.[163] Involving school personnel in the process also promotes transparency in the selection process and the criteria set for officers.

According to interviews conducted for this report, many municipal and county police agencies do not include school administrators in the selection process. A common challenge to engaging school staff in the process includes frequent personnel changes in both police departments and schools. Because of the desire to fill positions quickly, local police agencies feel they lack time to involve school principals in the decision-making process. In addition, staff responsible for hiring at the police agency may not always appreciate or agree with the value of involving particular school administrators in the process.

The first step in the SRO selection process should be a candidate's expression of interest. Many local agencies require applicants to submit a formal letter or application that details their interest in and any prior experience working with youth. Other agencies have an informal process whereby interested candidates share their knowledge and understanding of the SRO's roles and responsibilities, as well as previous assignments or experiences that demonstrate their suitability for those roles.

Following an expression of interest, municipal and county police agencies should include these steps as part of the selection process:

1. ***Initial Interview with Police Agency***

   This interview provides the first screening of potential candidates and is meant to determine each candidate's level of commitment to working with students. It provides an opportunity to identify what specialized training the officer may have that would lend credibility to his/her candidacy, as well as any additional qualifications such as experience as a sports coach, trained mentor, former teacher, substance abuse counselor, or civic leader that would translate to the position.

2. ***Second Interview: Panel Format***

   Police agencies should consider bringing together a panel for second-round interviews when time permits.[164] Panel members might include the following:

   - ☐ First-line police agency supervisor
   - ☐ School administrator

- ☐ Current school-based officer (if applicable)
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Educator
- ☐ Community member
- ☐ Student

This in-person interview focuses on observing a candidate's demeanor, communication skills, and responses to problem scenarios. Panel interviews can also reinforce the roles and expectations of the job and allow candidates to ask questions to ensure a good fit for all parties. (When panel interviews are not possible, the selected officer should meet with a group made up of school staff, students, parents, and others serving youth in the schools for an exchange of ideas and concerns, and to explain the officer's role.)

3. ***Reference Checks***

   Successful candidates from the interviews may also be subject to the following as part of their selection process:

   - ☐ A reference check for each candidate (e.g., current and previous supervisors and peers)
   - ☐ A thorough review of his or her personnel file*
   - ☐ Additional discussions with selection team or other stakeholder representatives

4. ***Group Decision-Making Process***

   Unless a final interview is needed to decide between the top candidates, the hiring panel should recommend a candidate to the police chief and school administrator. If reaching consensus proves difficult, the panel should provide the police chief with the scores for and all feedback on each candidate.

   Ultimately, the selection decision is made by the municipal/county law enforcement agency that assigns officers to the school. Feedback from practitioners indicates that every effort should be made to address school administrators' concerns and expectations before placement.† School administrators do not typically have veto power over the selection of a particular SRO, but if the selected officer is not a good fit or administrators have problems with the officer, the police agency should try to find a more suitable candidate.

* Must be done in accordance with union contract, if applicable.
† As school district employees, school district police chiefs and school district administrators typically have a working relationship and sit in on various district committees related to school safety. To the extent possible, school district police chiefs work to involve superintendents and principals in the selection of school-based officers and the identification of training topics.

COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS
DENVER, CO

According to the 2013 Intergovernmental Agreement between the Denver Police Department and Denver Public Schools,

"The Police Department and Denver Public Schools [DPS] understand the importance of ensuring that each SRO embraces and works collaboratively with school administration and understands the school culture they are a part of. Therefore, selection of SROs assigned to the SRO Partnership will be made through a collaborative process involving the Police Department and DPS school administration. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the District Commander from the district where the SRO is assigned to the SRO Partnership shall have the final decision as to the placement of each SRO."

For more information, see juvjustice.org/sites/default/files/ckfinder/files/Denver%20IGA.pdf.

RECOMMENDATION 2: **Ensure that law enforcement agencies and training authorities, in collaboration with school leaders, provide appropriate training for officers on school policies, practices, and working with youth in a school setting.**

Training is critical to meeting the mutual goals of an effective school-police partnership. Officer training has been provided by a combination of federal, state, and local law enforcement training agencies, private contractors, membership association trainers, internal police agency training programs, and others. Although there has been a lack of formal evaluations of the effectiveness of particular programs, anecdotal feedback is that the training provided by many of these sources is very useful and appropriate.

There are three levels of training for school-based officers:

1. All sworn police officers must be certified, which requires receiving basic academy training as prescribed by each state's Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) commission or council at a local or regional academy or training center.[165] This curriculum is for individuals who will be sworn law enforcement officers in the state and does not provide specific training on how to effectively manage school campus issues. Firearms training and certification is required of officers who will carry weapons.
2. Special post-academy training has been developed for school-based officers to help them better understand the needs of students, laws related to juveniles, the developmental stages of childhood and adolescence, CIT training, and other topics.[166] In surveys of school-based officers and school police association members conducted for the Consensus Project, most respondents indicated that school-based officers receive special training for working in schools. Active shooter training, critical incident management, and investigation protocols were among the leading training topics mentioned. Training may also include conflict resolution, developing positive relationships with youth, and cultural competency.[167] According to the surveys, typical basic SRO training is 40 hours.[168] There are other agencies that provide no special training to school-based officers beyond a basic orientation. Common challenges to providing adequate and appropriate training are funding, staff time, and the time and location of training sessions.[169]
3. Some police agencies also provide in-service training annually or periodically. Others make additional training for current SROs voluntary.

Although it is widely acknowledged in the field that a combination of both coursework and field training is helpful to prepare officers for situations they may encounter while working in schools, most agencies do not have adequate resources for current SROs to train officers being assigned to a school or to allow them to shadow experienced SROs in their schools.

COLORADO POST TRAINING FOR SROS

In accordance with the 2012 revisions to Colorado's state education statute,[170] in January 2014 the Colorado POST Board announced the release of a new SRO training curriculum to prepare law enforcement officers for school-based positions.

The new 40-hour training incorporates elements of crime prevention, intervention, and enforcement that are tailored for basic SRO training, including risk assessment and emergency planning; trends in school policing and mitigation of "school-to-prison pipeline; bullying, suicide, and drug-abuse prevention; and critical incidents." The SRO training also integrated additional specialized training related to Colorado-specific programs, including Safe2Tell,[171] active shooter training, and others. POST staff developed the curriculum after meeting with members of the Colorado Association of School Resource Officers and other SROs throughout the country.[172] The training is administered to SROs by vetted training providers, including NASRO and Corbin & Associates, Inc. The training is to be provided to all new SROs; those who have already completed a 40-hour basic SRO training course will not need to complete the training again. The Colorado POST is able to provide grants to cover training costs for some agencies, while others pay out-of-pocket.

The 2012 statute requires that all municipal and county law enforcement agencies in the state have at least one person trained in the new curriculum, with the goal of scaling up training to reach all school-based officers. Prior to 2012 there had been no training requirement for school-based officers in Colorado. Some agencies provided extensive specialized training, while others required officers to watch a 90-minute video describing some of the issues they might encounter when working in schools, and still other agencies did not provide any specialized training at all.

For more information, see coloradoattorneygeneral.gov/departments/criminal_justice/post_board.

Pre-service Training

Officers should receive as much training as possible before stepping onto a school campus. There are extensive resources and written guidelines for training school-based officers as well as curricula currently in use across the nation.[173] Basic SRO training is typically based on a 40-hour curriculum developed by the NASRO or one of the state SRO associations.[174] Training materials and programs have also been developed by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), individual police agencies[175] and their training authorities, or contractors.[176] Through the FY13 Community Policing Development (CPD) Program, the COPS Office is in the process of developing an integrated SRO model training and curriculum.[177] There are also Regional Community Policing Institutes throughout the country that provide related training, according to some of the NASRO survey respondents. Basic training for SROs typically focuses on a range of topics related to working in schools and with youth, including those topics compiled in Table 4.[178]

TABLE 4. SRO TRAINING TOPICS

Working in Schools	Working with Youth
■ History, roles, and responsibilities of school-based police ■ Legal issues involved in school settings and working with youth (e.g., searches, interviews/interrogations, investigation protocols, information sharing, selective enforcement, civil rights issues, mandatory reporting and arrest)[179] ■ Working collaboratively with school administrators and staff ■ Safe school preparation and critical incident management, including CPTED, security equipment use, and event security ■ Active shooter training ■ Threat assessment ■ School-based problem solving[180] ■ Policies and procedures for patrol officer-SRO interactions ■ School and community resources for student services and supports ■ School procedures and guidelines for student referrals, notice for arrests, disciplinary actions for codes of conduct violations vs. serious offenses ■ Using outcome measures and data analysis tools to track outcomes and identify and prevent unintended consequences	■ Child/youth development issues, including common characteristics and stressors associated with different developmental stages as well as the challenges for students stemming from events like the transition from middle to high school ■ De-escalation techniques and alternatives to arrest, such as conflict resolution, peer mediation, and restorative justice programs that stress accountability, empathy, and prosocial skills rather than punishment ■ Mental health interventions[181] ■ Underlying causes for youth behavior such as child trauma, abuse, and neglect[182] ■ Current juvenile trends, including gang involvement, homelessness, and drug abuse ■ Children with disabilities and special needs, including familiarity with federal laws ■ Cultural competence and issues related to the impact of law enforcement action on all students ■ Establishing positive relationships and appropriate boundaries with students ■ Teaching and classroom management strategies for police-led education programs ■ First aid

To the extent possible, new officers should have the opportunity to shadow veteran school-based officers in the field.[183] These experiences provide critical on-the-job training and allow new officers to observe how to positively interact with students and strategies for building productive relationships with school administrators, and to ask questions about issues as they arise. Law enforcement agencies can support other peer-to-peer learning opportunities for all officers on the job through informal and formal mechanisms (for example, coaching and mentoring) to share concerns, barriers to effective practices, and other issues.

Advanced In-service Training

School-based officers should receive ongoing training that is formalized in a governance document (such as an MOU) to ensure that police and school officials have a shared understanding of the support that will be provided to officers.[184] Many individuals and organizations recommend that 10 hours of in-service training be provided to officers annually.[185] The content of training should be tailored by both school and police leaders to ensure that officers have the best, most up-to-date information pertaining to the operation and safety of the school campus, including updates on laws and the school code of conduct, changes in school policy, and key issues facing educators. Most administrators do not want school-based officers out of the building for long periods of time. To minimize disruption, in-service training should be scheduled on non-school days, professional development days, and over the summer when possible.[186] In-service training can also be provided on topics that directly align with the roles outlined by the school/police partnership, such as the following:

- Gang Resistance Education And Training (GREAT)[187]
- Active shooter/critical incident planning and safety[188]
- Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)[189]
- Community policing
- Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for Youth[190]

FLORIDA SRO PRACTITIONER AND SPECIALIST DESIGNATIONS THE FLORIDA CRIME PREVENTION TRAINING INSTITUTE (FCPTI)

FCPTI established the SRO Practitioner and Specialist designation programs to formally recognize officers who have excelled in their work and who demonstrate a commitment to the SRO program through advancing their education and knowledge.

SRO Practitioner

The SRO Practitioner designation is awarded to experienced SROs (employed as a certified law enforcement officer for at least three years) who attend a minimum of 130 hours of SRO-related courses through FCPTI. Coursework for this designation includes successfully completing the 40-hour basic SRO training and 90 hours of additional SRO instruction offered through FCPTI.[191] Courses range from conflict resolution and cultural competency to critical incident planning and school-based threats.

SRO Specialist

The SRO Specialist designation recognizes those SROs who have earned 88 hours of SRO-related courses through the FCPTI. The SRO Specialist designation has two coursework tracks:

1. SROs who have completed FCPTI's 40-hour Basic Training class can earn an SRO Specialist designation by completing 24 hours of SRO Intermediate Training and 24 hours of SRO Advanced Training. These officers are also able to work towards the Practitioner designation.
2. SROs who have not completed FCPTI's 40-hour Basic Training class can also earn an SRO Specialist designation by attending one conference of the Florida Association of School Resource Officers and 64 hours of FCPTI SRO courses. To work towards the Practitioner designation, these officers must take FCPTI's Basic Training class.

The designations distinguish these officers as leaders in their agencies, in their communities, and at their schools. Both designations expire after two years and may be renewed by completing eight hours of SRO training. For more information, see fcpti.com/fcpti.nsf/pages/SROPD.

Cross-Training

As previously noted, surveys and other feedback indicate that cross-training of police and school personnel is helpful to ensure that officer roles and responsibilities in the classroom and on the school campus are clear.[192] When appropriate, officers should be encouraged to attend school-based training for educators and other staff on issues related to school climate, encouraging positive behaviors, developing positive relationships with students, and minimizing the use of exclusionary discipline and arrests. The same opportunities should be offered to school leaders so they may be more aware of what SRO training is being provided to the school's officers. Joint training can happen after school, over the summer, or during professional development days as well. Training for school-based officers and school staff should focus on the following:

- Strategies for improving school-police partnerships and ways to integrate officers into the school's culture
- Specific roles and responsibilities of officers working in the school and any mandated reporting requirements among school staff[193]
- Legal issues regarding information sharing between school personnel and police, as well as an understanding of other issues regarding search, interviews, and more[194]
- Teacher, staff, and officer roles in responding to victims, enforcing code of conduct violations vs. situations that call for officer involvement, and the use of arrests
- Alternatives to out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and arrest when appropriate

Although not the focus of this report, officers and school personnel should be aware of the extensive resources available on preparing for and responding to disasters, critical incidents, and active shooter situations.[195]

SCHOOL SAFETY ONLINE TRAINING SERIES

In April 2013, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) launched a series of online trainings related to school safety. The free, interactive trainings are intended to help law enforcement, other public safety personnel, school officials, and school safety team members better understand steps that can be taken to secure schools. Participants pace themselves through the introductory-level training, which assists them in developing crisis response strategies and plans to prevent and respond to events that threaten the safety of learning environments.[196]

Training topics include the following:[197]

- **Assessing School Safety**

  Training focuses on identifying needs and strategies for performing a comprehensive school safety assessment. Participants learn about the role of safety in supporting student success and what tools can be used to assess the safety of the school campus.

- **Forming a Safe School Planning Team**

  This training helps participants understand why it is necessary to create a safe school planning team, as well as how school-police partnerships can effectively identify potential members, roles, and responsibilities for the team.

- **Preparing for a School Crisis**

  Participants examine several tools that can be used in preparing for a school crisis, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency crisis management model and incident command system, and review how to include these strategies in their school safety plans.

- **Responding to a School Crisis**

  Participants learn evidence-based strategies for responding to a crisis or critical incident and discuss how to incorporate these strategies into school safety plans.

These trainings build on IACP and OJJDP's classroom training course, "Partnerships for Safe Schools."[198] Survey responses about the online training have been very positive. More than 90 percent of respondents reported that the trainings increased their knowledge of the topic, that they were able to apply what they learned to their job, and that they were satisfied with the overall quality of the training.

STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH

Strategies for Youth is a nonprofit organization that works with districts and schools to provide training around the role of officers and their responsibilities. The organization provides training to school-based officers, administrators, counselors, teachers, and other staff in small group settings on a number of topics, including the following:

- Child and adolescent development
- Impacts of exposure to trauma
- Demographic factors affecting home/school lives of children
- Cultural factors impacting youth behavior
- Juvenile law for officers in schools
- Implicit bias
- Asserting authority effectively with youth
- Understanding how youth perceive assertion of authority
- Teaching officers how to recognize signs of prevalent mental health issues and respond appropriately

Sessions are interactive and include role-playing with youth. The organization also provides training to students about code of conduct and disciplinary rules and regulations. For more information, visit strategiesforyouth.org/.

RECOMMENDATION 3: **Tailor school-based officers' supervision and evaluation to their defined roles and goals in order to effectively support officers' efforts and to monitor their progress.**

Many municipal and county law enforcement agencies struggle with the inherent challenges in supervising officers who are stationed in schools. Effective supervision not only provides regular oversight, but also helps reassure officers that they are a valued part of the police agency. Supervisors must make sure the goals of the SRO program are being met, support officers' professional growth, keep officers integrated in the police agency as well as the school, and help identify early any problems with how officers are engaging with students or staff.[199]

Although supervision structures may differ by the type of school-police partnership,[200] superiors in their own police department typically supervise school-based officers.[202] Many municipal and county agencies do not have a dedicated supervisor for school-based officers; instead, these officers may report to the same supervisor as non-school officers. Because supervisors typically oversee multiple officers, supervision for school-based officers often consists of informal check-ins and quick visits to the school site to speak with the officer and school administrators to ensure that any issues or conflicts are being addressed. Municipal/county school-based officers do not typically attend roll call or check in with supervisors at the end of shift.

Municipal and county agencies need to be cautious about using traditional measures to monitor the progress of or evaluate school-based officers in the same way as other sworn personnel without considering school factors and the distinct goals of the position. Just as many police agencies revised their evaluation process to meet the goals of community-oriented policing, there is a comparable need to ensure that school-based officers are being evaluated on achieving the goals and objectives in the school environment.

Based on a review of the literature and conversations with practitioners and experts in the field, the following steps are recommended as part of a comprehensive supervisory structure for school-based officers:

Establish clear reporting lines

Decisions related to the supervision of a school-based officer depend on the police agency's capacity, available supervisors' workload, and location. The supervisor should work with school administrators who have daily contact with officers and should monitor their progress and activities. Specific supervisory roles should be articulated through the MOU for municipal/county agencies or other governing documents between the school district police agency and the education authority. It is important for the police supervisor and school administrator to recognize that it is a challenge for officers to report to school administrators while also being

accountable to supervisors in the police agency. Ongoing communication will help resolve conflicts in priorities, activities, and goals. Officers should be engaged in these conversations so they can help identify any needs for additional training or support.

Supervisors should be carefully selected from among former school-based officers or a juvenile unit and briefed on school-related concerns. Some principles of effective supervision include the following:

- Maintain regular contact, including email and telephone communication
- Visit the school campus to observe officers in a variety of contexts
- Meet regularly with school administrators
- Periodically bring officers from various schools together to discuss common challenges
- Maintain an open-door policy
- Regularly monitor officers' progress through in-person meetings as well as email and activity logs or reports

SRO CENTRAL COMMAND AND STUDENT OUTREACH ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MD

The Anne Arundel County Police Department is the fifth largest police department in Maryland, with approximately 660 sworn officers. Of these officers, 21 of them, along with two sergeants and one lieutenant, make up the School Resource Unit. Members of the SRO unit are employees of the police department, which provides all salaries and training. The police department hosts a large central command whereby all SROs and county officers report to a single location to facilitate coordination, training, and information sharing. Given the decentralized nature of SRO work, having a central command provides opportunities for direct communications among officers and encourages peer supports.

The agency also has received recognition for its Speak Out software application for smart phones, which allows students to anonymously report incidents. Because of challenges in convincing students of the anonymity provided, overlapping reporting systems are also promoted, such as a student safety hotline. Posters and materials with QR codes help students to reach out using the technology they are most comfortable with. For more information, see naco.org/newsroom/countynews/Current%20Issue/10-22-2012/Pages/Countypolicecreateappgearedtoschoolsafety.aspx.

Performance measures should be tailored to the responsibilities of school-based officers[202]

When monitoring the progress of school-based officers and conducting performance evaluations, supervisors should examine the full range of activities related to the officer's essential functions and duties within the school. Competencies that school-based officers should be able to demonstrate will differ, but may include any of the following:

- De-escalates conflict effectively
- Uses problem-solving skills
- Makes appropriate referrals to community and in-school resources
- Responds appropriately to requests for assistance and uses discretion properly
- Raises awareness among students about the harms of alcohol and drug abuse, gang involvement, and other risky behaviors
- Ensures that student and staff are aware of safety precautions
- Contributes to safety planning
- Increases feelings of safety among students and staff
- Works effectively with school faculty and administrators
- Respects staff, students, and families
- Exhibits strong interpersonal relationships with students and staff while maintaining professionalism and appropriate boundaries
- Demonstrates cultural competency.
- Is easily accessible
- Demonstrates knowledge about youth issues
- Arrives at work on time and dresses appropriately
- Actively participates in team meetings as needed

Measure progress and determine areas of support that officers need when working in or with schools

Supervisors should conduct periodic reviews to monitor the performance of officers working in schools and identify areas in which additional support would be useful. Supervisors can determine the extent to which officers exhibit the competencies listed above through a range of means and information sources. Recognizing that school administrators and staff have the most frequent contact with officers, every effort should be made to get their input.[203] Mechanisms for collecting information can include the following:[204]

- ***Review of activity logs***

  If the officer maintains an activity log, these entries can provide an opportunity for officers to describe their day-to-day functions and accomplishments. Supervisors should review logs regularly with an eye toward assessing the officers' problem-solving and diversion work meant to help students succeed at school, make healthy decisions, and reduce arrests for minor offenses. Notes on the logs can help inform an annual assessment as well.[205]

- ***Review of case or arrest reports***

  Although all police agencies require supervisors to review officers' arrest reports, supervisors of school-based officers should pay particular attention to them. Because arrests of students are often an option of last resort, these should be reviewed to ensure that actions are consistent with policies and guidance. They may also alert supervisors to situations when officers are feeling pressured to make arrests.

- ***Review of complaint history***

  Formal complaints made against the officer should be examined. Supervisors should also keep track of how complaints were addressed and resolved. (Also see the MOU discussion in Policy Statement IV about complaint processes.)

- ***Field observations***

  Supervisors should visit the school to speak with officers and school administrators, and observe officers' interactions with youth. If possible, supervisors should observe officers in a variety of settings, including any training or teaching activities they perform.

- ***Meetings with officers***

  Through regular meetings with groups of school-based officers, supervisors have an opportunity to share department and programmatic information, identify problems that officers collectively may be having, and further develop a rapport among them. These meetings also provide some context when supervisors are assessing how an officer is performing in a particular school.

- ***Meetings with school administrators and staff***

  Meetings that include teachers, administrators, and police provide a forum to engage staff and officers on key issues at school, as well as help to identify themes for annual in-service training and future objectives.

- ***Survey data***

  Surveys help provide supervisors with a better understanding of student, staff, and family perceptions of safety in the school building, the officer's role, and their interactions with the officer. Some of this data may already be collected as part of a school climate or safety planning survey. Survey data can also provide information on stakeholders' opinions of the officers' performance in such areas as visibility, rapport with students, communication skills, and impact on the school environment.

- ***Additional stakeholder input***

  Supervisors can seek out additional stakeholder input through focus groups and individual conversations with students, staff, and parents.

Given limited time and competing demands, not all of these measures may be undertaken, but regular contact with the officer and school will provide continuous information for the supervisor and feedback to the officer. Performance monitoring should be used as an opportunity to promote discussions about any modification to the school-police partnership goals or desired activities for the officer. Supervisors should create an environment where officers feel they can openly ask questions, reflect on practices, and seek out resources to improve their skills. Officers and their supervisors should collaboratively develop a growth plan that addresses any issues uncovered through the review process, and outlines steps to build competencies in areas of personal interest or school need. Supervisors should establish a follow-up process and timeline to review the officer's progress towards goals.

More about evaluating the school-police partnership is reviewed in Policy Statement IV. Additional resources are available to help guide agencies through the process of developing performance evaluations for school-based officers and programs.[206]

POLICY STATEMENT IV

Written agreements formalize key elements of the school-police partnership that are periodically reviewed and refined based on data and feedback from a diverse group of stakeholders.

Most school-police partnerships are formalized through a memorandum of understanding (MOU), which is also sometimes called a memorandum of agreement (MOA). MOUs may be legally binding agreements if they meet all the requirements of a valid contract. It is important that MOUs set clear guidelines and expectations to help keep the school community safe and protect the dignity and rights of all students. These agreements must also take into account all relevant federal, state, and local mandates.

Although there are model MOUs, it is important for jurisdictions to tailor agreements to their distinct needs and resources. All of the major activities and decisions described in this chapter can be reflected in these written agreements: defining the type of partnership; determining when to involve officers in incidents at school; and deciding who will hire, train, supervise, and evaluate officers serving schools. These agreements are typically between the municipal/county police department and the school district.

In areas where there is a school district police agency, however, the school district police agency may be party to an MOU with a municipal or county police department that outlines whether officers will receive the same training as municipal or county police and information on how enforcement actions will be coordinated. The school district police agency may also have a mutual aid agreement with the local municipal or county law enforcement agency, particularly where agencies have redundant services or overlapping jurisdiction.

Recommendations 1 and 2 focus on the legal issues and information-sharing principles that all partners should be aware of before entering an MOU. The remaining recommendations reflect the respective roles and responsibilities of schools and law enforcement agencies that advance collaborations while respecting one another's authority.

RECOMMENDATION 1: **Understand the legal issues that school-based officers and other police personnel serving schools encounter.**

In developing an MOU, there are a number of legal issues that must be considered. Unfortunately, many of these matters lack bright-line rules and case law is sometimes conflicting or unclear. Consulting legal counsel is critical for ensuring that all federal, state, and local mandates are met. Although this section primarily reviews federal mandates regarding information sharing and other aspects of school-police partnerships, all governing authorities must be considered. Much of the literature and training related to the legal issues that officers face while working in schools tends to focus on two topics:

1. ***Information Sharing***

- ***Who is receiving information:*** What information can be shared with SROs or other school-based officers as well as officers not based on school campuses
- ***Who is releasing information:*** What information SROs and other officers can disclose to school officials, their municipal or county law enforcement agencies, or other parties
- ***What information is being shared:*** Whether there is personally identifiable information in student educational records, directory information, health records, criminal records, or other types of information
- ***Circumstances under which sharing is permitted:*** For what purposes the information will be used by officers

2. ***Governing legal standards for searches:*** Officers may be subject to different standards for searches depending on the purpose of their search and other factors. In discussions with officers and others in the field conducted for this report, the greatest concerns centered on searches of property, which is the focus of the text below. (There are extensive resources on personal searches, interviews/stops, and other related matters that are referenced below as well.)

A cursory review of these issues is provided below to help readers ask the right questions and know when to involve legal counsel before memorializing policies and practices in an MOU.

Legal Issues Related to Information Sharing

With regard to information sharing, the most important factors that school and police officials must evaluate are how officers are defined and classified when they are trying to access information for a particular purpose. Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), education agencies (schools and districts) have discretion to define when school-based officers are considered "school officials" for information-sharing purposes and what activities are considered to have "an educational purpose." These definitions will help determine what information can be shared with and by police, under what circumstances, and with whom the information can be shared. Some questions for determining legal obligations include the following:

- Is the officer considered a "school official" under FERPA?
- Does the officer have "a legitimate educational purpose" for accessing student education records? And is the officer limiting use of that information ONLY to educational purposes?
- Are the school-based officers designated as a "law enforcement unit" under FERPA with information that is separately collected and maintained by officers for law enforcement purposes?
- Is information gathered by officers used for a law enforcement purpose alone or in combination with educational purposes?
- Is the emergency exception under FERPA that authorizes officers to access student education records applicable?

As detailed in the Information Sharing chapter, most schools and districts have adopted the model guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Education for notifying students and their parents of their privacy rights. This model notification includes a broad definition of "school officials" that includes school-based officers. This generally means that school-based officers do have access to student education records without prior parental consent if the information is being used for legitimate educational purposes only. That information cannot then be used or shared to make arrests, however, or be used for other law enforcement purposes absent an emergency.

Where school-based officers are considered to be "a law enforcement unit" under FERPA (which can include a single officer) and have collected and maintained their own separate student records (for example on gang affiliations, drug activity, arrests, or other information) for law enforcement purposes, the law enforcement unit has control over those records and with whom that information can be shared.

These statements are somewhat of an oversimplification and do not take into consideration all exceptions and court interpretations of the law. For more detailed descriptions of the federal laws governing information sharing for officers and specific analyses around scenarios involving on-campus and off-campus responding officers, see the Information Sharing chapter of this report.

Legal Standards for Searches

Whether a municipal or county SRO or school police officer is considered a "school official" is also a critical determination when it comes to the search standards to which officers are subject. The courts have historically held school officials to a lower standard for searches than patrol officers. The landmark case is *New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1985, in which the court determined that "school officials" need only have a "reasonable suspicion" that an illegal act or school rule has been violated (as opposed to the "probable cause" standard that law enforcement officers must meet).[207] The majority of courts across the nation have found that SROs and school police officers are considered school officials and only need to meet reasonable suspicion standards so long as certain conditions are satisfied. The overarching question seems to center on whether the officer assigned to the school is directed by and answers to the school or to the law enforcement authority in carrying out the search. There are conflicts, however, and courts may consider a number of additional dynamics.