An Investigation of School Resource and Safety Programs Policy and Practice in Virginia

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Executive Summary

This study discerned a great deal of information from surveys, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), focus groups, and interviews. This executive summary will provide some of the top-level findings regarding School Resource Officer (SRO) and School Security Officer (SSO) programs in Virginia and direct the reader to where more detailed discussion of each finding can be found.

Our survey of SROs their law enforcement supervisors (SRO Supervisors), administrators who work with them (School-Based Liaisons), and SSOs, and the School Safety Survey provided the foundation for much of the quantitative analysis. Based on the School Safety Survey, 58.6% of Virginia schools have an SRO and/or an SSO. SROs tended to be male (81.7%), Caucasian (80.7%), and an average age of 43 (range 24–70). SSOs however had much more diversity across the board, with 62% male and 51.9% African-American, and they were somewhat older, with an average age of 52 (see Table 1).

We asked SROs to provide information on the education and training that they have received. Among our respondents ($n = 202$), 13% had a high school diploma or equivalent, 35.1% had completed some college, 17.3% had earned an associate's degree, 25.2% had earned a bachelor's degree, 5% had completed some graduate school, and 3.5% had earned a master's degree. With regard to law enforcement specific training they have received, SROs indicated that 55.6% of their training applied to all settings, whereas 22.49% of their training was specific to the school setting. When asked in which areas SROs think they need more training, the top five areas included working with students with special needs, mental health issues in childhood and adolescence, dangerous and threatening students, bullying, and establishing effective working relationships with parents. One especially interesting finding in this area emerged when we asked

SROs, their law enforcement supervisors, and their school liaisons about areas in which SROs would benefit from more training. Although most all areas tracked higher and lower together, indicating an agreement on whether SROs could use more training, working with dangerous and threatening students was one area that diverged. School liaisons felt as if SROs did not need as much training in those areas whereas both SROs and their law-enforcement supervisors believed they did need more training in working with dangerous and threatening students.

As with the SROs, we asked SSOs to describe their educational background and training experiences for their position. Among our respondents ($n = 108$), 13% earned a high school diploma or equivalent, 28.7% completed some college, 14.8% earned an associate's degree, 29.6% earned a bachelor's degree, 3.7% completed some graduate school, and 7.4% had earned a master's degree. With regard to other training the support of their position, 41% of SSOs reported previous experiences as law enforcement officers. When we asked SSOs what topics they would benefit from learning more about, the top five look very similar to those selected by SROs. The most commonly endorsed training areas were working with dangerous/threatening students, mental health issues in childhood and adolescence, de-escalation techniques, working with students with special needs, and bullying. A majority of SSOs (57%) reported training in de-escalation techniques (e.g., Mandt System or Handle With Care) and 78% agreed or strongly agreed that SSOs need more training in their role as an SSO.

There were some interesting findings with regard to the day-to-day activities and duties of both SROs and SSOs. SROs, their law enforcement supervisors, and their school administration liaison were all asked to reflect on how SROs spend their time among the four common job roles: law enforcement officer, community liaison, law-related educator, role model or mentor. Although there was a great deal of agreement overall with regard to how much time

was spent within each role, there was a greater similarity between the percentages reported by SROs and their liaisons within the school. Perhaps not surprisingly, the SRO law enforcement supervisor estimated more time spent in the law enforcement officer role and consequently less time in the role model or mentor role (See Figure 2). Another notable area with regard to SRO duties was that 65% of SROs said that school faculty or staff request assistance from the SRO relating to bullying on an hourly, daily, or weekly basis. SRO law-enforcement supervisors also reported that the majority of their SROs (63.9%) are asked to provide assistance with school disciplinary issues that do not involve criminal activity or threats to public safety on an hourly daily or weekly basis. From the qualitative data, SROs are clear that they do not take action with regard to these sort of disciplinary issues, but it seems that school staff are consulting them and seeking their guidance with great frequency.

SSOs reported a variety of tasks that are part of their role. They described their roles and the percentage of their time spent with in each as: patrolling school areas in order to prevent crime and ensure safety (43.1%), detaining students who are violating the law or school board policies (11.4%), investigating violations of school board policies (11.3%), assisting with disciplinary incidents (17.2%), and other (17%). A plurality of SSOs (19%) reported their assistance was requested for student physical altercations once per month, with 11% reporting they receive such a request each week, 6.7% each day, and 6.1% each hour. When SSOs were asked to describe how they typically become involved in disciplinary incidents, 40.7% reported that a school employee requested their assistance, 38% of the time they were present in the area when an incident began, and 8.3% of the time a school employee requested their presence in advance of the meeting or event that was likely to escalate.

11

Accompanying each of our research questions is additional perspective from our qualitative inquiry. The qualitative findings present data and perspectives from our content analysis of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), focus groups, and individual interviews. The MOUs help us to understand how the relationship between school districts and law enforcement in Virginia are codified, what issues are anticipated, and how SRO duties are described. Focus groups were held with SROs, SSOs, and school leaders to hear about the day-to-day workings of the school resource and safety programs in Virginia. Additionally, individual interviews were held with SROs, SSOs, school leaders, and law enforcement supervisors from Virginia who are considered exemplars in their roles. The focus groups and interviews provided rich descriptions of the training, roles, responsibilities, and tasks of the people charged with keeping Virginia schools safe, and helped to provide more depth of understanding to the quantitative data derived from the surveys. Some of this qualitative perspective is woven into our findings for each of the research questions, and a more focused presentation of the qualitative research findings is presented in the appendices.

An Investigation of School Resource and Safety Programs Policy and Practice in Virginia

Introduction

Reported data suggests an overall downward trend of school violence in the U.S. (Musu et al., 2019), yet, recent, high-profile school shootings and growing student activism around the issue have led to calls for improved school safety. Efforts to enhance school safety in the U.S. frequently involve increasing police presence in schools. Since the first formalized school resource officer (SRO) program began in Flint, Michigan, in the 1950s, the number of police officers in schools throughout the country has significantly increased, with the greatest gains seen in the 1990s to the present (Counts et al., 2018; Weisburst, 2019). While the amount of research about police officers in schools has grown in recent years (Javdani, 2019), many questions remain about the effectiveness and impact of SRO programs and little research exists on the topic of school security officers (SSO) programs.

In many Virginia schools, ensuring school safety often involves the use of SROs, SSOs, or some combination of SROs and SSOs. Well-structured SRO and SSO programs, with clear policies, procedures, roles, and responsibilities, seem more likely to achieve positive outcomes (Cray & Weiler, 2011). This study investigated the current state of SRO and SSO programs in Virginia to illuminate how SRO and SSO programs are operating and uncover best practices associated with program development, implementation, and evaluation. Specifically, the research questions were:

RQ1: How are SROs and SSOs trained to operate in K-12 public schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia?

RQ2: What are the criteria that are being used to select SROs and SSOs to operate in schools?

RQ3: How are the activities of SROs and SSOs that do not result in an arrest being documented?

RQ4: How are SROs and SSOs operating in schools supervised by their own department and/or by the school(s) in which they operate?

RQ5: What criteria are used to assess SRO and SSO performance?

RQ6: To what extent are SROs and SSOs involved addressing school disciplinary matters that do not rise to the level of criminal activity?

RQ7: Are there differences when comparing between school districts that have MOUs with local law enforcement, and school districts that do not have formal arrangements with local law enforcement?

Project Activities

A combination of existing and new data was utilized to answer the research questions outlined above. Quantitative data collected from two existing datasets (School Safety Survey and Annual Report for Discipline, Crime & Violence) were analyzed alongside new data collected from 533 returned surveys of SROs, SSOs, SRO Supervisors, SSO Supervisors, and SRO School-Based Liaisons. The survey was launched in the November 2017 and data collection from the survey was completed in January 2018. Following the implementation of the survey, we collected a range of qualitative data. First, we solicited existing Memorandum-of-Understandings (MOUs) for school-law enforcement partnerships (SLEPs) across Virginia (Spring and Summer 2018). We then conducted 23 interviews with SROs, SRO Supervisors, SSOs, SSO Supervisors, and School Leaders (Summer and Fall 2018). Finally, we held 4 focus groups with SROs, SSOs, and School Leaders (Spring 2019).

Structure of Report

This report consists of two main sections. The first section, *Methods*, describes the data collection and analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data. The second section, *Findings*, presents the results from the quantitative analysis of both the existing datasets and new

survey data. Findings from the qualitative analysis of the MOUs and interview and focus group

transcripts are also provided. The results and findings are organized by the seven overall project

research questions and the associated sub-questions. The appendices of this report contain a

variety of project-related documents including copies of the survey, recruitment documents,

consent forms, and interview and focus group guides. Longer and more detailed reports on the

MOU and interview analyses are also included.

<center>**Methods**</center>

Survey Data Collection and Analysis

New Surveys

      We constructed and administered new surveys to reach five target groups: SROs, SSOs, SRO Supervisors, SSO Supervisors, and SRO School-Based Liaisons. The Safety/Security Personnel Survey collected data directly from SROs and SSOs employed in Virginia. To distribute the survey, we used a list of names and email addresses for SROs and SSOs available in the School Safety Survey dataset (see Appendix 1 for documents related to survey recruitment). The Supervisors of Safety/Security Personnel Survey collected data directly from the school administrators and law enforcement agents who hire, supervise, and evaluate SROs and SSOs. These names and email addresses were provided by Virginia's Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and SRO and SSO respondents to the Safety/Security Personnel Survey. Each potential participant received an email invitation directly from Qualtrics. Nonrespondents received two reminders thereafter. The complete survey for each group can be found in Appendix 2.

      We invited approximately 700 SROs, 136 SRO Law Enforcement Supervisors, and 93 SRO School-Based Liaisons to our online surveys. We also sent the invitations to approximately 600 SSOs and 57 SSO Supervisors. Eventually, 202 SROs (28.9%), 54 SRO Supervisors (39.7%), 40 SRO Liaisons, and 108 SSOs (18.0%) completed the surveys. Unfortunately, only 8 SSO Supervisors (14.0%) participated in the survey. Given this low response rate, we decided to omit the responses of the SSO supervisors from the subsequent quantitative analyses because the uncertainty in the data seemed quite large and the data was unlikely to represent our target population.

<center>16</center>

Table 1 summarizes the demographic information of the survey respondents who went through all the questions. For the law enforcement officers (i.e., SROs and their supervisors), around 15% of the respondent were female (16.8% for SROs and 13.0% for SRO Supervisors), and around 35% of SRO School-Based Liaisons (35.0%) and SSOs (36.1%) were female. For race/ethnicity, more than 80% of the respondents identified as White/Caucasian except for SSOs. SSOs showed a different racial demographic from the other types of respondents; more than half of them identified themselves as Black/African American. SSOs also showed a distinguishing age distribution. Their average age was 51.72, which was highest among the respondents ($M = 43.49$ for SROs; $M = 46.77$ for SRO Supervisors; $M = 45.82$ for SRO Liaisons).

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Survey Respondents

Demographic Variables	SROs (Total N = 202)		SRO Supervisors (Total N = 54)		SRO Liaisons (Total N = 40)		SSOs (Total N = 108)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender								
Male	165	81.7%	47	87.0%	26	65.0%	67	62.0%
Female	34	16.8%	7	13.0%	14	35.0%	39	36.1%
Missing	3	1.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	1.9%
Race/Ethnicity								
Black/African American	13	6.4%	4	7.4%	7	17.5%	56	51.9%
White/Caucasian	163	80.7%	46	85.2%	33	82.5%	44	40.7%
Hispanic or Latina/o	6	3.0%	2	3.7%	0	0.0%	2	1.9%
Asian	3	1.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Other including Multiethnicity	10	5.0%	2	3.7%	0	0.0%	3	2.8%
Missing	7	3.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	2.8%
Age								
~ 29	10	5.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	1.9%
30 ~ 39	61	30.2%	4	7.5%	13	32.5%	9	8.3%
40 ~ 49	80	39.6%	33	62.3%	12	30.0%	27	25.0%
50 ~ 59	36	17.8%	16	30.2%	12	30.0%	39	36.1%
60 ~	8	4.0%	0	0.0%	3	7.5%	23	21.3%
Missing	7	3.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	7.4%

The School Safety Survey

The School Safety Survey is conducted annually by the Commonwealth of Virginia and contains building level data from all 133 school divisions about issues related to school safety. This audit includes the safety of the physical school building, broad policy issues such as whether or not a school has an emergency management plan, and minute detail issues such as school policy on cell phone use. Especially relevant to our research were data relating to SROs, SSOs, disciplinary infractions, and school and LEA responses to disciplinary infractions. The dataset has data from a series of questions that building administrators responded to which relate specifically to SROs and SSOs, for example:

- Did you have safety/security personnel such as School Resource Officers, School Security Officers, or other types of security personnel working at your school full time during the 2013-2014 school year?
- Has the SRO(s) that worked at your school completed a School Resource Officer Basic Training?
- Who provided the SRO training that your SRO completed?
- How is the SRO position(s) at your school funded?

These data helped to identify the current state of SRO and SSO placements in Virginia schools and provided some information related to their training and position type.

In total, 1,956 schools in Virginia participated in the School Safety Survey in 2017 (1,104 elementary schools, 338 middle schools, 197 high schools and 197 other types of schools). According to the audit, 1,146 schools (58.6%) have an SRO and/or SSO and 810 schools, most of which are elementary schools, answered they do not have either an SRO or SSO.

Discipline, Crime, and Violence Dataset

The DCV dataset includes student level data on 79 types of infractions and seven possible disciplinary actions that occurred in the schools. This information is required by Virginia statute

(Code of Virginia §22.1-279.3:1), and includes every disciplinary referral that receives a sanction, and every incident of criminal behavior or violence on school property (including on school buses or at school sponsored events). The dataset includes school, age, grade, race/ethnicity, and disability status for every student who has received a disciplinary referral. In addition, it provides data on what the nature of the specific offense was (e.g., bullying, attendance violations, disrespectful behavior, fighting, weapons, etc.). The data also include the disposition of the disciplinary referral, including the length of time for short- or long-term suspensions (in and out of school) and expulsions, and whether a referral was made to law enforcement. There are seven enumerated types of offenses, which if they occur on school property, the principal is required by statute to report the students to law enforcement.

One of the main challenges for a research study of this nature was securing the data from each of the sources involved. Some of these datasets (e.g., School Safety Audit) have information about school responses to threats that cannot be released publicly. However, we entered into an MOU with each of the three agencies involved (i.e., DCJS, DJJ, DOE) in which they agreed to share the data required for the research and analysis presented here.

MOU Data Collection and Analysis

In June 2018, we emailed all school divisions in Virginia and asked them to email or fax any MOUs that guide the work of SROs in their division (see Appendix 3 for MOU Request Document). In our request email, we informed them our review would not identify specific school divisions but would focus on general trends. We received a total of 75 MOUs and masked any identifying information such as names of individuals, schools, school divisions, law enforcement agencies, cities, and counties. Each MOU was assigned a randomized number as a file name.

We used NVivo, a qualitative analysis software program, to conduct a content analysis of the MOUs. The 75 redacted MOUs were imported into NVivo. An initial review of the redacted files indicated that two school divisions had submitted two MOUs for their division. To simplify results and discussion, we chose to analyze only one MOU from each school division. We selected the MOU with the most recent date.

The analysis consisted of three stages. In the first stage, we investigated the overall structure and format of the MOUs. We counted the total number of pages in each MOU, counted the number of structural headings and subheadings in each MOU, and reviewed each MOU to determine if a model MOU had guided the development of the document. For the second stage of analysis, we used a mixture of descriptive and in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016) to extract text from each MOU that was relevant to the seven overall project research questions. For the third and final stage of analysis, we coded each MOU to check for alignment with the Virginia SLEP Model MOU (Virginia Department of Criminal Justice, 2017). We used counting (Miles et al., 2014) to tally and analyze the findings from the coding. The Findings section of this report contains a summary of the relevant MOU data for each research question and select sample MOU text to support and clarify the categories. For additional findings from the MOU analysis that did not specifically address one of the seven research questions (e.g., structural analysis of the MOUs), please see the complete MOU Findings Report in Appendix 4.

Other Document Collection and Analysis

In addition to MOUs, we also collected, reviewed, and analyzed the following documents to provide data for Research Question 1:

- Virginia DCJS Instructor Guide for the School-Law Enforcement Partnership Training Curriculum (June 2017)
- Virginia School Resource Officer Program Guide (2004 Edition)
- Descriptions from the Virginia DCJS website of two 2019 SRO trainings:

- School Resource Officer, School Security Officer and School Administrator Training: Building a Team to Support Students and Ensure School Safety (formerly called SRO Basic)
- School Leader and Advanced School Resource Officer Forum - Enhancing School Safety through Improving Climate, Understanding Trauma, and Building Partnerships

We used content analysis to summarize the training topics referenced in each of the documents.

Interview Data Collection and Analysis

For the initial round of interviews, we used three avenues of identification. First, we asked selected VA DCJS staff and the project advisory board to provide names and contact information for exemplary SROs, SSOs, SRO supervisors, SSO supervisors, and school leaders. Second, additional names were added via recommendations from the study's Co-PIs based on interactions they had with representatives of the different groups. Finally, as part of the interviews or in a follow-up email, we asked interviewees to recommend other exemplary SROs, SSOs, SRO supervisors, SSO supervisors, and school leaders.

We emailed 51 identified potential interview candidates (see Appendix 5 for Interview Recruitment Document) and invited them to participate in a 60-minute interview to be conducted via phone or video using Zoom video conference software. We followed up with any interview candidates that responded and scheduled 26 interviews. Three interviews did not occur due to interviewees cancelling or not showing up at the scheduled time.

Interviews ranged in length from 18 to 41 minutes. Some interviews were kept short based on participant time constraints (e.g. "I have 20 minutes before I need to be on lunch duty"). A graduate research assistant from Virginia Tech's School of Education conducted all interviews. Prior to all interviews, participants received the consent form via email. At the start of each interview, the interviewer explained the study purpose and the interview structure, and

reviewed the consent form (see Appendix 6 for the Interview Informed Consent). Participants were given the opportunity to ask any questions they had about the study or consent form. Interviews proceeded once interviewees gave their consent and agreed to the interview being recorded. A third-party transcription service generated transcripts for each interview. The interviewer verified each transcript by comparing the audio file to the transcript.

We conducted the semi-structured interviews using a flexible interview guide. The interview questions were developed to address the seven overall project research questions. Separate interview guides were developed for the different groups of participants: SROs, SSOs, SRO supervisors, SSO supervisors, and school leaders. The five interview guides are available in Appendix 7.

In total, we conducted 23 interviews with SROs, SROs Supervisors, SSOs, SSO Supervisors, and school leaders who work in Virginia schools. Two of the interviews were joint interviews where two participants were interviewed together. All interviews were completed in late Summer and Fall 2018. Table 2 provides information about each of the 23 interviewees.

To analyze the data, we imported the 21 transcripts into NVivo. We used a mixture of descriptive and in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016) to extract text from each transcript that was relevant to the seven research questions. Extracted text was coded and organized according to the research questions. Codes were grouped into broad categories, which were organized into themes and presented in the Interview Findings Report found in Appendix 8. Findings specific to the study's research question are presented in this report. Supporting quotations from interviewees are provided to help illuminate selected findings. Each quotation is associated with the interviewee's pseudonym, role, and region.

Table 2. General Description of Interviewees and Interviews

Pseudonym	Role	Region	Transcript Length (pages)	Interview Length (minutes)
Amanda	School Leader	5	11	27
Joe*	School Leader	4	12	34
Melissa	School Leader	6	9	21
Stephanie	School Leader	4	8	24
Tyler*	School Leader	5	12	31
Curtis	SRO	2	9	23
Daniel	SRO	1	18	39
Gary	SRO	5	9	22
Mark	SRO	1	10	34
Spencer	SRO	3	11	29
Alex	SRO Supervisor	2	9	29
Glenn	SRO Supervisor	3	9	22
Luke	SRO Supervisor	3	10	24
Ryan*	SRO Supervisor	5	12	31
Bruce	SSO	4	8	18
Cody	SSO	4	11	27
Terry	SSO	4	6	26
Wes	SSO	4	11	28
Christina	SSO Supervisor	1	11	30
Jack	SSO Supervisor	4	11	24
Joan	SSO Supervisor	4	11	41
Patrick*	SSO Supervisor	4	12	34
Robert	SSO Supervisor	2	11	32

Note: Asterisk (*) denotes a joint interview.

Focus Group Data Collection and Analysis

We conducted four focus groups in June 2019 involving 4 school leaders, 7 SROs, and 5

SSOs. To invite participants, we worked with staff at Virginia's DCJS to identify potential

candidates from registered participants of two DCJS sponsored trainings. We sent an initial email to potential participants explaining the study and inviting them to participate in a focus group during a break of each training. Each person who responded was sent additional information about informed consent (see Appendix 9 for the Focus Group Informed Consent) and where to meet for the focus group. Table 3 provides a list of the focus group participants.

The focus groups were led by two research team members who used flexible focus group guides to structure the groups (see Appendix 10 for a copy of the focus group guides). The focus groups followed an informed consent procedure similar to that of the interviews with participants providing consent and agreeing to audio recording. All focus groups were audio recorded and a third-party transcription service generated transcripts for each focus group. Transcripts were imported into NVivo and were analyzed for thematic content. Additionally, insightful and clear participant quotes that directly related to the study's research questions were highlighted in NVivo to provide additional support for findings from other data sources.

Table 3. Description of Focus Group Participants

Pseudonym	Role	Region
Rick	School Leader	4
Grace	School Leader	5
Tammy	School Leader	4
Barbara	School Leader	7
Buck	SRO	7
Sofia	SRO	3
Will	SRO	7
Thomas	SRO	7
Jill	SRO	2
Lily	SRO	2
Chris	SRO	7
Tony	SSO	4
Cameron	SSO	4
Kayla	SSO	4
Andre	SSO	4
Tim	SSO	4

Findings

Research Question 1: Training

How are SROs and SSOs trained to operate in K-12 public schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia?

Research Question 1a: Current Training Topics

On what topics do SROs and SSOs receive training?

SRO Training Topics

Survey Data

In the survey, SROs were asked about how their training applied to different settings. The 202 responses suggest that a majority of SRO training (56%) is applicable to all settings. On average, SROs reported that 22% of their training applies to only the school setting, while 22% of SRO training does *not* apply to the school setting.

SRO Survey Question: Think of the formal training you have received about law enforcement work (ex. Basic training, annual mandatory training). What percentage of it was general training that applies to all settings, what percentage was about a school setting specifically, and what percentage does not usually apply to a school setting? (Total must sum to 100).

Table 4. Application of SRO Training to Different Settings

Response	n	M	SD	Range Potential	Actual	Skew
Training that applies to all settings	202	55.57	24.89	0-100	0-100	-0.35
Training that applies to the school setting specifically	202	22.49	16.45	0-100	0-80	0.93
Training that usually does not apply to a school setting	202	21.94	22.65	0-100	0-99	1.51

MOU, Interview, and Other Document Data

A content analysis of the interview data, the MOUs, and documents related to SRO training revealed an extensive list of training topics covered in various SRO trainings offered in Virginia. Table 5 lists the specific training topics named in the data and shows which data source referenced each topic.

Table 5. Named SRO Training Topics by Data Source

Topic	Data Source					
	SLEP Curr.	SRO Guide	SRO Trng.	Adv. Trng.	Intvws.	MOUs
Dangerous Students, Threat Assessment	X	X	X	X	X	X
School Climate, Student Behavior	X	X	X	X		X
SLEPs, MOUs, Roles, SECURe Rubric*	X	X	X	X		X
Working with Students with Special Needs	X	X	X		X	X
Child or Adolescent Development	X	X	X			X
Childhood/Adolescence Mental Health Issues	X		X		X	X
Crisis and Emergency Management Planning	X	X			X	X
Drugs, Alcohol, and Addictions	X	X			X	X
Legal Issues	X		X	X		X
Restorative Justice	X			X	X	X
School Discipline	X		X	X		X
Communicating with Children/Adolescents	X				X	X
Information Sharing, FERPA	X	X				X
School Environment, Setting, and Programs	X	X				X
School Safety Audits	X	X			X	
Trauma-Informed Care	X		X	X		

Topic	Data Source					
	SLEP Curr.	SRO Guide	SRO Trng.	Adv. Trng.	Intvws.	MOUs
Youth Gangs	X	X	X			
Bullying	X	X				
Child Abuse and Neglect	X	X				
Communication Skills		X			X	
Community Policing	X	X				
Corporal Punishment	X	X				
Cultural Diversity, Cultural Competence		X				X
Physical Intervention	X					X
Recordkeeping, Reporting, Program Evaluation	X	X				
School to Prison Pipeline Concerns	X			X		
Search and Seizure Procedures	X	X				
Social Media, Technology			X		X	
Truancy Prevention/Intervention	X	X				
Victims' Rights	X	X				
Conflict Resolution, Peer Mediation	X					
Crime Tip Lines		X				
Crime Reporting	X					
De-Escalation Techniques			X			
Detention and Arrest	X					
Firearms Training, Stun-Gun training						X
Homeless Students	X					
Human Trafficking					X	
Juvenile Justice Involved Youth	X					
Law-Related Educator, Virginia Studies	X					
Mentoring Youth	X					
Questioning	X					
Responsibilities of SSOs						X
School Division Policies and Procedures						X

	Data Source					
Topic	SLEP Curr.	SRO Guide	SRO Trng.	Adv. Trng.	Intvws.	MOUs
Suicide Prevention	X					

MOU Data

Forty-two of the MOUs contained text that generally described SRO training as training relevant to the position. This text included references to training that supports SRO certification, connects to the school mission, aligns with SLEP and DCJS curriculum, and/or addresses special training needs of SROs. Example text that described training includes:

> *initial 40 hour SRO school required to earn SRO certification training should be aligned with the SLEP and DCJS curriculum training specifically for SROs training or instruction to support the school's mission training required of SROs by applicable Virginia law attend the annual Virginia School and Campus Safety Training Forum*

Twenty-six MOUs used the following wording (with minimal variation) to describe SRO training and its general purpose:

> *in-service training, when available, to the SRO in areas…will increase the effectiveness of the officers and their ability to accomplish their respective duties and responsibilities'*

Eighteen MOUs referenced training approved or required by the LEA, and/or training needed to obtain and maintain law enforcement certification. Example text includes:

> *Additionally, all SROs continue to participate in on going [POLICE DEPARTMENT] provided in service training as mandated by the [LOCALITY] PD command structure.*

> *The [LOCALITY] SHERIFF'S OFFICE will provide necessary training of police officers as defined by existing Virginia Code.*

The [LOCALITY] SO shall be responsible for providing training for the SRO's on all subjects required of their positions as Deputy Sheriff

The SRO is a fully trained and sworn deputy sheriff

Nine MOUs referenced joint training involving both SROs and school administrators, suggesting an emphasis on topics such as communication and teamwork. Example text includes:

The SO will ensure the SRO receives...ongoing joint training with school administrators.

The Sheriff's Office will ensure that all SROs are certified for their duties by completing the "School Resource Officer, School Security Officer, & School Administrator Training: Building a Team to Support Students While Ensuring School Safety" course

SSO Training

Survey Data

In the survey, SSOs were specifically asked about training in de-escalation techniques. Of the 98 respondents, 62% reported that had received de-escalation training.

<u>SSO Survey Question:</u> Have you completed training in de-escalation techniques such as Mandt or Handle With Care?

Table 6. SSO Completion of Training in De-escalation Techniques

Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
No	37	34.3	37.8
Yes	61	56.5	62.2
Total	98	90.7	100.0
Missing	10	9.3	
Total	108	100.0	

SSO survey respondents were also asked about their previous experience in law enforcement. Forty-three (40%) of the 107 respondents indicated that they had previous

experience as a law enforcement officer, suggesting that these SSOs had likely received the

training that goes with being a law enforcement officer.

Interview Data

As part of the interviews, SSOs and those who work with them were asked about current

SSO training topics. Interviewees described general training received by SSOs as required for

certification and to meet individual school division requirements. Specific topics named were:

- Current trends in drug use, gangs, and social media
- First aid
- Interpersonal skills (e.g., de-escalation skills, verbal judo)
- Investigative skills
- Legal issues
- MANDT training (restraint training)
- Mental health
- Non-judgmental bias training
- Parent reunification
- School safety (e.g., active shooter, critical incidents, emergency procedures, threat assessment)
- Self-defense
- Student searches
- Working with students with special needs
- Working with the media

SRO and SSO Educational Experience

Both SROs and SSOs were asked in the survey to describe their highest level of

educational experience. Compared to SROs, more SSOs indicated they had earned a Bachelor's

or Master's degree.

SRO and SSO Survey Question: SSO Which of the following best describes your highest
educational experience?

Table 7. SRO Highest Level of Educational Experience

Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Completed Some High School	1	0.5	0.5
Earned a High School Diploma	25	12.4	12.5
Completed Some College	71	35.1	35.5
Earned an Associate's Degree	35	17.3	17.5
Earned a Bachelor's Degree	51	25.2	25.5
Completed some Graduate School	10	5.0	5.0
Earned a Master's Degree	7	3.5	3.5
Total	200	99.0	100.0
Missing	2	1.0	
Total	202	100.0	

Table 8. SSO Highest Level of Educational Experience

Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Completed Some High School	3	2.8	2.8
Earned a High School Diploma	14	13.0	13.0
Completed Some College	31	28.7	28.7
Earned an Associate's Degree	16	14.8	14.8
Earned a Bachelor's Degree	32	29.6	29.6
Completed some Graduate School	4	3.7	3.7
Earned a Master's Degree	8	7.4	7.4

Total	108	100.0	100.0
Missing	0	0.0	
Total	108	100.0	
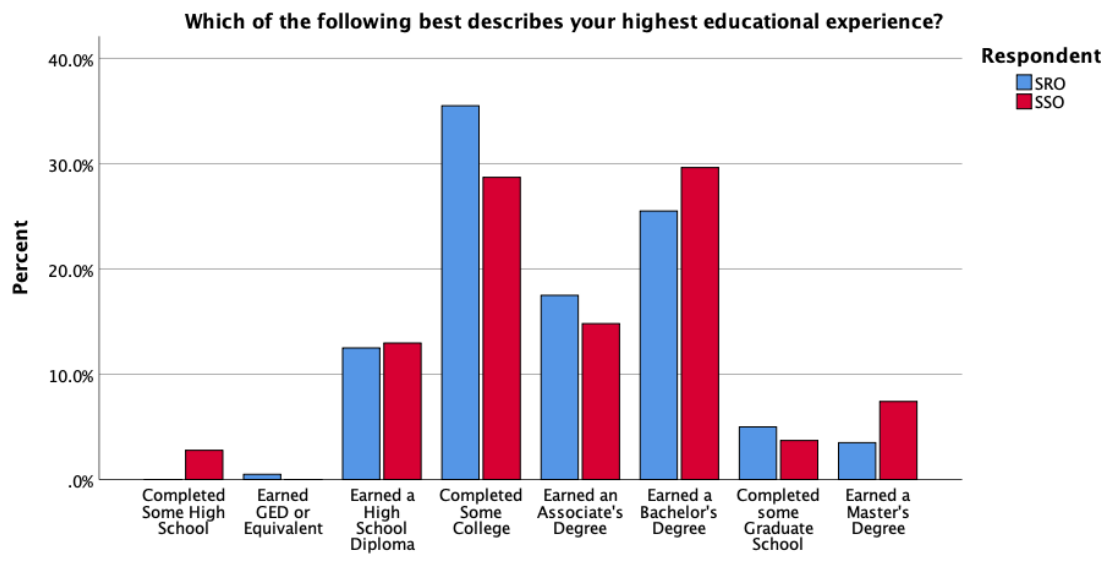
Figure 1. SRO and SSO responses regarding their highest level of educational experience.

Research Question 1b: Alignment of Training with Duties

How does SRO and SSO training compare to their actual duties?

SRO Roles, Responsibilities, and Tasks

To address this question, we first worked to determine the perceptions of current SRO

and SSO roles, responsibilities, and tasks.

Survey Data

In the survey, SROs, their supervisors, and School-Based Liaisons were asked to indicate

what percentage of time SROs spend on tasks associated with each major role of SROs. The

roles and associated example tasks used in the question were:

- Law Enforcement Officer (e.g., respond to criminal activity and public safety threats)

- Community Liaison (e.g., build relationships and identify resources)
- Law-Related Educator (e.g., give presentations for students, parents, and school staff)
- Role Model or Mentor (e.g., be professional, approachable, and compassionate)
- Other

The three groups of respondents showed general agreement about the percentage of time that SROs spend on each role/task, although there was some variation about which role/task SROs spent the most time on. SRO Supervisors indicated that they believed Law Enforcement Officer was the role/task on which SROS spent their most time (30%), compared to SROs and SRO Liaisons who felt that Role Model or Mentor (35% and 37%, respectively) was the role in which SROs spend the greatest amount of time. Tables 9, 10, and 11 provide data for the survey question for each group and Figure 2 provides a graphical representation comparing the results for each group.

Two SRO Supervisors provided responses to the prompt asking for descriptions of "Other" tasks. These two respondents listed: Assisting school administrators and Taking care of school issues such as transporting students home when sick.

SRO Survey Question: What percentage of your time do you spend on each of the following tasks? (Total must sum to 100)

Table 9. SROs' Reported Percentage of Time They Spend on each Role/Task

				Range		
Response	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Potential	Actual	Skew
Law Enforcement Officer	202	22.59	18.38	0-100	0-90	1.36
Community Liaison	201	24.03	14.26	0-100	0-80	1.04
Law-Related Educator	202	14.64	10.12	0-100	0-50	1.36
Role Model or Mentor	201	35.24	19.08	0-100	0-80	0.52
Other	199	3.85	6.40	0-100	0-30	1.87

Table 10. SRO Supervisors' Reported Percentage of Time SROs Spend on each Role/Task

Response	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Range Potential	Actual	Skew
Law Enforcement Officer	54	30.00	20.65	0-100	5-100	1.25
Community Liaison	54	24.26	11.59	0-100	0-50	0.10
Law-Related Educator	54	15.59	8.77	0-100	0-40	0.37
Role Model or Mentor	54	28.48	15.60	0-100	0-75	0.81
Other	54	1.67	8.63	0-100	0-60	6.24

Table 11. SRO Liaisons' Reported Percentage of Time SROs Spend on each Role/Task

Response	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Range Potential	Actual	Skew
Law Enforcement Officer	40	22.93	24.18	0-100	0-80	1.32
Community Liaison	40	19.65	13.94	0-100	0-53	0.67
Law-Related Educator	40	14.30	15.21	0-100	0-90	3.20
Role Model or Mentor	40	36.63	23.63	0-100	0-90	0.23
Other	40	6.50	21.31	0-100	0-90	3.43
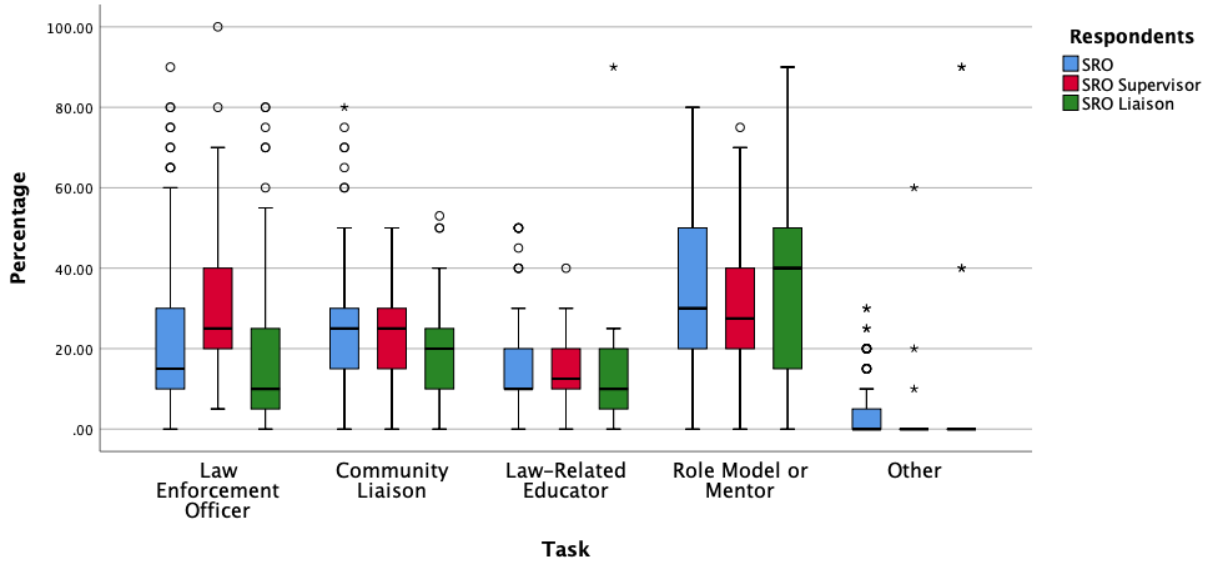
Figure 2. SRO, SRO Supervisor, and SRO Liaison responses regarding how much time SROs spend on each role/task.

In the survey, SROs were asked specifically about how often they are asked by school employees to assist with bullying. Nearly half (48%) of SROs indicated this happened on a weekly basis and 14% indicated they received requests to assist with bullying on a daily basis.

SRO Survey Question: On average, how often do school employees request your assistance related to bullying, including social media or technology-related bullying?

Table 12. SRO Reported Frequency of School Employee Request for Bullying Assistance

Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	5	2.5	2.5
Once a year	15	7.4	7.5
Once a month	51	25.2	25.5
Once a week	96	47.5	48.0
Once a day	28	13.9	14.0
Hourly	5	2.5	2.5
Total	200	99.0	100.0
Missing	2	1.0	
Total	202	100.0	
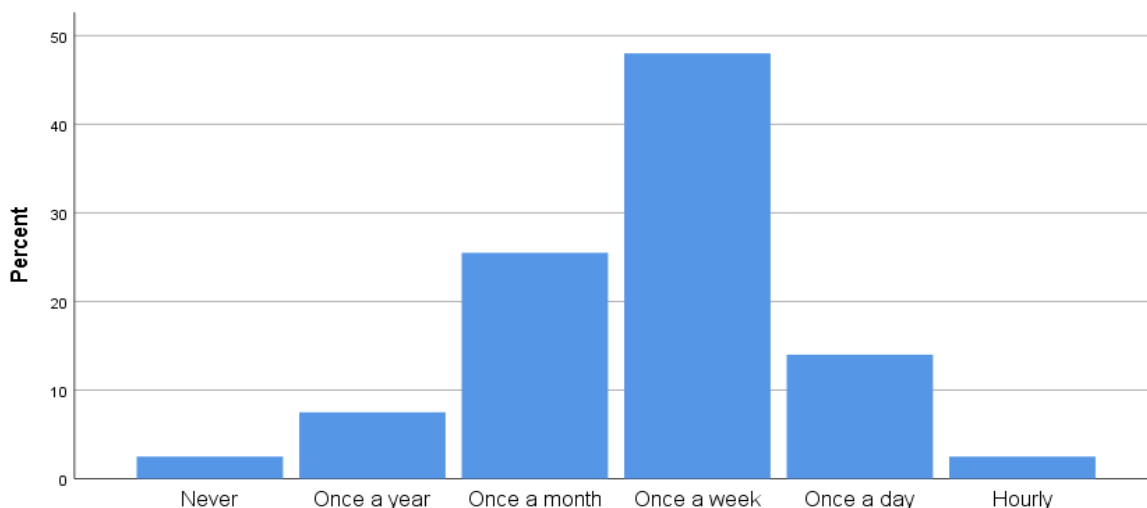
Figure 3. SRO reported frequency of school employee request for SRO assistance with bullying.
MOU Data

In various sections throughout the MOUs, all 73 contained text that described the agreed-
upon roles and duties of SROs. The DCJS Model MOU describes three major roles: law

enforcement officer; law-related educator; and informal role mentor and role model. The

majority of MOU text describing the roles and responsibilities of an SRO was coded as one of

these three major roles. Three additional categories (liaison, counselor, and transportation

provider) also emerged from the coding process. Each of the roles identified in the MOUs is

discussed below.

Law enforcement officer. All 73 MOUs described one SRO role as a law enforcement

officer. In addition to clear law enforcement duties such as investigating crimes and making

arrests, the role of law enforcement officer was defined broadly. It included expectations that the

SRO will work to promote a safe and secure school environment and prevent crime. Examples of

this role definition from the MOUs included:

> *As sworn law enforcement officers, SROs' primary role in schools is as a law*
> *enforcement officer. SROs assume primary responsibility for responding to requests for*
> *assistance from administrators and coordinating the response of other law enforcement*

37

resources to the school. SROs should work with school administrators in problem solving to prevent crime and promote safety in the school environment. SROs should also collaborate with school personnel to reduce student engagement with the juvenile justice systems and divert students from the courts when possible.

Enforce any local, state and federal laws.

Enforcing criminal and traffic laws on school property.

Investigating criminal offenses on school grounds and others involving students.

Patrolling school grounds and adjacent areas.

Provide law enforcement assistance to school personnel, parents and students, and to monitor culture and social influences and activities to ensure the prevention or early detection and intervention in the development of criminal activity.

The SRO facilitates the effective delivery of law enforcement services and assists with matters related to safety, security, and the exchange of information.

Take incident reports on all matters pertaining to school property at any time while on Duty and conduct follow-up investigations on those incidents.

Regularly wear the official Sheriff's Office uniform, with civilian attire being worn on such occasions as may be mutually agreed upon by the principal and the SRO. The SRO provides a visible deterrent to crime and a positive law enforcement presence to students and staff.

Conduct patrols of the campus, including adjacent roadways, parking lots, school grounds, exterior doors and building hallways. Assist in providing school-based security during the regular school day and assist in the promotion of a safe and orderly environment at [LOCALITY] County High School.

SROs should assist school administrators in developing and practicing school crisis, emergency management, and response plans. They will work with administrators in problem-solving to prevent crime and promote safety in the school environment. SROs are expected to collaborate with school administrators and other school personnel to support positive school climates that focus on resolving conflicts, reducing student engagement with the juvenile and criminal justice systems, and diverting youth from courts when possible.

Law-related educator. Seventy-one MOUS included description of the SRO as a law-

related educator. These descriptions included having the SRO teach in a classroom, provide

training for school staff, and giving presentations to parent and community groups.

> *As resources permit, SROs should strive to assist with presentations for school personnel on law-related topics such as law enforcement practices, changes in relevant laws, crime trends, crime prevention, school safety strategies, and crisis response procedures. SROs may also deliver law-related education with students using lessons/curricula approved in advance by the SRO Supervisor*

> *Assist in training students in conflict resolution, restorative justice, and crime awareness.*

> *Assist school staff with interpretation of law as it relates to police matters.*

> *Develop and instruct educational programs on a variety of law enforcement topics and issues to students as well as faculty and parents. Some topics might include: alcohol and drug abuse, traffic safety, violence reduction, crime prevention and security, law enforcement careers, citizenship responsibilities, sexual assault, criminal justice and juvenile justice systems, Crime Stoppers, etc.*

> *Develop expertise in presenting various subjects such as understanding the laws, the police officers, and the police mission.*

> *Enhance DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Program.*

> *Implement the Class Action program, which provides students with some working knowledge of the law and the criminal justice system.*

> *Makes presentations to PTA, civic, and other organizations regarding students, the law, and the operations of the Sheriff's Office and the Resource Officer Program.*

> *Provide and participate in educational activities within the school when appropriate and practicable. Topical areas might include: Virginia laws; mediation and conflict resolution; drug avoidance and awareness; safe driving and laws pertaining to motor vehicle safety; laws relating to alcoholic beverages; personal safety and self-defense; good citizenship; the police, the citizenry and the U. S. Constitution; Search & Seizure; and any other security, educational, or athletic support as feasible.*

> *Provide presentations on substance abuse, DWI, curfew, shoplifting, runaway prevention, suicide prevention, child abuse/neglect, gang participation, constitutional law and other agreed upon topics that become relevant to the community's needs throughout the school year.*

Serve as an instructor in classes, teaching on matters that need attention that have been identified by school staff and/or students; and work cooperatively with the Virginia State Police in efforts to improve student driving habits.

Should seek opportunities to speak to parent groups and provide in-service presentations for teachers.

The SRO assists the school staff in the interpretation of law as it relates to police matters. The SRO is responsible with training for school administrators in law enforcement and related areas.

Train teachers and staff in matters of school security, symptoms of drug use, and first aid techniques.

Informal mentor and role model. Sixty-eight MOUs contained text that identified being

an informal mentor and role model as another SRO role.

Students often seek approval, direction, and guidance from adults in the school setting about various problems. Through formal and informal interaction with students, SROs serve as informal mentors and role models. SROs are expected to communicate clearly to students about acceptable and unacceptable behavior, to set a positive example in handling stressful situations and resolving conflicts, to show respect and consideration of others, and to express high expectations for student behavior. Students who may need additional assistance shall be referred to a school based resource.

Provides guidance, acts as a positive role model and serves as a contact for support of services both within and outside the school environment

To cultivate positive relationships with students, strengthening each student's understanding of good citizenship and accountability for their actions.

Promote the profession of law enforcement officer and be a positive role model while increasing the visibility and accessibility of law enforcement to the school community.

Collaborate with school based community organizations, parent teacher organizations, school advisory councils, and student government to develop opportunities for positive activities such as panel discussions and mentoring programs.

SROs will also be positive role models for the many youth they come in contact with while in the performance of their duties.

The SRO is expected to be a positive role model because students learn from every observation of or interaction with the SRO.

Shall effectively seek to build positive relationships with students and staff. Will provide positive relationships with students and staff. Will provide a positive role model.

Liaison. Fifty MOUs contained text about the role of the SRO that was coded under the category, Liaison. This text often used the term "liaison" to talk about developing and supporting relationships between the LEA and a range of audiences, including students, parents, schools, neighborhoods, and the general public. Relevant text also described how the SRO should work to positively represent the LEA or serve as a source of information about their LEA and community resources.

> *Act as liaison with the Sheriff's Office, Social Services, Court System, and other community services.*

> *Act as a liaison between school and law enforcement personnel.*

> *Serve as a liaison between the schools and the legal justice system*

> *Effective problem solving and liaison with neighborhoods surrounding the schools, which are affected negatively by the conduct of students.*

> *Enhance positive communications and trust between students and law enforcement officers by developing a rapport between police officers and students*

> *The SROs will … provide a positive impression of law enforcement in a non-confrontational setting*

> *Promote citizen awareness of law enforcement efforts to assure the peaceful operation of school-related programs and to build support with students.*

> *SROs can coordinate the response of other law enforcement resources to the school with school administrators to include assisting other law enforcement officers with outside investigations concerning students attending their assigned school, essentially serving as a liaison between the [LOCALITY] SO or other law enforcement agencies and the students and school officials.*

> *The SRO facilitates the effective delivery of law enforcement services and assists with matters related to safety, security, and the exchange of information.*

> *The SRO will act as a liaison with various community youth services agencies and work with school personnel on student referrals to these agencies.*

This program will create an atmosphere of trust, safety, and cooperation between the two organizations and the community at large. This will be achieved by providing an Officer(s) to serve as "School Resource Officer(s)" for the enforcement of state and city statutes on the school campus as well as providing a positive role of bridging the gap between law enforcement and the students.

To establish liaison with school principal, faculty, students, and parents.

To obtain open communications by developing a working relationship with school substance abuse counselors, the guidance department, the school administration, and the Sheriff's Office.

To provide a resource for school counselors and administrators.

Counselor. 18 MOUs contained text that referenced counseling as an SRO role. It is not always clear if the MOU use of the terms "counsel", "counseling", and "counselor" refers to a general giving of advice or to cases where a person is trained specifically to provide psychological services.

Providing guidance, counseling and role modeling to students

Serve as a confidential source of counseling to students concerning problems they face.

Develop and maintain a positive and open relationship with students while providing informal counseling to students upon the student's request or making referrals to the guidance department.

Further, it was deemed appropriate that each student be provided an avenue where they could find guidance and support through the services of a full-time law enforcement officer who could offer individual and group counseling when deemed necessary, provide guidance on ethical issues in a classroom setting, act as a resource with respect to delinquency prevention, and, through the application of formal instructional sessions, explain law enforcement's role in society.

Other tasks include student counselor, certified instructor of specialized curriculum, and any other assignments deemed appropriate.

Provide counseling to students in areas dealing with law enforcement

Reduce juvenile crime through counseling, teaching about the system, and personal interest in students.

SROs may counsel students in special situations, such as students suspected of engaging in criminal misconduct/behavior especially when requested by the principal or by the student's parents, with the hopes of preventing further juvenile delinquency through close contact with the student; and provide an avenue for other needed services inside and outside of the school.

The School Resource Officer offers crime prevention and intervention programs, classroom lectures, counseling, conferences with students and parents.

The SRO program will focus on ... identifying and counseling troubled youth, thereby diverting them from the criminal justice system.

The SRO shall keep documentation of all in office counseling sessions.

The SRO will attempt to identify and prevent, through counseling and referral, delinquent behavior, including substance and alcohol abuse. The SRO will provide assistance and support to victims of crime within the school setting.

The SROs will provide discussion and counseling services through classroom-based, small group-based, and individual sessions with students and hold conferences with parents pertaining to law enforcement.

Transportation provider. The following statements appeared in the "SRO Duties"

sections of two MOUs:

Transporting a student without the student's consent is authorized only when arrest is authorized.

The SRO may transport students from school to their residence, however, permission from a parent or legal guardian SHALL be obtained prior to transport. The SRO shall not transport sick or injured students unless it is deemed a law enforcement matter. If a student is disorderly and the school request the SRO transport a student home with parent/legal guardian permission the SRO shall, when possible, notify the on duty supervisor of the transport. The SRO will have discretion on all transports.

Primary role of SROs. Seventy of the MOUs indicated that the role of law enforcement

officer was the primary role of an SRO. MOUs often appeared to prioritize this role by listing it

as the first role and/or by including a large amount of text that was coded to the *Law*

Enforcement Officer category. Some of the MOUs prioritized the role of law enforcement officer

explicitly through statements such as:

43

First and foremost, they are law enforcement officers whose primary purpose is to keep the peace in their communities so that students can learn.

Responding to incidents or conducting investigations will always take precedence over instructing in the classroom.

Time and staffing constraints may require the SROs to prioritize their duties. with the highest priority being to monitor student activity and provide a law enforcement presence for building and grounds.

The primary duties of the SRO shall be the prevention of crime, and to promote a safe and secure environment for the learning through detection and apprehension of criminals.

The SRO is first a police officer whose primary job is enforcement of the law.

In contrast, three MOUs included purpose statements or program descriptions that seemed to indicate that the partner agencies did not view law enforcement officer as the primary role of an SRO, or that other roles were equally important. The entire text from the three MOUs is provided here to show how the focus of these statements is not completely on law enforcement—there is an equal focus on other roles.

The [SRO] Program is a cooperative effort between the Division and [LOCALITY]PS. It was established as a result of a realization by both agencies that the presence of a uniformed law enforcement officer is essential to ensure a quality education for each student in the secondary school system and that it is achieved in a safe environment with minimal disruption of normal activities. Further, it was deemed appropriate that each student be provided an avenue where they could find guidance and support through the services of a full-time law enforcement officer who could offer individual and group counseling when deemed necessary, provide guidance on ethical issues in a classroom setting, act as a resource with respect to delinquency prevention, and, through the application of formal instructional sessions, explain law enforcement's role in society.

The Program focuses on providing accurate information about alcohol and drugs, teaching decision-making skills, building self-esteem, providing ways to resist negative peer pressure, and offering alternatives to drug use at the school level.

The SRO program will focus on developing rapport with students, presenting information to students on various crime prevention subjects; providing law enforcement assistance to school personnel, parents and students; and identifying and counseling troubled youth, thereby diverting them from the criminal justice system. Through such activities in the schools and the community, the program helps students, parents, and educators to

develop a better understanding of the role of law enforcement officers and to create a more positive concept of the judicial system.

Interview and Focus Group Data

Four SRO roles emerged from the interview and focus group data when participants described SRO roles and responsibilities: law enforcement and safety, relationship building, liaison, and law educator.

Law enforcement and safety. The primary role referenced by most interviewees and focus group participants was that of law enforcement and safety.

> *I think the main responsibility is safety. That's a huge part of the role that they play even just by their very presence. And so that's – number one is school safety. (Amanda, School Leader, Region 5)*

> *One of the big things that the SROs work with is that a lot of the students might make different threats or make different statements online, through some aspect of social media. And because those deal with other – those deals – those are less – more about laws outside of school rather than the policy. (Melissa, School Leader, Region 6)*

> *Well, I see their role as being another staff member that gives us an extension to law enforcement. (Tyler, School Leader, Region 5)*

> *I understand that I am here for the school law aspect or, I'm sorry, the state law aspect and it's my job to keep this school as safe as possible. (Mark, SRO, Region 1)*

> *The safety. That's what I want to be there for. I want to make sure every one of those kids come to school, get that education and go home and they're safe. (Thomas, SRO, Region 7)*

> *So, I'm tasked with the safety and security of this building for all staff members and all students while they're here. My job is to provide a safe learning environment for them to come here and get the best education they can, so they can go on and do better things. And so I take that pretty serious. (Spencer, SRO, Region 3)*

> *Their roles and responsibilities, first and foremost, is the safety and security of everybody within that building for a safe learning environment…Their responsibilities are also included to handle any criminal misconduct that takes place within the school. (Glenn, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)*

I mean, the SRO is per se, first and foremost, a law enforcement officer. And they basically provide safety in around the schools. Addressing any crime, fear of crime, things of that nature. (Alex, SRO Supervisor, Region 2)

Relationship building. Many interviewees and focus group participants also talked about

the role of SROs being to build relationships with students, teachers, parents, and the

community. SROs were described as being mentors, role models, counselors, and confidants.

Interviewees and focus group participants described actions such as working with students,

interfacing with students and staff, listening to students and parents, mingling with students, and

getting to know students as important parts of the SRO job.

Your day-to-day, the bulk of it is just interfacing, interfacing at an interpersonal level with the students, with the faculty and with the community. You're not just there. (Daniel, SRO, Region 1)

The other part is just to be that bridge or that community policing officer that goes out and, I spend a lot of time developing relationships with my students. And that's what I find is, you know, one of the biggest aspects of my job is a lot of kids are told their entire life that cops are bad, cops are bad, cops are bad, and it's my job to break down those barriers. Build those relationships. (Spencer, SRO, Region 3)

Or if there's a kid that has some issues or some children that are having issues, we'll try to sit down and talk and try to find those kids that we can mentor. (Luke, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)

I know there are instances where students have confided in the schools resource officer rather than, again, a guidance counselor, a teacher, or somebody else of that manner and they do that. (Jack, SSO Supervisor, Region 4)

The job of the SRO is really to build relationships with kids in the schools that will carry on through their life really and build relationships with law enforcement…The SROs run sports leagues at the schools. They influence kids that way. They are – part of their role is counselor to kids that maybe would be in trouble otherwise. And they can also serve in a role to divert them maybe away from law enforcement, maybe to counseling or to some other path as opposed to taking them to jail… (Robert, SSO Supervisor, Region 2)

In addition to the times at the beginning of the year when he comes to, you know, just kind of introduce himself to the kids, and then throughout the year, just stopping by to say hi, maybe eat lunch with the kids one day or go out and play kickball…the relationship-building piece. (Grace, School Leader, Region 5)

Liaison. Another SRO role as described by interviewees and focus group participants is that of liaison, where SROs connect the school community with law enforcement resources and act as a positive representative of law enforcement.

> *Just making sure the school is safe and providing that resource, and then finding outside resources, if we need them. Like in a lockdown, he notifies the right people and it goes from there. (Melissa, School Leader, Region 6)*

> *That's the whole point of the SRO program, is that community outreach. We are a bridge for, and hence the words School Resource Officer. You know, I mean, the word resource is exactly what I am. (Spencer, SRO, Region 3)*

> *We want the children to know from early onset that a law enforcement officer is there for their help and to aid them, not someone they should run from to be afraid of. (Glenn, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)*

> *They basically serve as a liaison between the school district or the school they represent and the police department. (Alex, SRO Supervisor, Region 2)*

Law educators. Finally, SROs are seen as law educators. SROs teach students in the classroom, sometimes as part of a formal curriculum like the DARE Program or Virginia Rules, sometimes informally when invited by a teacher to make a presentation or simply read to students. SROs also educate parents, teachers, and the community about the law and provide trainings for school staff on a variety of law and safety issues.

> *The – our SRO also works with the government teacher for the lessons on the legal – legality, the law, that they need to know when they graduate. In the past, which – we didn't do this last year, but in the past, he has also given a presentation about drunk driving to especially our driver's ed classes. So there's also some curriculum pieces that he is involved in as well. (Amanda, School Leader, Region 5)*

> *We're there for – definitely for any type of law enforcement questions with the staff, faculty, students. (Ryan, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)*

> *We have a lot of students that are interested in law enforcement, so they use him as a resource and go, "What do I need to know? What do I need to do? What can I expect?" And that ended up going to the point where our EFE teacher, Education for Employment teacher, went to him and said, "Hey, can you get a panel of people?" So he worked with our law enforcement and different aspects of it, as well as our fire and rescue and*

brought them in and had like a little career fair for our students to go through and see, so that was nice they put all of that together. (Tammy, School Leader, Region 4)

I make a lot of lesson plans. I do a lot of teaching. (Daniel, SRO, Region 1)

Two years ago I was put in for Officer of the Year based on my role as a school resource officer. My partner and I at my previous school worked so well together and built such wonderful rapport with our students that word was spread throughout the [LOCALITY] County School District on a program that we did. And the school district implemented that program as mandatory curriculum for both eighth grade and tenth grade students based off a presentation that my partner and I had done two years go. (Mark, SRO, Region 1)

Our job is to educate. I spend a lot of my day undoing what parents have taught their kids. A lot of parents are like hey, finders keepers losers weepers. That's not true. That's not written in the law books. I've never been able to find it in any law book. And so again, same thing. If somebody punches you, you punch them back. Well, no, that's not exactly how it works. So I spend a lot of my day undoing what parents have taught that kid. And so my job is to be that bridge, to explain the law to them, educate them in the law, so that way they don't get themselves into any serious trouble later on. (Spencer, SRO, Region 3)

Yeah, I mean, for like, what we do here at the beginning of the school year, we have several orientations. Which is like the public schools have mandatory orientations, like a parent orientation, where we try to educate the parents. This is what we do. This is our role. These are some safety tips that you can be aware of, to help your kid be successful here at the high school. And then we also have a teacher's orientation where I teach the class and break it down specifically. This is the role of the SRO. This is the role of the security officer. This is what you can expect. If you have this event, this is what you should do, this is how you should respond. (Curtis, SRO, Region 2)

Educating our kids. Especially at the elementary level. It's our school resource officers that teach the D.A.R.E. curriculum. In our division, we've recently just expanded the pilot to start providing D.A.R.E. in middle schools. (Luke, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)

They're an educator. We have our SROs, they teach Virginia Rules. And they have a great program, the gang resistance education program. (Alex, SRO Supervisor, Region 2)

SSO Roles, Responsibilities, and Tasks

Survey Data

SSO respondents were asked to report the time they spend on the following tasks: patrolling school areas, detaining students, investigating, assisting with school discipline, and other.

SSO Survey Question: What percentage of your time do you spend on each of the following tasks? (Total must sum to 100)

Table 13. Percentage of Time SSOs Report Spending on each Task

Response	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Potential	Actual	Skew
				Range		
Patrolling school areas in order to prevent crime and ensure safety	104	43.11	24.62	0-100	0-100	0.26
Detaining students who are violating the law or school board policies	104	11.41	9.79	0-100	0-50	1.11
Investigating violations of school board policies	103	11.34	12.04	0-100	0-60	1.66
Assisting with disciplinary incidents	104	17.21	17.37	0-100	0-90	1.62
Other	104	17.05	21.65	0-100	0-100	1.75
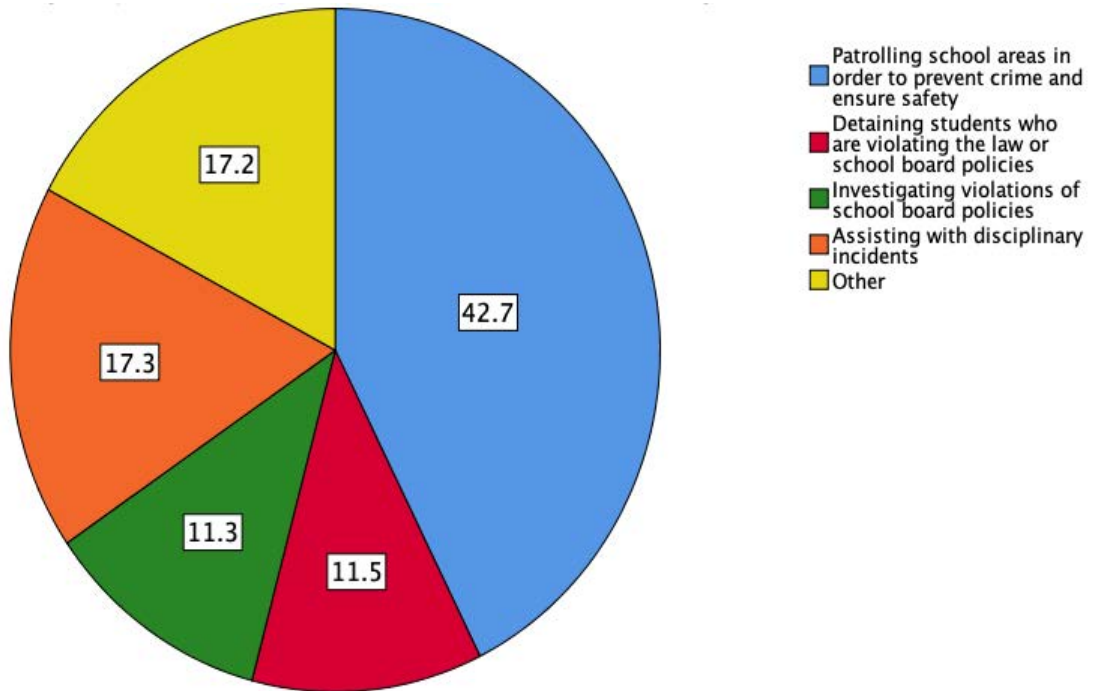
Figure 4. Percentage of time SSOs report spending on each task.

Legend:
- Patrolling school areas in order to prevent crime and ensure safety
- Detaining students who are violating the law or school board policies
- Investigating violations of school board policies
- Assisting with disciplinary incidents
- Other

Pie chart values: 42.7, 11.5, 11.3, 17.3, 17.2

When the data are presented in a boxplot (see Figure 5) we can see the variability of the answers among SSOs.
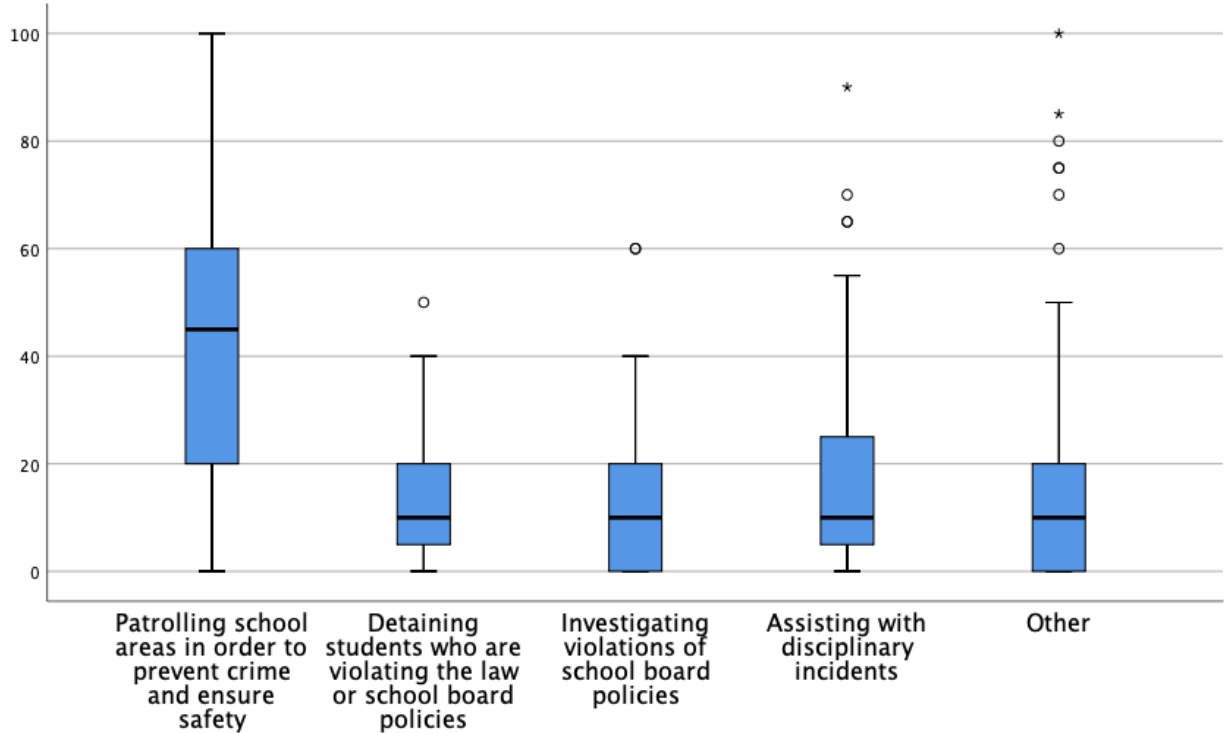
Figure 5. Boxplot displaying percentage of time SSOs report spending on each task.

SSOs were asked specifically about how often they are asked to intervene in physical altercations between students. SSOs reported a wide range of frequency of requests, with 13% saying they are never asked to intervene and 10% saying they are asked to intervene on an hourly basis.

<u>SSO Survey Question:</u> On average, how often are you requested to intervene in physical altercations between students?

Table 14. SSO Reported Frequency of Request for Intervention in Student Physical Altercation

Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	13	8.0	12.9
Once a year	18	11.0	17.8
Once a month	31	19.0	30.7
Once a week	18	11.0	17.8
Once a day	11	6.7	10.9
Hourly	10	6.1	9.9
Total	101	62.0	100.0
Missing	62	38.0	
Total	163	100.0	
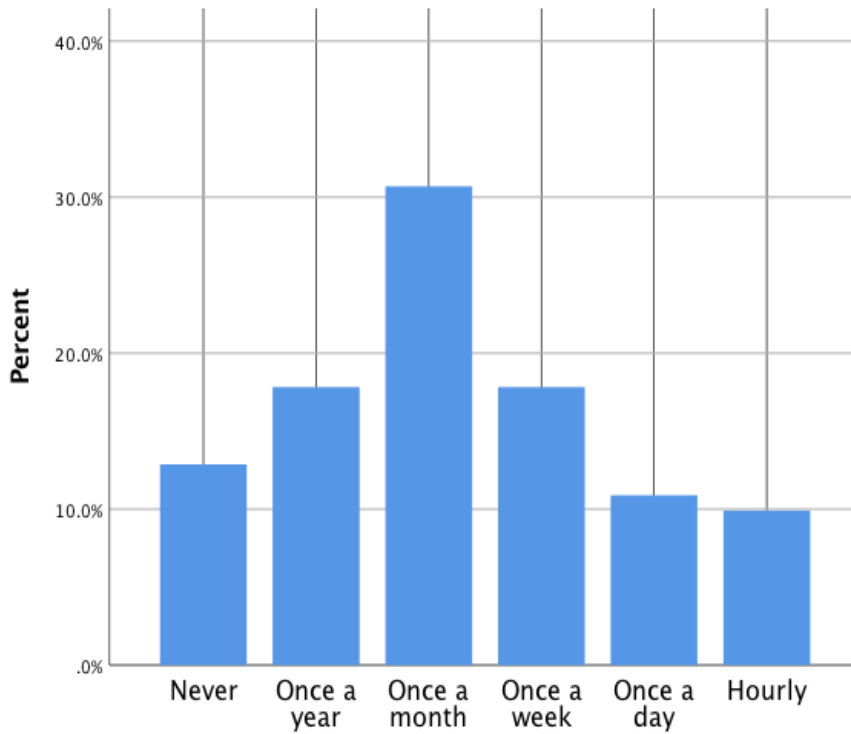
Figure 6. Percentage of SSOs reported request frequency for intervention in student physical altercations.

Interview and Focus Group Data

Interviewees and focus group participants saw safety and security, enforcement or supporter of school discipline, and relationship-building as main roles for SSOs.

Safety and security. The primary role for SSOs is viewed as safety and security and involves patrolling hallways, lunchrooms, and the perimeter; overseeing transportation matters such as bus loading and unloading and traffic patterns and parking; and monitoring everyone coming in and out of the campus.

> *…but the bottom line is, we're all there to do our jobs and keep students and staff safe and secure…I mean, I wanna keep students and staff safe, you know? Nobody likes to watch the news and see that something happened at a school, because you never know when it could be you, and you wanna make sure that your staff can stay safe and everything across the board flows properly. (Cody, SSO, Region 4)*

> *It varies a little bit, but in the high schools predominantly what we see them doing are carrying out all the security requirements, patrolling and making sure the school is safe, answering questions, conducting investigations under the supervisor of the specialists. (Joe, School Leader, Region 4)*

> *All of my principals are wonderful people, but they have a really big job. They wear so many hats, the jack of all trades, master of – well, master of many probably. Safety needs its own little niche and it needs its own little expert, and that's what our safety specialists should be. (Joan, SSO Supervisor, Region 4)*

School discipline. Several interviewees and focus group participants talked about the role SSOs play in school discipline. This ranged from monitoring students serving in-school suspension, investigating violations of school rules, and reporting to administration about any concerns over potential student issues.

> *The SRO's get involved in the criminal matters, but the SSO's, the specialists, they do all the administrative investigations involving student discipline. Then in the middle schools, many of the SSO's, the security assistants, are used for alternative programs, kind of your in school suspension programs where they'll monitor the middle school children involved in those. (Joe, School Leader, Region 4)*

> *And we work the investigation from the school rules standpoint to see if it needs to go any further into the hearing's office or that sort of thing, for further discipline. And then the*

police officer does his own investigation from a law-enforcement standpoint and to see if any criminal charges need to be placed against the kid. (Terry, SSO, Region 4)

The general, overall standard school rules are what we try to enforce. I'm lucky enough to have a school resource officer, which is a sworn officer from the state of Virginia, in my building with me. So usually he enforces the laws. Myself and my team enforce the school rules. (Wes, SSO, Region 4)

Relationship-building. The relationship-building role for SSOs includes getting to know

the students, serving as a mentor and role model, and generally building relationships with as

many students as possible. For some interviewees and focus group participants, the relationships

are important as they create open communication where students are more comfortable sharing

information with the SSO.

You know, sometimes students that are just, if we see they're having trouble in school or, you know, the typical one kid sitting by himself at lunch, we'll go talk to him and make sure everything's okay. I guess a great example is, I have a senior now that has been eating lunch with us every other day since he was a freshman, because he really doesn't have a whole lot of friends in the building. On certain days—we're a block schedule. So, on certain days, he eats with one guy he's really close friends with. On the other opposite days, the even period days, he usually comes and eats lunch with us and talks with us. And he was kinda struggling at first, but he managed to—I think that's the mentoring we do, we try to make sure that nobody's left out. Obviously, we don't tolerate any bullying. He wasn't a bullying subject, but he was one of those kids that just kinda, you look at him and he's sitting alone and you go, "Okay, he needs somebody to talk to." So, that's the type of mentoring we do. (Bruce, SSO, Region 4)

Like I said, I constantly help kids make smart decisions. I like to think I'm a positive male role model. Some of the kids in our school don't necessarily have [a positive role model] in their home life or in the community. So a lot of times – I'm an unarmed security officer in the school. So I basically handle about 2600 teenagers with my own personal interaction skills, the ability to be able to have conversations, to be able to use examples and convince young adults to make smart decisions. It's just building those relationships. (Wes, SSO, Region 4)

What I do with my role, even though I'm a safety and security assistant, is I feel like I'm a liaison between the students and the teachers. I'll bring up things to the teachers that I hear from the students on a daily basis and then I also explain some things to the students, you know, remind them what the teachers are really there for. (Kayla, SSO, Region 4)

That's what we – when I sit down and talk with the SSO once they've been hired, the main thing that we really talk about is that as a school security officer, yes, you do have your daily and expectations to patrol a building and making sure that doors are locked and secure but you're really there to build that rapport with students because the relationship is the number one thing is kids can trust you and they have a good relationship with you. They'll tell you what's going on. (Christina, SSO Supervisor, Region 1)

SRO Training Needs

Survey Data

In the survey, SROs, SRO Supervisors, and SRO Liaisons were asked to indicate which training topics SROs would be beneficial to SROs given their typical duties. Table 15 provides the results of this question. The most frequently selected topics for all three groups included Bullying, De-escalation Techniques, and Working with Students with Special Needs. SROs and SRO Supervisors also frequently chose Dangerous/Threatening Students as a beneficial topic and SROs and SRO Liaisons frequently indicated Mental Health Issues in Childhood and Adolescence as a beneficial topic. The data suggests Communicating with Children and Adolescents was a popular choice for SRO Supervisors and Establishing Effective Working Relationships with Parents was named a beneficial training topic by a large number of SRO Liaisons.

Several SROs entered responses for the Other category to share additional training topics they felt would be beneficial to SROs but were not included in the question options. These additional topics were: Social Media ($n = 6$), Active Shooter ($n = 2$), Restorative Justice ($n = 1$), Working with Principals and School Boards ($n = 1$). SRO Liaisons submitted these additional beneficial training topics: Decreasing SRO Involvement in Non-criminal Activities ($n = 2$), Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) for Youth ($n = 1$), and Active Shooter ($n = 1$).

Think about what SROs do in a typical week. Would they benefit from more training on the following topics?

Table 15. Additional Training Topics for SROs

Topic	SROs (*n* = 202)	SRO Supervisors (*n* = 54)	SRO Liaisons (*n* = 40)
Working with Students with Special Needs	67%	63%	60%
Mental Health Issues in Childhood and Adolescence	67%	59%	55%
De-escalation Techniques	60%	63%	53%
Dangerous/Threatening Students	59%	65%	23%
Bullying	57%	65%	55%
Communicating with Children and Adolescents	54%	65%	40%
Mentoring Youth	54%	52%	15%
Establishing Effective Working Relationships with Parents	52%	57%	48%
Child Abuse and Neglect	49%	50%	18%
Evaluation of the Safety/Security Programs	48%	48%	28%
Youth Gangs	45%	52%	10%
Drugs, Alcohol, and Addictions	44%	48%	18%
Counseling/Helping Skills and Techniques	44%	43%	25%
Crisis and Emergency Management Planning	42%	56%	23%
Search and Seizure Procedures	34%	41%	18%
Child or Adolescent Development	34%	26%	23%
Cultural Diversity	22%	31%	25%
Trauma-Informed Care	22%	26%	20%
Victims' Rights	11%	20%	10%
Implicit Bias	10%	22%	10%
Other	7%	11%	3%
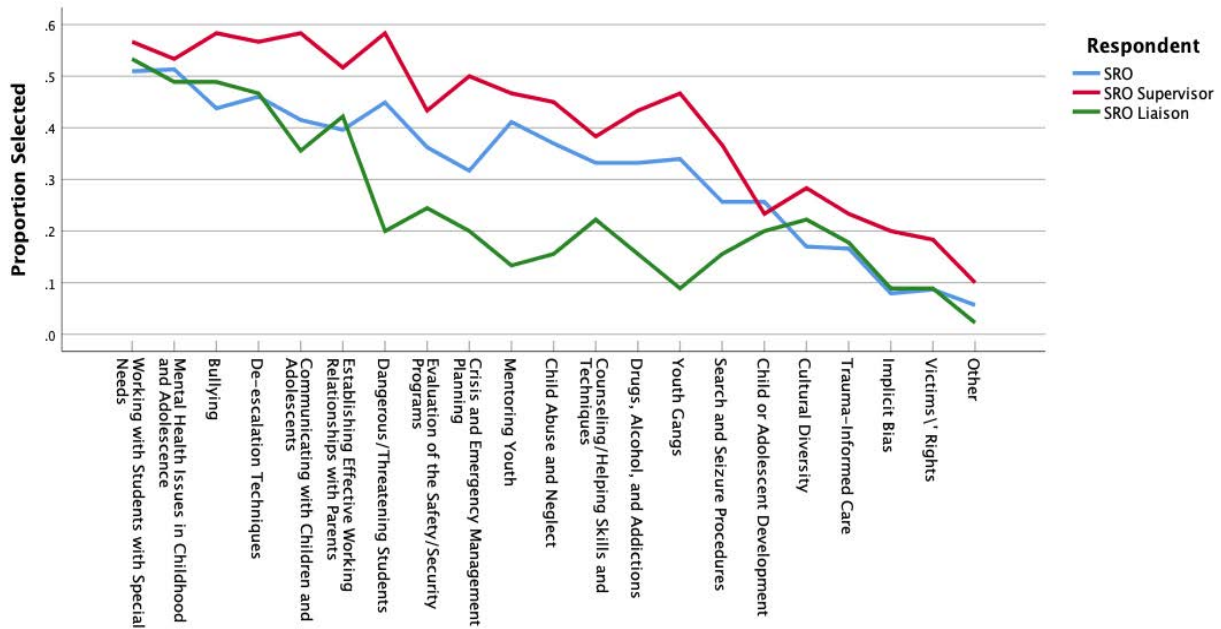
Figure 7. Proportion of the respondents who think SROs would benefit from more training on each topic.

Interview and Focus Group Data

Interviewees and focus group participants identified additional topics for training that

SROs could use:

- Mental health (e.g., de-escalation strategies, trauma-informed care, crisis intervention)
- Evidence-based school security
- Trends in technology, social media
- Active shooter

I feel like they might be getting more on this, but more of that counseling – not the counseling aspect, but more of the aspect of working with individuals who might be at risk for suicide or victims of trauma. I think that's the big one, and that could be a – sometimes that can be a challenge, where the resource officer comes in, and you might have an individual who is scared of law enforcement because of a past traumatic event. And just training, more training on how to understand that there are people that are victims of trauma that do not mean to come across as disrespectful, but they have a lot –

they're dealing with a lot. So maybe more trauma-informed training. I think that would be one of the biggest. (Melissa, School Leader, Region 6)

I'd like to see a little bit more about school security, like within the school. What we do now is I've got my basic knowledge of it as a school resource officer. I've got my basic knowledge of safety and security as a police officer, and I try to marry the two of those together. I have to believe that there's been some research or some studies or some discipline out there that has already done that that can give us some hints, tips, tricks, best practices, things like that. I'd really like to see that. (Daniel, SRO, Region 1)

SSO Training Needs

Survey Data

In the survey, SSOs were asked to indicate which training topics they felt would be beneficial based on their typical job duties. The most frequently selected topics align with the most popular topics chosen by SROs, SRO Supervisors, and SRO Liaisons. The top five most frequently selected training topics were: Dangerous/Threatening Students, Mental Health Issues in Childhood and Adolescence, De-escalation Techniques, Working with Students with Special Needs, and Bullying. SSOs were given the opportunity to submit training topics they felt would be beneficial but were not provided as answer options. Two SSOs mentioned Physical Intervention (to include how to disarm an individual) and one SSO suggested Translation.

SSO Survey Question: Think about what you do in your job in a typical week. Would SSOs benefit from more training on the following topics?

Table 16. SSO Reported Additional, Beneficial Training Topics

Training Topic	Frequency	% (*n* = 108)
Dangerous/Threatening Students	58	53.7%
Mental Health Issues in Childhood and Adolescence	57	52.8%
De-escalation Techniques	56	51.9%
Working with Students with Special Needs	56	51.9%
Bullying	52	48.1%
Evaluation of the Safety/Security Programs	49	45.4%
Communicating with Children and Adolescents	46	42.6%
Youth Gangs	46	42.6%
Counseling/Helping Skills and Techniques	45	41.7%
Search and Seizure Procedures	45	41.7%
Crisis and Emergency Management Planning	44	40.7%
Drugs, Alcohol, and Addictions	39	36.1%
Establishing Effective Working Relationships with Parents	39	36.1%
Child Abuse and Neglect	36	33.3%
Cultural Diversity	34	31.5%
Mentoring Youth	30	27.8%
Trauma-Informed Care	24	22.2%
Child or Adolescent Development	23	21.3%
Victims' Rights	20	18.5%
Implicit Bias	14	13.0%
Other	5	4.6%

Interview and Focus Group Data

Interviewees and focus group participants indicated that SSO training covered some topics, but needed more in-depth coverage of some of those topics, and that some needed topics were not addressed at all.

Yeah, the training is pretty basic, to be honest with you. He goes over the different laws and everything that are – that you use within the school system. It was – you know, when I went through the original training, it was pretty basic. I mean, you would have to be brain-dead not to be able to pass the test almost. So I think that maybe some of that is lacking. (Terry, SSO, Region 4)

In the interviews and focus groups, identified topics for additional SSO training were:

- Advanced first aid
- Conflict management
- Current trends in technology
- Legal issues
- Mental health
- Personal safety
- School safety
- Working with SROs
- Working with students
- Working with students with special needs

Anything that can help my people with their bag of tricks so that they interact with the kids they will know this child might have a certain form of autism and one of my SSO's had been to a class on autism, they could approach that child with an understanding of autism and be able to handle that situation better than if they hadn't had that opportunity to take that class on autism, as an example. (Wes, SSO, Region 4)

I think crisis management. I would definitely like more training on that.(Tony, SSO, Region 4)

I would think probably more technology stuff, because that's what the kids are into, more. You know, most of our job is in youth conflict resolution and stuff like that. The technology is hard to keep up with. We used to always seem to be behind the curve with the students and all that. I actually rely on the students more to keep us up with what layers of technology they're using than I do the school system. (Bruce, SSO, Region 4)

Research Question 1c: Training Structure

What structural method of providing training is most effective?

MOU Data

Timing of SRO training. Thirteen MOUs contained texts coded as related to the timing

of SRO training. This text described how SROs may need time away from school hours to attend

training, how SROs should inform school administrators if they will be off site to attend training,

how SROs should try to schedule training to occur on non-instructional days, and/or how SROs

should be given opportunities for training. Example text includes:

> *On occasion, SROs may be required to be away from their assigned school for training and other law enforcement-related duties.*

> *When possible and practical, the SRO will notify the principal of the assigned school when he/she will be absent from the campus (vacation, sick day, training, etc.).*

> *The School Resource Officer will be afforded every opportunity to attend specialized trainings specific to the School Resource Officer Program while school is in session.*

> *The SRO Unit Supervisor will attempt to schedule the bulk of an officer's yearly training during the summer vacation.*

> *In the event that an SRO is on annual leave or committed to training obligations, a reasonable effort will be made by the Patrol Division of the [LOCALITY] Police Department to conduct extra patrols at the High School and Middle School.*

> ***Provider of SRO training.*** Forty-nine MOUs contained text describing who is

responsible for providing or overseeing the training of the SRO. This text described who

provides funding for training, who decides what training the SRO attends, and/or who offers the

training. Twenty-seven MOUs contained text that indicates both the LEA and the SD are

involved in SRO training. Sometimes this text explicitly identified a mutual responsibility

through a joint statement:

The parties shall collaborate to provide in-service training to the SROs.

> *Selection, assignment, scheduling, training, supervision, and evaluation of school resource officers (SROs) will be the responsibility of the Sheriff's Office. However, each of these actions will take into account the input of school personnel, and identified needs and conditions of schools.*

> *The School Division and the [LOCALITY] Police Department should mutually seek opportunities to jointly provide in-service training in the areas of mutual interest to the program.*

Other times, there were separate statements occurring at different parts in the MOU that

referenced LEA training and SD training:

The school division will provide the SRO with in-service training or instruction to support the school's mission.

The Chief of Police/designee will identify and provide training for SROs.

The [LOCALITY]Sherriff's Office shall be responsible for providing training for the SRO's on all
subjects required of their positions as Deputy Sheriff.

[LOACLITY] Public Schools shall provide in-service training, when available, to the SROs in topical areas…

Thirteen MOUs contained text that only named the SD as the provider of SRO training. One of the 13 MOUs contained a single reference to the SD providing training in seclusion and restraint. In the other 12, the reference was (with minimal variation in wording):

The school system shall provide in-service training, when available, to the SROs in areas that will increase the effectiveness of the officers and their ability to accomplish their respective duties and responsibilities.

Nine MOUs contained only text naming the LEA as the provider of SRO training. The relevant statements sometimes referred to the LEA providing ongoing training for the SRO, and sometimes referred to the idea that the SRO would start their job as an SRO as a fully trained police officer, often with additional training specific to being an SRO.

The SRO will be required to attend all designated training within the Police Department.

The PD will ensure the SRO receives relevant training prior to or within 60 days of assignment

Funding of SRO training. Of the 58 MOUs that referenced training, 3 contained statements that explicitly addressed who would pay for part or all of the SRO training.

The Sheriff's Office and the Board of Supervisors negotiate their percentages of costs associated with the deputy's training, uniform, weapon, equipment and transportation. Each agency's percentage is determined during the annual review and update of this memorandum.

Also, the Sheriff's Office will be responsible for payments involving the deputies' training.

[LOCALITY] Public Schools agrees to pay 50 percent for the SLS and SROs to attend the annual Virginia School and Campus Safety Training Forum. That will include the cost of the training forum, per diem, and lodging at the host hotel for this event. The training costs for [LOCALITY] PS will not exceed $750 per school year.

Interview and Focus Group Data

SRO training appears to be provided primarily by the LEA and SSO training is most frequently provided by the SD. An effective training model will likely include multiple training providers, including training provided by the LEA, training provided by the SD, and joint trainings where the LEA and SD work together to identify training needs and address them. Joint trainings that provide opportunities for SROs, SSOs, and school leaders to interact and share training experiences could also improve understanding of roles and improve relationships among those responsible for school safety. Interviewees described positive training experiences that involved joint training with SROs and school leaders.

> *The principal – or the superintendent and I were invited to come to that training by the sheriff, which was an excellent training, and this is – this was why that training was so important, was because the SROs often see how we perform our job, but we were actually able to see how they train. And that was a perfect segue for us to really understand how they train for active shooters, school shootings, and to be able to watch them and participate in that training was critical. It made me realized how important training was on all facets for resource officers, but especially for them to get that additional active shooter training in a live setting. The comfort level that I had when I left there was elevated. (Tyler, School Leader, Region 5)*

> *We go several times a year. There will be training. The schools will have a training, or a seminar, or something, and then they'll invite some officers to it. So it's not just within that cocoon of law enforcement. We go to training with school personnel, school administrators, teachers, things like that. I think that's huge, also. (Daniel, SRO, Region 1)*

Almost all participants mentioned the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) as they talked about training. Interviewees and focus group participants referenced

training and certification provided by DCJS and the annual School Safety Training Forum, with

several participants speaking positively about their training and conference experiences.

> *DCJS does an amazing job at providing really, really beneficial training that we just aren't able to do here in our county because we just don't have them for the time that we need them for. (Christina, SSO Supervisor, Region 1)*

> *We usually go to the School Safety Conference every year, normally held at Hampton. I'm not sure if you're familiar with that one. But we normally go there. They have great resources. Kind of like everything at that one location. So we get opportunities to interact with other school districts and get a lot of the training that they have listed. Because now with the budget cuts and them not wanting to send people to different events across the state, that kind of fits for us. (Curtis, SRO, Region 2)*

> *We go to the SRO conference every year that's put on [by] the DCJS. They hit on numerous topics – anything from bullying to mental health. So we get a lot of good information from those trainings. (Ryan, SRO Supervisor, Region 5)*

Two participants offered a critique of DCJS training in that they wanted to see more practical

exercises in addition to presentation of material:

> *Well, I think the Department of Criminal Justice Services focuses a lot on the mental health aspects of the kids. I mean, I think that's good. But by the same token, I think they need to expand out and maybe provide a little bit more hands-on experience. There is a lot of theory involved, but not much practical training. (Terry, SSO, Region 4)*

> *Instead of just sitting and listening to somebody talk – he's wonderful – but I would like somebody – I want to see feedback…scenarios. (Kayla, SSO, Region 4)*

Based on interview and focus group data, a number of recommendations, based on the

experiences of these participants, emerged associated with SRO and SSO training. While some

aspects of these are discussed above, below is a summary list of recommendations.

SRO Training Best Practices/Recommendations

- It is helpful for those who provide SRO training to be able to interact with and hear how

  other SDs and LEAs are implementing their SRO programs.

- School administrators should be provided with opportunities to learn about law enforcement and legal issues. This can be accomplished by joint trainings where school leaders attend SRO trainings to experience firsthand what SROs are learning.

- An SRO Supervisor in Region 2 described a monthly meeting that involves all the SROs under his supervision coming together to discuss issues, trends, and experiences, and may also include a training component. The meeting location rotates through the different schools. At each meeting, the host SRO is responsible for a 15-minute presentation on an SRO-related topic.

SSO Training Best Practices/Recommendations

- SSO training is facilitated when there is a training coordinator at the county level who is responsible for all SSO training.

- An SSO Supervisor in Region 1 reported success involving local LEA in SSO training for topics related to school safety.

- There needs to be additional paid time for SSOs to attend training on days when school is not in session.

Research Question 2: Selection and Hiring

What are the criteria that are being used to select SROs and SSOs to operate in schools?

SRO Selection

Survey Data

In the survey, SRO Supervisors and SRO Liaisons were asked who had determined the job duties of the SRO they supervised. The data suggests that the LEA is the primary determiner of SRO duties, with SRO Supervisors, on average, estimating that the LEA was responsible for determining a greater proportion of SRO duties. The average SRO Supervisor reported the LEA determined 75% of the SRO duties and the typical SRO Liaison reported the LEA determined 60% of SRO duties. Respondents were also allowed to specify if SRO duties were determined by someone other than the answers provided (LEA, SD administrator, school administrator, or school board representative). Two SRO Supervisors indicated that the MOU determined SRO job duties.

SRO Supervisor, SRO Liaison Survey Question: For the most recently assigned SRO you supervise, who determined the duties of the job? (Total must sum to 100)

Table 17. SRO Supervisors' Beliefs Concerning Who Determines SRO Duties

SRO Supervisor Response	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Range	
				Potential	Actual
The Law Enforcement Agency	52	74.50	25.29	0-100	10-100
A School Division Administrator	53	12.17	15.712	0-100	0-50
A Principal or Assistant Principal at the school	54	11.31	16.77	0-100	0-75
A School Board Representative	54	0.83	4.32	0-100	0-30
Someone else	54	4.17	19.27	0-100	0-100

Table 18. SRO Liaisons' Beliefs Concerning Who Determines SRO Duties

SRO Liaison Response	n	M	SD	Range	
				Potential	Actual
The Law Enforcement Agency	40	60.45	24.55	0-100	10-100
A School Division Administrator	40	20.58	18.92	0-100	0-50
A Principal or Assistant Principal at the school	40	17.98	21.07	0-100	0-75
A School Board Representative	40	1.00	4.27	0-100	0-25
Someone else	40	0	0	0-100	0-0
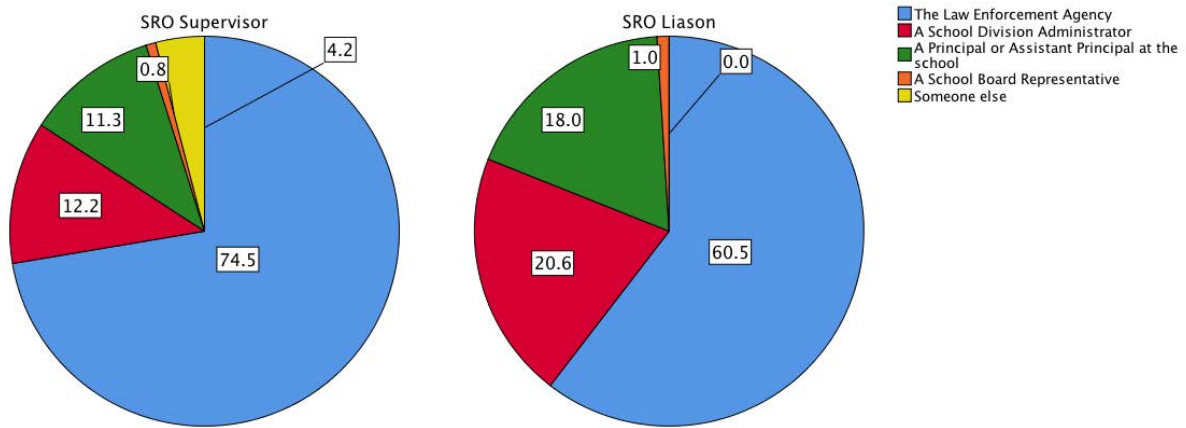
Figure 8. Comparison of SRO Supervisors' and SRO Liaisons' beliefs concerning who determines SRO duties.

A boxplot (see Figure 9) reveals large variability in responses from both SRO Supervisors and
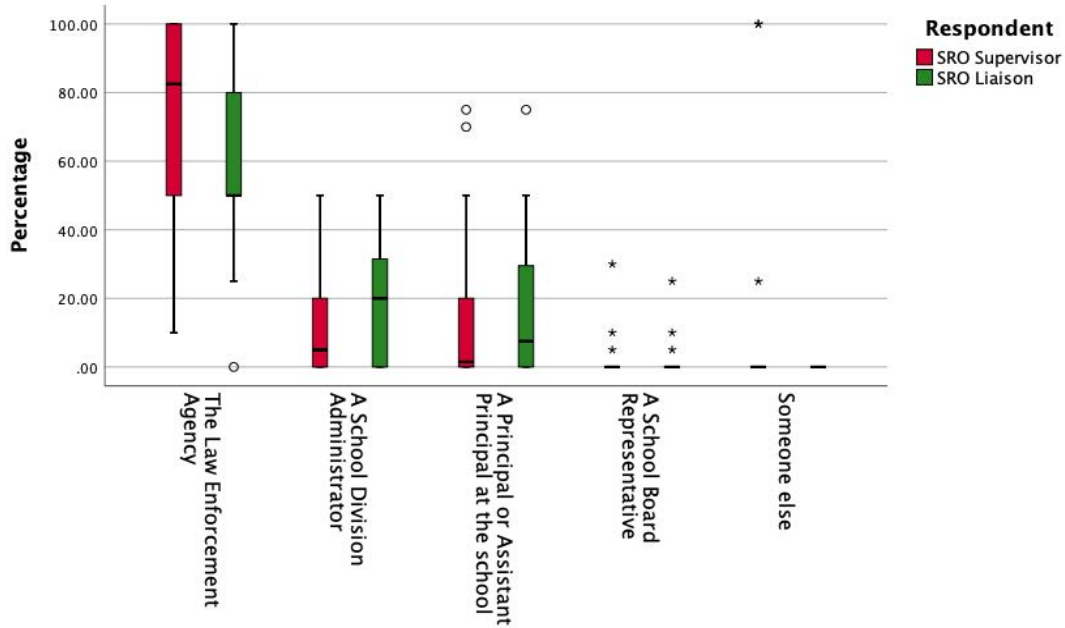
SRO Liaisons.

Figure 9. Boxplot showing SRO Supervisors' and SRO Liaisons' beliefs concerning who determines SRO duties.

SRO Supervisors and SRO Liaisons were asked about their involvement in the SRO selection process. Fifty-nine percent of SRO Supervisors ($n = 53$) and 20% of SRO Liaisons ($n = 40$) reported they were part of the selection process for the most recently selected SRO.

SRO Supervisor, SRO Liaison Survey Question: For the individual most recently selected/hired to be an SRO, were you (or, for SRO Liaisons, another school administrator) a part of the selection process?

Table 19. SRO Supervisors' Report on Their Involvement in the SRO Selection Process

SRO Supervisor Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Yes	31	57.4	58.5
No	19	35.2	35.8
Other	3	5.6	5.7
Total	53	98.1	100.0
Missing	1	1.9	
Total	54	100.0	

Table 20. SRO Liaisons' Report on Their Involvement in the SRO Selection Process

SRO Liaison Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Yes	8	20.0	75.0
No	30	75.0	5.0
Other	2	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	75.0
Missing	0	0	
Total	40	100.0	
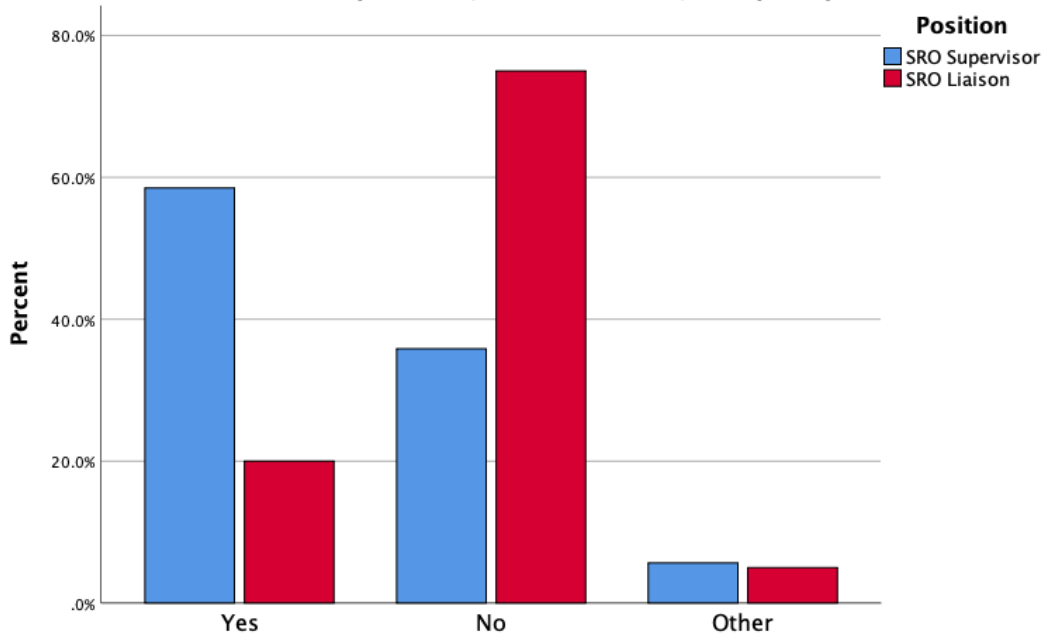
Figure 10. Comparison of SRO Supervisor and SRO Liaison responses about their involvement in the SRO selection process.

MOU Data

SRO qualifications. Nineteen of the 73 MOUs contained text that described requirements or preferred qualifications for SROs. Table 21 lists the categories of requirements/preferred qualifications and their associated frequency.

Table 21. Frequency of Named Selection Requirements in the 73 MOUs

Named Requirement/Suggested Qualification	*n*
Ability and interest to work with youth/students	14
Ability and interest to work with school staff	11
Ability and interest to work with the public	10
Be a certified Law Enforcement Officer	8
Be a creative Problem Solver	8
Knowledge of juvenile code and court procedures	8
Ability to work with diverse groups	7
Conflict resolution skills	7
Have a minimum amount (1 to 3 years) of experience in law enforcement	7
Have completed or be willing to complete Basic SRO Training	6
Knowledge of Police Departmental resources	6
Ability to work with minimal supervision	4
Ability to perform multi-faceted roles (e.g., law enforcer, instructor, role model, liaison)	4
Recommended by supervisor	4
Ability to maintain uniformed appearance	3
Communication skills	3
Knowledge of law, law enforcement, and law enforcement procedures	3
Unspecified knowledge, skills, and abilities relevant to this job	3
Ability to be a positive resource to youth, school staff, parents, and public	3
Willingness to attend additional training as needed	3
Ability and interest to work with parents	2
Unspecified criteria provided in another document	2
Knowledge of community resources	2
Motivated and productive	2
Ability to convey a positive police presence	2
Ability and willingness to instruct students, faculty, parents, and others on a variety of law enforcement related topics	1
Ability to work cooperatively in a non-law enforcement environment	1

Named Requirement/Suggested Qualification	*n*
Be a DCJS Certified Instructor	1
Be a department member in good standing with no grievable disciplinary action within the previous year	1
Be in good physical condition	1
Consistency and fairness	1
Good coordinating and planning skills	1
Good judgment and discretion	1
Good moral standards	1
Knowledge of Board of Education policies and regulations	1
Possess even temperament	1
Respect for students, including recognition of cultural norms and differences	1
Sincere concern for the school community	1
Willingness to, when possible, undergo a screening by both department and school officials as to suitability and temperament for the assignment	1
Willingness to be an SRO for a minimum of two (2) years or as the Chief of Police deems necessary	1
Willingness to work a varied schedule	1

Organization responsible for SRO selection. Forty-seven MOUs contained text that referenced the hiring, selection, assignment, and/or placement of SROs. Thirty-five MOUs outlined which partner organization was responsible for the selection and/or placement of SROs. Of those 35, 33 MOUs named the LEA as being ultimately responsible for selecting SROs and/or assigning SROs to particular schools. Twenty-four of those 33 MOUs contained text indicating that the LEA decisions about selection and placement of SROs should incorporate input from the SD.

> *Selection, assignment, scheduling, training, supervision, and evaluation of school resource officers (SROs) will be the responsibility of the SO. However, each of these actions will take into account the input of school personnel, and identified needs and conditions of schools*

The assignments are to be made through a collaborative approach involving both [LOCALITY] COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS and [LOCALITY] COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, with the [LOCALITY] COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE having final placement authority of its personnel.

Selection and appointment of the SRO will be made by the Sheriff's Office in consultation with the School Division.

Principals may be consulted by Sheriff/Chief Deputy prior to the selection of a new SRO to attain any relevant information on the needs or concerns of the particular school.

Officers will be selected by means of a joint selection committee, comprised of three (3) representatives from the [LOCALITY] School District who will be appointed by the Superintendent of Schools and three (3) representatives from the [LOCALITY] Police Department who will be appointed by the [LOCALITY] Chief of Police. The Selection Committee will make recommendations to the Chief of Police. While he will duly consider the Committee's recommendations, selection of each School Resource Officer is within the sole discretion of the Chief of Police.

Nine of the 33 MOUs that named the LEA as the organization responsible for selection and placement did not specifically mention incorporating input from the SD.

The Sheriff will appoint the SRO.

The County shall, at its expense, assign police officers from the Police Department to work as SROs at each high school and each middle school physically located within the County.

The assignment of the SRO shall be at the discretion of the Chief of Police.

Of the 35 MOUs that named an organization as responsible for SRO selection and placement, two MOUs described a collaborative process involving both the LEA and SD. There was no clear designation of one organization as the lead party.

The assignment of SROS will be made through a collaborative process involving [LOCALITY] SO and [LOCALITY] CS administrations.

[LOCALITY] PD and [LOCALITY] PS will collaborate on the selection of officers to be assigned.

Interview and Focus Group Data

       SRO selection and assignment. Interviewees described a similar process of becoming an

SRO. According to interviewees, each LEA announced there were openings for SROs, which are

considered a specialized assignment. Officers currently working for the LEA expressed their

interest in the assignment via a letter of intent or application and from this pool of candidates,

officers were selected for a panel interview. Following the interview, candidates were ranked

based on their qualifications and performance in the panel interview. Open positions for SROs

were filled based on placement on this list.

> *… it's just like any other specialized assignment, just like going to canine or becoming a detective. You first put in an application with all of your qualifications and just your general resume. If you're selected from that pool, you are given an interview. It's a panel interview with a number of people. On that panel is – there will be somebody from your own division, somebody from the school resource officer section. There will also be some representatives from the school system in attendance, and they'll ask you a series of questions, rate your responses, and then they will tier the candidates according to their performance therein. When openings occur, they will then do down the list. And say there's three openings, six people on the list, they will then take the first three people. (Daniel, SRO, Region 1)*

       In exemplar SRO programs, there appeared to be enough interest from current officers in

becoming an SRO that LEAs did not have to assign officers who might not have an interest in

being an SRO as SROs. As Glenn, an SRO Supervisor in Region 3, said:

> *…it's a process, and it's not an assignment. We get away—we stay away from assigning that, because if you put a person there who does not wanna be an SRO, your performance is gonna be very low. So, we do have to do it based upon the individual's interest in doing that.*

       While interviewees indicated the LEA in each school district was in charge of hiring and

selecting SROs, assignments to specific schools were made with input from the school district

and the SROs, when possible and to varying degrees.

The school gets a lot of input in that [SRO assignment to a school], and a lot of that is just our administration's way to fit the right personality to the right situations. (Daniel, SRO, Region 1)

Usually, we get better responses if the individuals have a setting where they're more comfortable rather than placing them somewhere where they're not happy. So, we take a lot of different things into consideration. Again, some of it's how they handle themselves, some is how they—where they want to be, and we just base it upon all of that. (Glenn, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)

SRO Qualifications. When selecting SROs, LEAs were looking for specific

qualifications and generally looked for a person whose experience, demeanor, and personality

were appropriate for the position. Ryan, an SRO Supervisor in Region 5, described how selection

committee members were looking for someone who "we feel like would be a good fit." Several

key characteristics emerged as traits that likely make a person a good fit for the SRO job.

The most important attribute for an SRO appeared to be being able to work well with

kids. Interviewees and focus group participants said an SRO needs to enjoy being around kids,

have a desire to work with kids and want to make a difference, and know how to develop

relationships with kids. Several interviewees and focus group participants wanted to know that

an SRO candidate has prior experience being around kids, such as being a parent, teacher, or

coach. Interviewees and focus group participants believed that traits like honesty and

dependability were important when working with youth. SROs had to be approachable, outgoing,

and friendly to best interact with students. Finally, interviewees and focus group participants

suggested SROs need to be compassionate.

There's certainly dangers in every school, but you don't have to come in and be a Robocop. You've got to remember you're working with kids. You've got to remember that some of their mindsets, they're not adults. They're still growing. So flexibility and patience are probably the biggest things. (Mark, SRO, Region 1)

And so as far as schools is concerned, you really have to, not every police officer can be an SRO. An SRO is for a position where you just have to have that ability to be able to make connections with kids and be able to you know, not just charge every kid you come

across…It's kind of a combination of a couple of things. It's one of those things where you have to be able to make that connection. But as far as you have to be comfortable with yourself, you have to be comfortable with reaching out. And speaking to kids. You have to be good with verbal judo….You have to be a person that doesn't lie, because kids are very innocent. And they are very, they listen to every word you say sometimes. When you don't think that they're listening, they're listening. And they're watching. And they're taking in, absorbing everything you're talking about. And if at any point in time they catch you in a lie, you will be done as an SRO. Because they will let every student know about that. (Spencer, SRO, Region 3)

I mean, for one, you've got to enjoy kids. If you don't enjoy kids, I mean, this SRO thing will not work for you. (Curtis, SRO, Region 2)

Number one, is being a people person, being able to relate to children, being able to understand how children think. I think a lot of cases, you'll find that some of your better SROs are already parents themselves, and in some cases, they're even grandparents. And being able to understand that child and know where their mindset may be going, what they're thinking about, and how it might be crucial sometimes for the officer to understand that the child has different needs than what another child has. (Glenn, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)

And, it takes, as I tell people all the time, it takes a special officer to be a school resource officer. A person can be an excellent police officer on the street, but that doesn't mean that person can be an excellent school resource officer. It takes a special person with heart, with compassion, a person foremost to try to develop young minds and help them to grow. (Alex, SRO Supervisor, Region 2)

But also that they are personable. And what I said earlier before, they are gonna approach students in the cafeteria. They're gonna walk up to the table of athletes, and they're gonna walk up to the table of girls, and they're gonna walk up to the table that has drama kids sitting at it. And they're gonna interact with all the students, and that really is what helps form positive relationships with that resource officer, just those little things, and talking to all the students. It just creates a positive atmosphere for not only that resource officer, but for the entire sheriff's department….. They're not just gonna go in there and sit at their desk. They're gonna do their thing, and they have that mentality that they want to help kids and faculty. (Ryan, SRO Supervisor, Region 5)

Other important characteristics to be an SRO involved being flexible, open-minded, and understanding. Interviewees and focus group participants noted these are important traits when working with youth and with other members of the school community. SROs need to be willing to help out when needed and be willing to work with all different types of students. SROs need to be good problem-solvers who are creative and can think outside the box. SROs need to be

open to trying different approaches, such as restorative justice, and be motivated to seek out new training opportunities and resources to better address an issue.

> *Don't hurry into things. You know, make sure that you're well prepared for what you're getting ready to undertake and just—you know, don't try to overpower situations. You have to lose the street mentality as far as a street officer and become more open minded to the fact that you're dealing, now, with children. And don't be so harsh on them that they're gonna shut down on you, but yet be firm enough that they understand why you're doing what you're doing when you have to take action. (Glenn, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)*

> *Being able to be part of multidisciplinary teams, to be able to provide the best support. Definitely being able to, in some ways, think out of the box of how to best serve, especially with teenagers, how to best serve the adolescent population. But definitely the collaboration, the communication, openness to change in the way things happen. Definitely in a school environment, things change from day to day. (Melissa, School Leader, Region 6)*

> *Also, problem solver. I want somebody that can think outside the box, somebody that can solve a problem that doesn't necessarily have to have a legal remedy to it. Ninety percent – and this is just grabbing a number, but 90 percent – of what I do there's no legal remedy to it. But I still am responsible for coming up with some sort of answer. People are looking at you like, "Why aren't you giving me an answer here?" So you need somebody that's creative, somebody that's a problem solver. (Daniel, SRO, Region 1)*

> *Sometimes there's stuff that we're in the area and asked to do certain things that may be not specifically outlined in our job description, but it may be helpful for administration when they're short handed or something else that the SROs can help them do. And often that's really appreciated. (Luke, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)*

According to the interviewees and focus group participants, another area in which SROs need to excel is having strong interpersonal skills. SROs have to work with many types of people, including students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the media. SROs need to have strong communication skills, be comfortable speaking in front of an audience, and be good listeners. Interviewees and focus group participants noted that a lot of SRO work involves developing relationships with other people and being part of the school community.

Finally, interviewees and focus group participants talked about the need for an SRO to be able to make people feel safe. This involved knowing trends and practices in school safety and

general knowledge about public safety gained through experience as a seasoned officer. SROs

must be willing to be present and be visible. Interviewees and focus group participants

referenced how SROs must find a balance in appearing authoritative yet not being overpowering.

> *I think somebody who's smart with relationships and can speak to a lot of different types of groups of people with a variety of different ideas and backgrounds and perspectives and to be okay with that, and monitor those situations pretty well. He's hard-working, he's not afraid to be visible and out there and walk around, rather than sit in their office. And then somebody who's humble, who has a presence about themselves who's approachable and not real badge-heavy, for lack of a better type of phrase. (Rick, School Leader, Region 4)*

SSO Selection

Survey Data

In the survey, SSOs were asked to compare their official job description to their actual

job duties. Overall, the 104 respondents seemed to think their actual duties aligned with their job

description with 57% responding "Very Much" and 35% responding "Somewhat".

SSO Survey Question: How well does your description of how you spend your time match your job description?

Table 22. SSOs' Beliefs About Fit Between Job Description and Actual Job Experience

SSO Response	n	%	Valid %
Valid			
Very Much	59	54.6	56.7
Somewhat	36	33.3	34.6
Not Much	7	6.5	6.7
Not at All	1	0.9	1.0
I am not familiar with my official job description	1	0.9	1.0
Total	104	96.3	100.0
Missing	4	3.7	
Total	108	100.0	

77
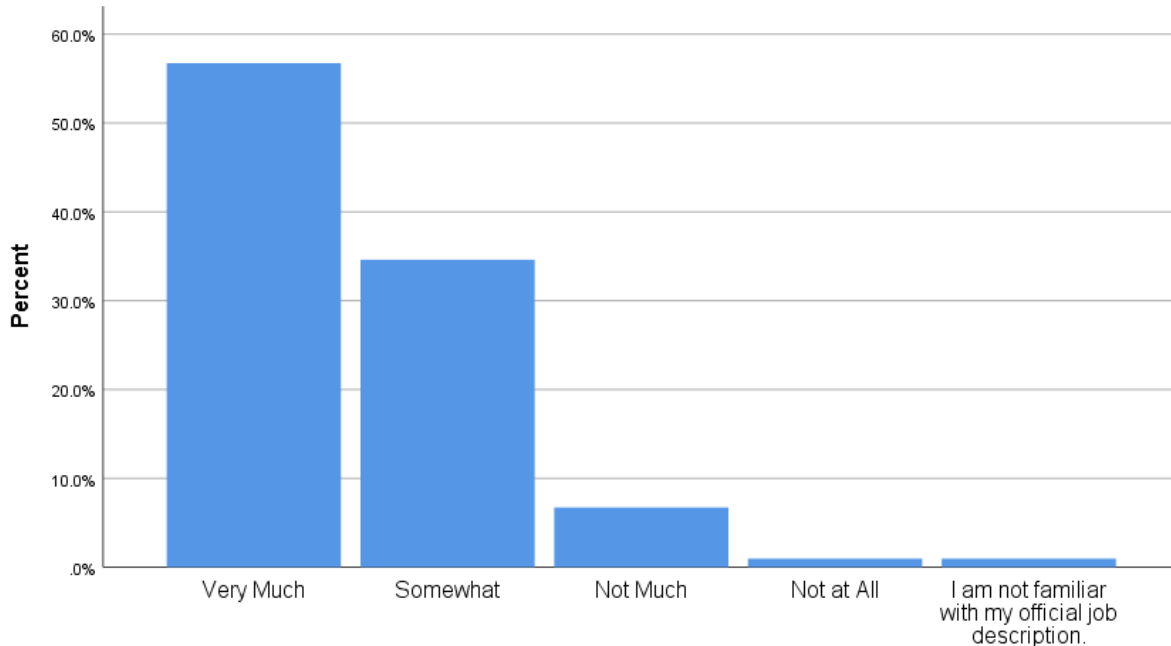
Figure 11. Percentage of SSOs who believe their job description matches what they actually do.

Interview and Focus Group Data

SSO hiring process. Based on interviewee responses, in many cases the principal had the ultimate responsibility for hiring SSOs. The role of the central office in SSO hiring appeared to vary. In one SD in Region 4, the central office was in charge of building an applicant pool and then sharing this pool with principals. In another SD in Region 4, the central office was minimally involved or possibly uninvolved in the hiring process. In a SD in Region 1, the central office was involved as much or as little as each principal wanted.

> *So our HR department goes and does the application program. They then put together the application pool. They then send that pool over to the individual principal who has the position opening. They do the interviews. They do the hiring. Once the person is hired, it then comes back to my office and that's when we get their uniform set up and their training and their certification stuff set up, their system permission set up, those kinda things, as of this moment. (Jack, SSO Supervisor, Region 4)*

> *It is down at the school level. The SSO's in our public schools all work directly for the principals and they do the hiring. (Joe, School Leader, Region 4)*

The way the hiring process works and it really just depends on how involved the principal wants to be. I always reach out to the principals when we have a vacancy and say, "If you want me to assist in any way, I'm more than happy to do so." And nine times out of ten, they say, "Yes. If you can please." So normally, what I will do then is I go in and I view all the applicants and we chose six candidates. (Christina, SSO Supervisor, Region 1)

One interviewee discussed how some of their SD's SSOs are provided by a security company via a contract between the SD and the private company.

We have SSOs that are employed by the school and paid by the schools and then we have about some that are contract security that we bring in from a company. So we do get – for our full time employees, we do get some crossover from there that come from the security company that works for us. (Robert, SSO Supervisor, Region 2)

A few of the interviewees described the hiring process for an SSO, which usually involved advertising the job on the Internet, reviewing submitted applications, and then interviewing qualified applicants. Two interviewees talked about the importance of having clear qualifications and well-written job descriptions.

Well, I think it would be good if there really were very specific criteria developed on who should a school security officer – what are not just the attributes but what are the – what are the standards and qualifications of a school resource officer? Is it a degree in counseling? Is it a degree in law enforcement? Is it a degree in probation? Is it a degree in social work? Is it a degree at all? I would think in today's very complicated environment, minimally, there should be a two year degree requirement and then there should be things like some kind of quantifiable experience working with young people and some sort of quantifiable experience that equals to some knowledge and understanding of the K12 environment. (Stephanie, School Leader, Region 4)

My one other thought is for any school division throughout the state, take a great look at your current job description. Make sure that it matches the real functionality that you design the position to be for your school system. Are they … they're not designed to be Wal-Mart greeters. You don't want somebody that's just going to sit there and let everybody into the building with open arms. That's not the design of the position. If we wanted that, we'd leave all of our doors unlocked. We'd let everybody walk in and we wouldn't have any security to begin with. So make sure that they meet the design of the position and that they know how to use all the tools in their toolbox. If you're a school division like ours that relies a lot on technology to do the job, again, be it the camera system, the access control system, the management system, whatever else you have in place, that position needs to have the technical knowledge to work all those pieces of technology effectively. So I encourage everybody, take a look at the job description and

make sure you're hiring people that meet that challenge. (Jack, SSO Supervisor, Region 4)

SSO qualifications. The most often mentioned desired qualification for SSOs was law enforcement, investigative, or security experience, to include military, emergency management, fire department, corrections, and probation-related experiences.

So I look for law enforcement, retired law enforcement folks, law enforcement experience of some type. Just because it gives them the ability to interact with people, project more of an aura of authority, which is what you need sometimes...And then from there, we go down to security experience and in particular, experience in a school. (Robert, SSO Supervisor, Region 2)

We like the law enforcement, somebody that has kind of a law enforcement or investigative background because they do do investigations. And the experience in learning, knowing how to talk to people and with people and gather information in there (Joan, SSO Supervisor, Region 4)

...we're looking for somebody in a background with maybe they're sometimes police background or something with law enforcement...Or working in the correction office... (Christina, SSO Supervisor, Region 1)

Several interviewees and focus group participants also wanted to see SSO candidates that worked well with young people and had experience building relationships with children and young adults. Coaching experience was specifically mentioned as one way to demonstrate this.

As far as a background to be an SSO you gotta love kids first. You gotta be somebody that gets excited about being around kids. If not, you're in the wrong job, first and foremost, and then understanding that kids make mistakes and working with that and not – you know, there has to be a balance. And not necessarily having a law enforcement experience, even though that helps, but you're being in juvenile detention, probation, bus – we just hired a bus driver as an SSO who's phenomenal with kids. So you have to have a wide variety and a mix, and the key thing is, you know, wanting to be around kids. (Tim, SSO, Region 4)

I'm also looking for somebody who can deal with adolescents, who has experience dealing with adolescents because they're a unique group in there. We've had – I've had several police officers who've applied and they've gotten the position based on their interviews. But when they actually get into the school and start working, I had two – I had one that left within two weeks because he realized he couldn't deal with the kids. He didn't know how to talk to them. He didn't know how to interact. And that's a very important part of the job is being able to interact and garner – get those relationships,

build the relationships and keep them moving with all of your student population. (Joan, SSO Supervisor, Region 4)

Or say they have been a coach at a school for the past ten years and are just trying to get out of whatever they're doing but have been involved in the schools in some way or another or have had some type of involvement with the youth. (Christina, SSO Supervisor, Region 1)

Another important qualification was good communication skills, not only the ability to communicate with students (although important), but also the ability to get along with teachers, parents, school administration, and others. Interviewees and focus group participants felt SSOs need empathy and conflict management skills to better communicate with youth and other members of the school community. Ideal applicants might even have a counseling background.

People skills are highly encouraged because you're interacting with the public. So you have the students coming into the building, visitors coming into the building, contractors, vendors, all of the above. You're interacting with people so being able to manage that is important. (Jack, SSO Supervisor, Region 4)

And a lot of that comes to communication, just verbal communication; the ability to have a conversation with a young adult. (Wes, SSO, Region 4)

Often times, they may come out of youth probation programs or counseling but essentially, most of the behaviors or most of what we're looking for in terms of attributes would be the ability to manage conflict, to be capable in conversation, constructive conversation, to be positive in having managed conflict, to be versed in the sort of justice practices and other forms of conflict management would be prioritized. (Stephanie, School Leader, Region 4)

Related to the qualifications of working well with youth and having good communication skills, several interviewees and focus group participants said they liked to see SSOs with experience in a K-12 setting, to show they know how to work with students and teachers and that they understood how a school community functions.

…and then there should be things like some kind of quantifiable experience working with young people and some sort of quantifiable experience that equals to some knowledge and understanding of the K12 environment. (Stephanie, School Leader, Region 4)

Because just because you've done security work in the past, working in a school is completely different. It's the same mindset of perimeter tech and so forth but you have the relationship there that you have to add into that. (Christina, SSO Supervisor, Region 1)

Other specific qualifications mentioned by a smaller number of interviewees and focus group participants include critical thinking, being bilingual, having strong technology and computer skills, being willing to make a long-term commitment, reliability and punctuality, and the willingness to take instruction and do what is needed.

Research Question 3: Documentation of Activities

How are the activities of SROs and SSOs that do not result in an arrest being documented?

Survey Data

In the survey, SROs were asked if they documented activities for specified job duties. Based on data from 195 respondents, 99% of SROs report that they document activities for law enforcement activities and 81% report doing so for law-related education activities. Activity documentation was less common for community liaison activities (49%) and role modeling/mentoring (30%).

SRO Survey Question: Do you document your activities when performing the following duties of the job?

Table 23. Percentage of SROs Responding "Yes" Regarding Documentation of Activities When Performing Specified Job Duties

SRO Duty	%
Law Enforcement Officer (*n* = 198)	99%
Community Liaison (*n* = 196)	49%
Law-Related Educator (*n* = 197)	81%
Role Model or Mentor (*n* = 196)	30%
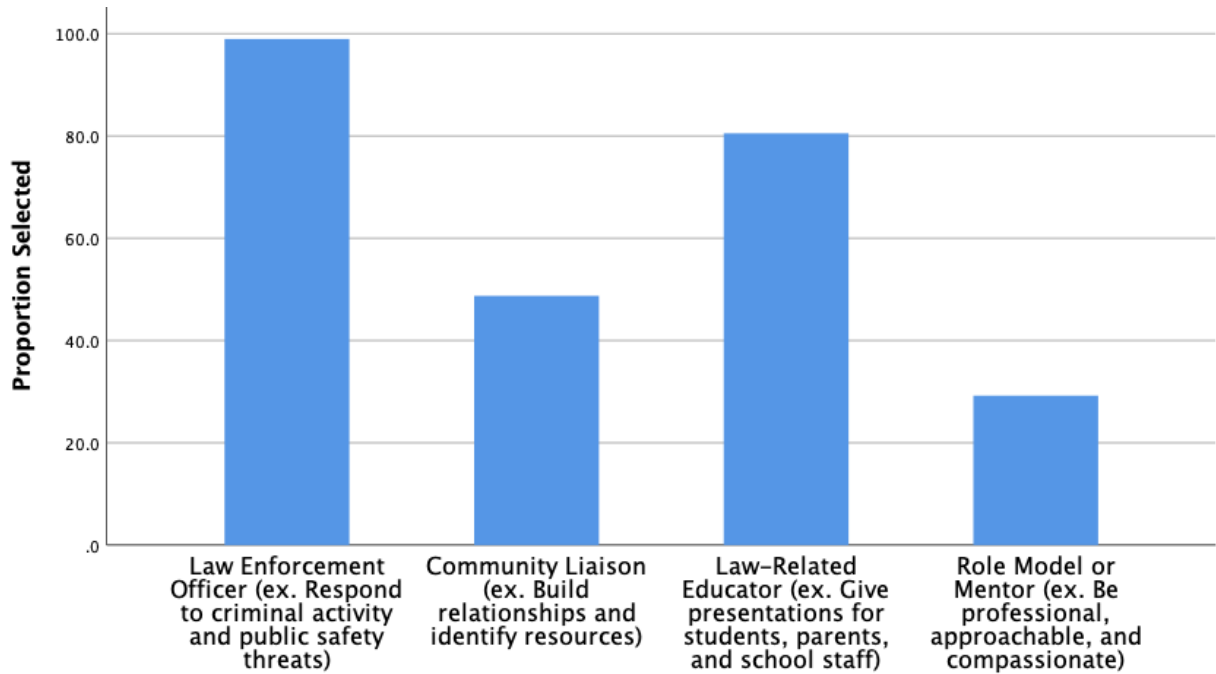
Figure 12. Proportion of SROs who report documenting activities under specified duty categories.

MOU Data

Twenty-five MOUs included text that addressed a formal reporting or documentation process for SRO activities that do not result in arrest or criminal investigation. Eleven of the 25 MOUs included text about reporting a specific type of non-criminally-related activity. Ten MOUs talked about reporting physical intervention by SROs. One MOU included text requiring SROs to report any in-office counseling sessions they conduct.

> *If an SRO is involved in the use of restraint or physical intervention, the action must be reported to the school principal and the SRO's supervisor and the rationale for the action must be fully documented.*

> *The SRO shall keep documentation of all in office counseling sessions.*

Fifteen of the 25 MOUs that referenced the reporting of non-criminally-related activities talked

about activity logs or report submission completed at regular intervals (i.e., monthly, quarterly,

or annually).

> *Maintain a daily log book to record the SROS everyday interactions involving those within the school setting and provide a biweekly report summarizing the SROS activities to the Sheriff or his designee.*

> *Maintain an activity log, or documentation in such other format as required by the School Division, to include all SRO activities such as meetings, conferences, extra-curricular events, arrests, investigations, training, and any other items or occurrences which are required by the School Division or Sheriff's Office.*

> *All SROs will document activities on the appropriate report/form and submit those in a timely fashion in accordance with the established requirements mandated by the [LOACALITY] SO and/or the Commonwealth of Virginia.*

> *The Sheriff's Office will provide Quarterly Reports of SRO activities in the school to the Clerk of the Board for distribution to the [LOCALITY] County School Board and Superintendent of Schools.*

> *The SRO is responsible for reporting the activities of the program. This is documented by weekly and monthly written reports and any grant required reporting to the SRO's immediate. supervisor and/or grant specified coordinator.*

> *The SRO will provide the Police Department with an annual report describing his/her activities.*

> *The SRO will provide to the Chief of Police or designee and the school administration a monthly report documenting all activities and incidents.*

> *Will provide student incident reports, monthly reports, quarterly activity reports, annual "Lessons from the Field" reports, and annual crime tracking reports to the appropriate agencies.*

While a formal reporting process for non-criminally-related activities was not common,

MOUs often contained text that referenced informal reporting of all types of SRO activities. This

text often referred to regular communication among SROs, school administration, and SRO

supervisors or described a required approval process that would involve SROs sharing

information about planned activities.

The School Resource Officer will communicate regularly with the Sheriff to review his/her previous work and to plan future activities.

The SRO will meet, at a minimum, weekly with his supervisor to ensure the open lines of communication are in place between the Sheriff's Office and the Schools and to keep abreast of ongoing SRO activities and programs.

The SRO's supervisor will meet at least once per school year with the Principals of those high schools and middle schools that have been assigned SROs. These meetings are to ensure that open lines of communication are in place between the Department and the School Division and to keep abreast of ongoing SRO activities and programs.

In accordance with the [LOCALITY] County School Resource Officer Program policy statement and job description, the SRO and the school administration will communicate regularly with each other concerning overall school safety, law enforcement, educational programs, and agency liaison activity. They also will communicate regularly regarding the daily schedule and assignments.

Any formal presentation or request to participate in a school based community event or organization must be approved by the SRO's supervisor.

Lesson plans for all formal organized presentations shall be forwarded to the SLS (School Liaison Sergeant) for review and approval prior to presentation.

When it is in the best interest of the Police Department and [LOCALITY] PS, SROs shall make formal presentations to, or participate in, school based community organization meetings such as Parent Teacher Association meetings or School Community Coalitions. All such participation must be approved by the SRO's Supervisor. Similar requests to participate in focus groups, panel discussions, camps, and mentoring programs must be approved by the SRO's Supervisor. The Patrol Division Commander shall be kept informed of any such approved additional activities.

Interview and Focus Group Data

SRO documentation. When asked about documentation, some interviewees and focus

group participants talked about official reports that captured reportable offenses as required by

the law. Often this was the only reporting they do.

It's just, if there's a crime that's committed and I do basically an incident based report which is an IBR, which is a police report. That's done. (Curtis, SRO, Region 2)

So yeah, with the sheriff's office, we have your standard reporting form for any type of criminal activity. So my job is, I'm here for the criminal element. Once it becomes

criminal, and in the state of Virginia we have certain laws in which the school is required to notify law enforcement. (Spencer, SRO, Region 3)

Two SROs mentioned having kept daily work logs at some point, but that practice had since stopped.

And I believe two or three years into my school resource assignment they asked us to start tracking what we did all day and a, I believe, a spreadsheet put together and we would document what we would do. Some officers were very good at basically keeping a journal on themselves and others were not so good. The school I was at had such volume of work that it wasn't a matter of what I was going to put down. It was … or it wasn't a matter of if I was going to put anything down. It would be a matter of what I was going to put down because I had, unfortunately – or fortunately, however you want to look at it – generally six to seven hours of work every day that I could log. (Mark, SRO, Region 1)

Instead of daily logs, interviewees and focus group participants used other means to document activities. This includes monthly reports, verbal communication between SROs and their supervisors, and meetings involving the LEA and SD.

SSO documentation. Similar to reportable offenses, SSO documentation seemed to focus on major activity, with SSOs describing incident reports as a common, and important, form of documentation.

The only thing I can add to that in the schools I do know that the SSO's whenever they have something out of the ordinary or something that needs to be documented in reference to their interaction with a student, they do maintain – I don't know if you want to call them written reports or documentation or whatever term you choose to use, but they do put it in writing what their interaction is with those students. (Patrick, SSO Supervisor, Region 4)

That's what I tell my guys. Build that paper trail so when this kid finally does pop somebody in the nose you can say, "Look, this is how many times I've taken him – these are all my paperwork," you know? If you don't – if nobody starts documenting any of this stuff, some of these kids just don't get disciplined and the structure they need. (Kayla, SSO, Region 4)

One SSO Supervisor reported that used to have a daily log, but no longer do. Another SSO Supervisor shared they they their SD is planning to implement some kind of system to record day-to-day activity.

I do maintain metrics on activities that occur in the schools. Part of it is for us so we know what's going on in the school. But we're going to start using those metrics also to help in working in that evaluation process kind of what are you doing? How much time are you spending wandering? You know, I shouldn't say "wandering the halls" because it's not really wandering. How much time are you spending out in the hallways doing that kind of patrol and those interactive conversations that you're having with kids? Not just we want to know how much "hi" are you saying, being visible out there, but I also want to know how much time are you really spending talking to kids, doing those investigations? How much time are you spending doing lunch duty because lunchtime tends to be when you get all those kids together a big time for fights because you have so many kids in one place and it's a little bit looser than a classroom in there. How much time are you spending doing those and kind of the number of investigations and actually the quality of the investigations? We're going to start looking at those reports as well to help build our evaluation process. (Joan, SSO Supervisor, Region 4)

Research Question 4: Supervision

How are SROs and SSOs operating in schools supervised by their own department and/or by the school(s) in which they operate?

SRO Supervision

Survey Data

SRO respondents were asked to provide the job title for their supervisor. Of the 158 respondents, 157 (99%) provided a job title (e.g., Captain, Lieutenant, Sergeant) that indicated their supervisor was from the local LEA. One respondent (1%) indicated their supervisor was the school principal.

Table 24. SRO-Provided Job Title for Their Supervisor

SRO Supervisor Job Title	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
LEA representative	157	77.7	99.4
Principal	1	0.5	0.6
Total	158	78.2	100.0
Missing	44	21.8	
Total	202	100.0	

SROs were also asked to provide the job title for their SRO Liaison. Of the 147 respondents, 95% named a school administrator, with 81% indicating the principal was the SRO Liaison, 13% indicating the assistant principal, and 1% indicating an administrator.

SROs were asked if they felt adequately supervised in their work. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree, the average SRO response was 4.25 (SD = .784). The majority of the 202 respondents (86%) agreed or strongly agreed the statement that they felt they were adequately supervised at work.

Table 25. SRO-Provided Job Title for Their Liaison

SRO Liaison Job Title	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Principal	119	58.9	81.0
Assistant principal	19	9.4	13.0
Director of support services	2	1	1.4
Administrator	1	0.5	0.7
Director	1	0.5	0.7
Director of security	1	0.5	0.7
Lead security officer	1	0.5	0.7
Pupil and personnel director	1	0.5	0.7
Safety and security manager	1	0.5	0.7
School security officer	1	0.5	0.7
Total	147	72.8	100.0
Missing	55	27.2	
Total	202	100.0	

SRO Survey Question: I feel adequately supervised in my work.

Table 26. SRO Level of Agreement with Statement Regarding Adequate Supervision

SRO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Strongly Disagree	1	.5	.5
Disagree	5	2.5	2.5
Neutral	22	10.9	10.9
Agree	89	44.1	44.1
Strongly Agree	85	42.1	42.1
Total	202	100.0	100.0
Missing	0	0	
Total	202	100.0	
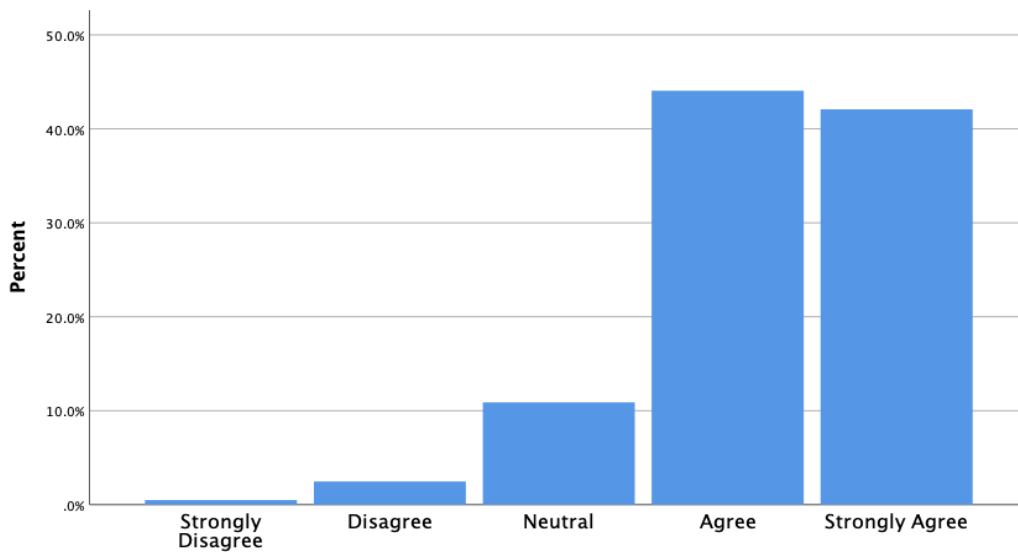
Figure 13. SRO level of agreement with statement they feel adequately supervised SRO.

Supervisors were asked how many SROs they supervised. The responses from 47 SRO supervisors ranged from 0 to 26, with an average of 6.55 (SD = 5.132) SROs per respondent. SRO Supervisor Survey Question: How many SROs do you supervise?
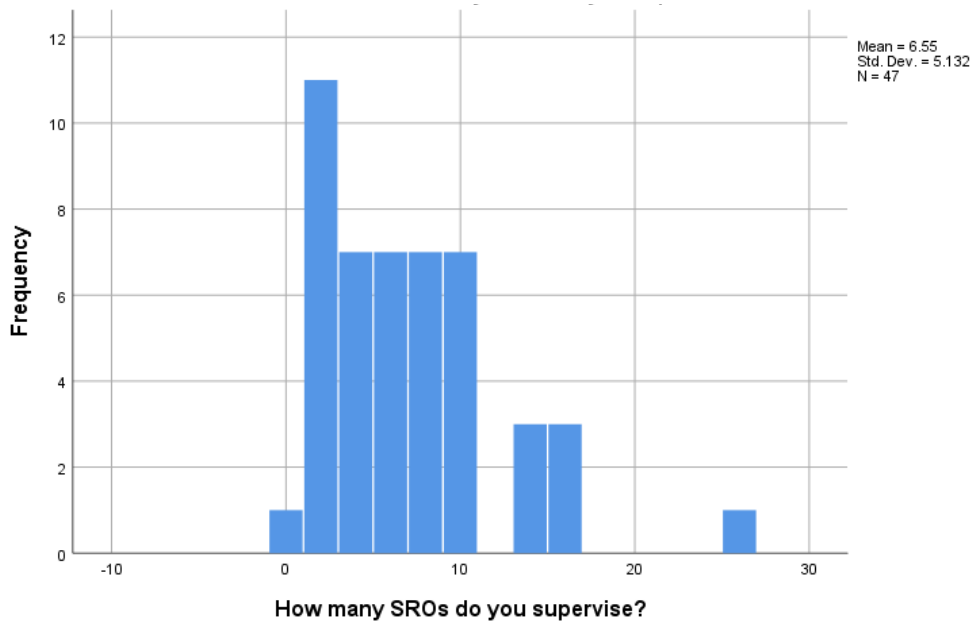
Figure 14. Total number of SROs supervised by SRO Supervisors.

SRO Supervisors were asked to report on their own experience as an SRO. Of the 64 respondents, in addition to being a law enforcement officer, 35% reported they were currently an SRO, 15% reported they were formerly an SRO, and 33% indicated they had no direct experience as an SRO. Seventeen percent selected the "Other" option to describe their position.

<u>SRO Supervisor Survey Question:</u> Which of the following best describes your position?

Table 27. SRO Supervisors' Reported Description of Their Position

SRO Supervisor Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
LEO, currently an SRO	19	31.7	35.2
LEO, formerly an SRO	8	13.3	14.8
LEO, no direct SRO experience	18	30.0	33.3
Other	9	15.0	16.7
Total	54	90.0	100.0
Missing	6	10.0	
Total	60	100.0	
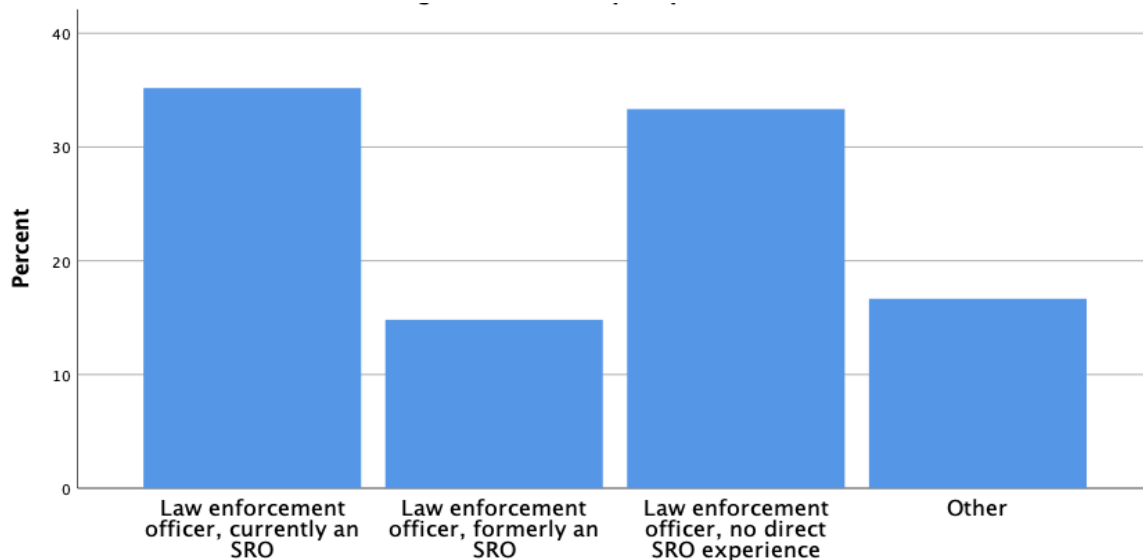
Figure 15. Percentage of SRO Supervisors selecting each option that best describes their current position.

SROs and SRO Supervisors were asked about the type and frequency of contact they have with each other. Data suggest that phone/radio contact between SROs and SRO Supervisors occurs on a daily or weekly basis, individual meetings most likely on a weekly basis, and group meetings on a monthly basis. Tables 28–30 display SRO responses about reported frequency of phone/radio contact, face-to-face meetings, and group meetings with their Supervisors.

Table 28. SRO Responses about Frequency of Phone/Radio Contact with their SRO Supervisor

SRO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Once a month	17	8.4	8.5
Once a week	84	41.6	42.2
Once a day	89	44.1	44.7
Hourly	9	4.5	4.5
Total	199	98.5	100.0
Missing	3	1.5	
Total	202	100.0	

Table 29. SRO Responses about Frequency of Individual (Face-to-Face) Meetings with their SRO Supervisor

SRO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Once a year	3	1.5	1.5
Once a month	57	28.2	28.8
Once a week	107	53.0	54.0
Once a day	29	14.4	14.6
Hourly	2	1.0	1.0
Total	198	98.0	100.0
Missing	4	2.0	
Total	202	100.0	

93

Table 30. SRO Responses about Frequency of Group Meetings with their SRO Supervisor

SRO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	14	6.9	7.1
Once a year	37	18.3	18.8
Once a month	122	60.4	61.9
Once a week	19	9.4	9.6
Once a day	5	2.5	2.5
Total	197	97.5	100.0
Missing	5	2.5	
Total	202	100.0	

Tables 31–33 display responses from SRO Supervisors regarding the reported frequency of phone/radio contact, individual (face-to-face) meetings, and group meetings with the SROs under their supervision.

Table 31. SRO Supervisor Responses about Frequency of Phone/Radio Contact with SROs They Supervise

SRO Supervisor Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Once a month	1	1.7	2.0
Once a week	16	26.7	31.4
Once a day	29	48.3	56.9
Hourly	5	8.3	9.8
Total	51	85.0	100.0
Missing	9	15.0	
Total	60	100.0	

Table 32. SRO Supervisor Responses about Frequency of Individual (Face-to-Face) Meetings with SROs They Supervise

SRO Supervisor Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	1	1.7	1.9
Once a year	1	1.7	1.9
Once a month	16	26.7	30.2
Once a week	33	55.0	62.3
Once a day	2	3.3	3.8
Total	53	88.3	100.0
Missing	7	11.7	
Total	60	100.0	

Table 33. SRO Supervisor Responses about Frequency of Group Meetings with the SROs They Supervise

SRO Supervisor Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	2	3.3	3.9
Once a year	12	20.0	23.5
Once a month	32	53.3	62.7
Once a week	5	8.3	9.8
Total	51	85.0	100.0
Missing	9	15.0	
Total	60	100.0	

Figures 16–18 provide a comparison of the responses from both SRO and SRO Supervisors,

showing general levels of agreement regarding the frequency of different types of contact

between the two groups.

95
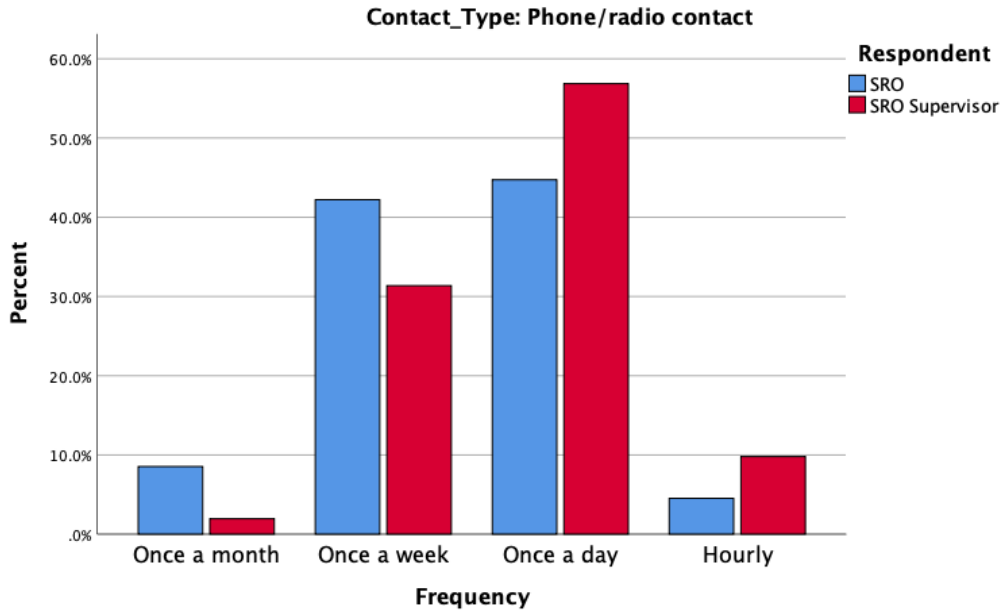
Figure 16. Comparison of SRO and SRO Supervisor responses regarding frequency of phone/radio contact between SROs and SRO Supervisors.
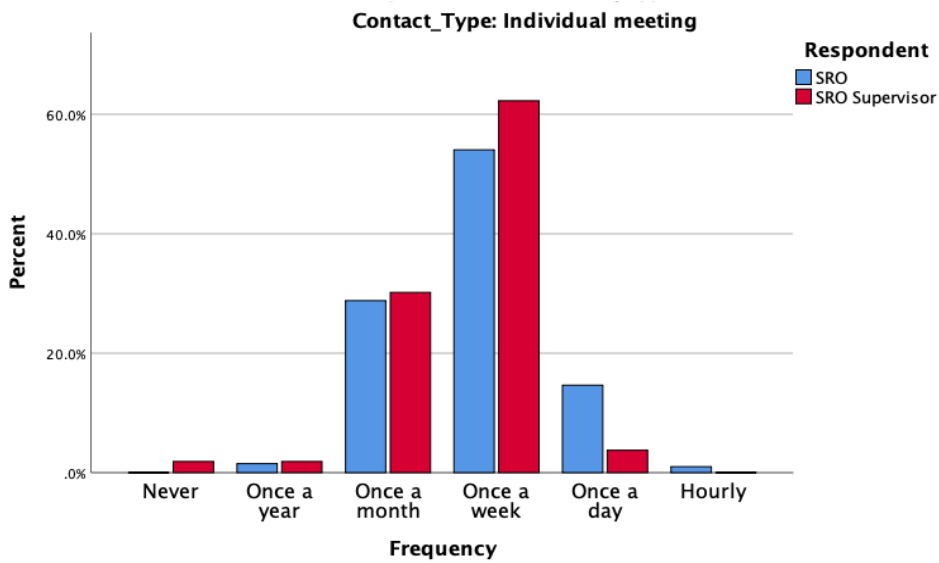
Figure 17. Comparison of SRO and SRO Supervisor responses regarding frequency of individual meetings between SROs and SRO Supervisors.
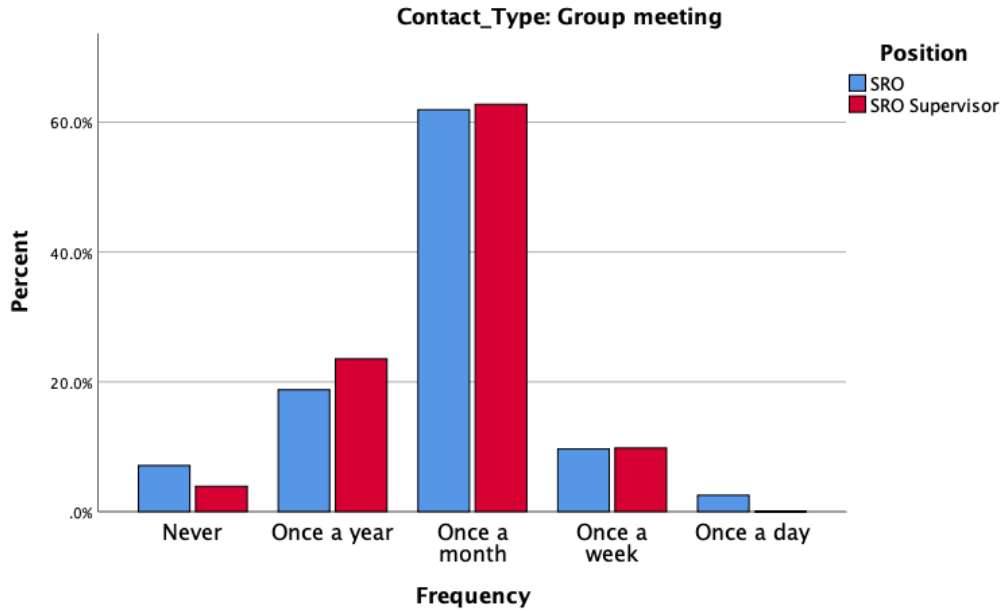
Figure 18. Comparison of SRO and SRO Supervisor responses regarding frequency of group meetings with SROs and SRO Supervisors.

SROs were also asked about the type and frequency of contact they have with their primary liaison at their school and SRO Liaisons were similarly asked about their contact with the SROs. For this relationship, SROs often reported having daily or hourly phone/radio contact, daily or hourly individual meetings with their liaison, and weekly group meetings. SRO Liaisons were more likely to report and weekly, daily, or hourly phone/radio contact, weekly or daily individual meetings with SROs, and monthly or weekly group meetings. Tables 34–36 display responses from SROs regarding the reported frequency of phone/radio contact, individual (face-to-face) meetings, and group meetings with their School-Based Liaisons.

Table 34. SRO Responses about Frequency of Phone/Radio Contact with their SRO Liaisons

SRO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	1	0.5	0.5
Once a month	1	0.5	0.5
Once a week	8	4.0	4.0
Once a day	80	39.6	40.4
Hourly	108	53.5	54.5
Total	198	98.0	100.0
Missing	4	2.0	
Total	202	100.0	

Table 35. SRO Responses about Frequency of Individual (Face-to-Face) Meetings with their SRO Liaisons

SRO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Once a year	2	1.0	1.0
Once a month	5	2.5	2.5
Once a week	23	11.4	11.6
Once a day	81	40.1	40.9
Hourly	87	43.1	43.9
Total	198	98.0	100.0
Missing	4	2.0	
Total	202	100.0	

Table 36. SRO Responses about Frequency of Group Meetings with their SRO Liaisons

SRO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	13	6.4	6.6
Once a year	4	2.0	2.0
Once a month	42	20.8	21.3
Once a week	87	43.1	44.2
Once a day	37	18.3	18.8
Hourly	14	6.9	7.1
Total	197	97.5	100.0
Missing	5	2.5	
Total	202	100.0	

Tables 37–39 display responses from SRO Liaisons regarding the reported frequency of individual (face-to-face) meetings, group meetings, and phone/radio contact with the SROs they work with in their schools.

Table 37. SRO Liaisons Responses about Frequency of Phone/Radio Contact with SROs

SRO Liaison Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	2	4.4	5.1
Once a month	1	2.2	2.6
Once a week	10	22.2	25.6
Once a day	16	35.6	41.0
Hourly	10	22.2	25.6
Total	39	86.7	100.0
Missing	6	13.3	
Total	45	100.0	

Table 38. SRO Liaison Responses about Frequency of Individual (Face-to-Face) Meetings with SROs

SRO Liaison Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Once a month	5	11.1	12.8
Once a week	14	31.1	35.9
Once a day	16	35.6	41.0
Hourly	4	8.9	10.3
Total	39	86.7	100.0
Missing	6	13.3	
Total	45	100.0	

Table 39. SRO Liaison Responses about Frequency of Group Meetings with SROs

SRO Liaison Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	8	17.8	20.5
Once a year	3	6.7	7.7
Once a month	14	31.1	35.9
Once a week	12	26.7	30.8
Once a day	2	4.4	5.1
Total	39	86.7	100.0
Missing	6	13.3	
Total	45	100.0	

Figures 19–21 provide a comparison of the responses from both SRO and SRO Liaisons, revealing a general trend suggesting SROs report meeting with their SRO Liaisons more frequently than SRO Liaisons report meeting with SROs.
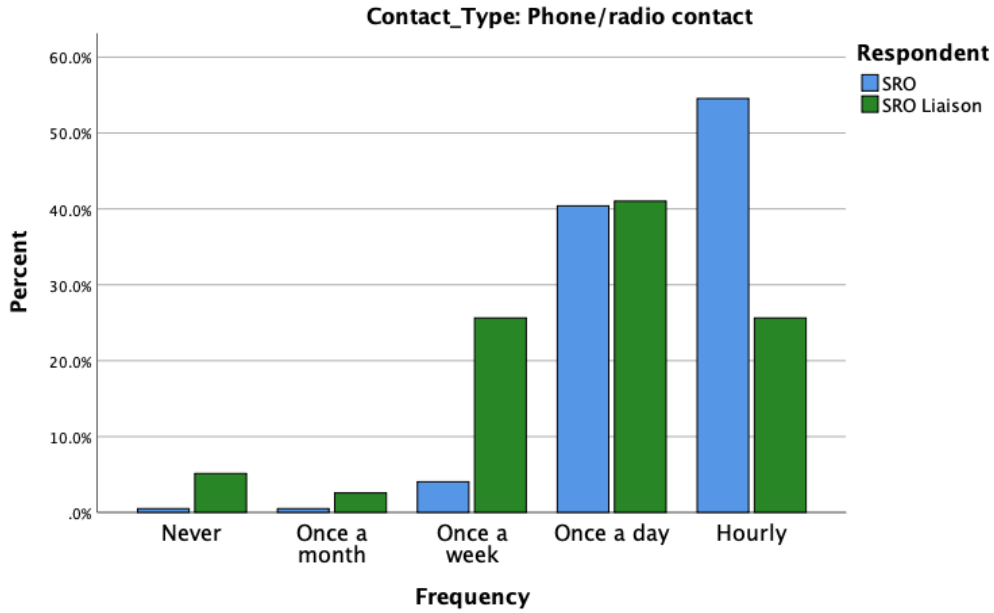
Figure 19. Comparison of SRO and SRO Liaisons responses regarding frequency of phone/radio contact between SROs and SRO Liaisons.
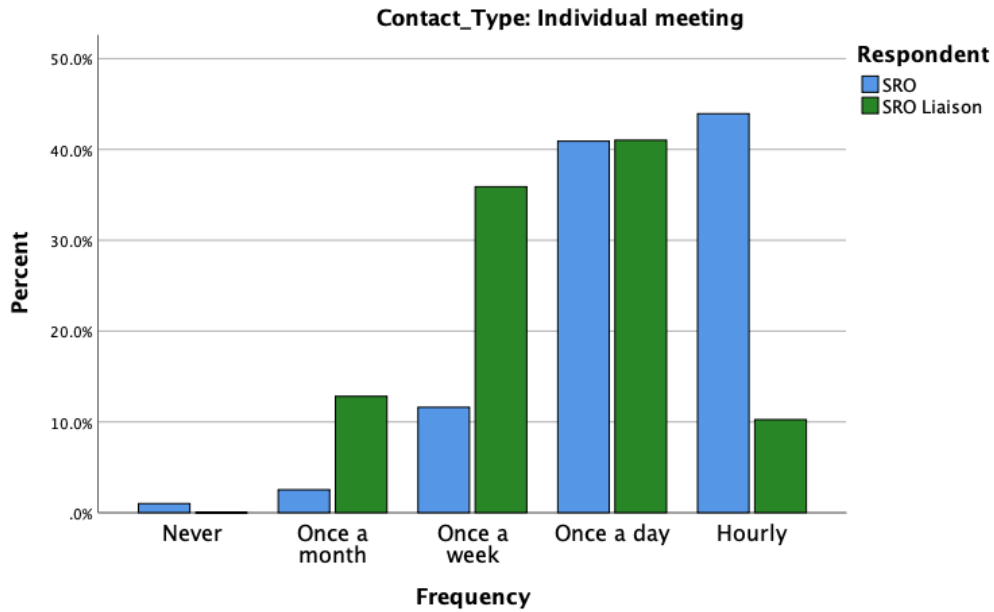
Figure 20. Comparison of SRO and SRO Liaisons responses regarding frequency of individual meetings between SROs and SRO Liaisons.
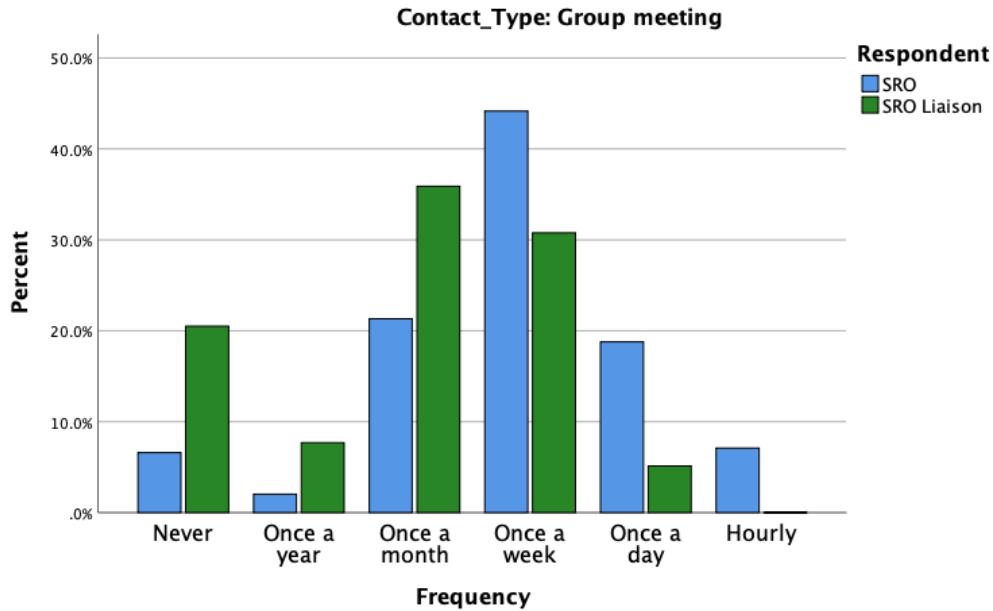
Figure 21. Comparison of SRO and SRO Liaisons responses regarding frequency of group meetings with SROs and SRO Liaisons.

MOU Data

   Organization responsible for SRO supervision. Of the 73 MOUs, 70 had text that clearly

addressed SRO supervision. Sixty-two MOUs identified the LEA as being ultimately responsible

for SRO supervision.

> *General supervision, technical assistance, and administrative control over SROs, including, but not limited to, the assignment of SROs to school buildings, will be the responsibility of a police sergeant assigned to the School Safety Unit of the Community Services Division.*
>
> *For the purposes of this MOU, the SRO has the status of an independent contractor and, as such, is subject to the control, supervision, and procedures and General Orders of the [LOCALITY] County Sheriff's Office.*
>
> *The Chief of Police will have final authority over the School Officers. School Officers will not serve in any other capacity than that of a law-enforcement officer performing those duties authorized by the Chief of Police.*
>
> *The SROs remain employees of the County and as such are ultimately supervised, evaluated, and directed by the Chief of the Police Department.*

102

Of those 62, 43 MOUs alluded to including the SD, often via school administration, in the process of SRO supervision. The 43 MOUs acknowledged that the LEA has final supervisory authority over SROs, but recognize that SD designees (often school principals) are the ones who will have daily interaction with the SROs.

> The SRO is an employee of the [LOCALITY] County Police Department. As an employee of the Police Department, the SRO reports directly to the School Resource Officer Unit Supervisor and to other supervisory members directly in his or her chain of command. The SRO is assigned to particular schools but is not an employee of that school. SROs and School Officials will attempt to work in harmony on all matters. They will make every effort to develop a mutually acceptable work plan that satisfies the needs of the school and the objectives of the police presence within the school.

> Selection, assignment, scheduling, training, supervision, and evaluation of school resource officers (SROs) will be the responsibility of the SO. However, each of these actions will take into account the input of school personnel, and identified needs and conditions of schools.

> Abide by school board policies and shall consult with and coordinate activities through the school principal or designee but shall remain fully responsive to the chain of command of the law enforcement agency in all matters relating to employment and supervision

Eight MOUs contained text that alluded to SRO supervision as a collaboration involving the LEA and SD, with no clear indication that one agency had final authority in terms of SRO supervision.

> Will be assigned to the Crime Prevention unit for coordination and general supervision but will work under the direct supervision of the school principal to which assigned

> On a daily basis the School Resource Officer (SRO) will report for duty at the assigned school where s/he will report to the principal or her/his designee. At least once each week, the SRO will report to the Commander CI/SO Division. When the SRO is required to take enforcement action, s/he will file the appropriate offense report(s), which will be reviewed and approved by the on-duty shift commander. This will normally be done prior to the SRO ending her/his tour of duty for the day. The principal or her/his designee is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the SRO.

> The resource office is a deputy sheriff and will perform the duties and assignments of a law enforcement officer in a school setting. The resource officer is under the supervision of and reports directly to the Sheriff when performing law enforcement duties. Otherwise,

the deputy assigned to the schools will be considered an adjunct faculty member under the direction of the school administration.

The day-to-day activities of the SRO on school grounds. in school buildings. or at school sponsored evens shall be determined jointly by the SRO, the SRO supervisor and the Principal of the school served.

The SRO shall be an employee of the [LOCALITY] COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE and shall be subject to the administration, supervision and control of the [LOCALITY] COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, except as such administration, supervision and control is subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement. As employees of the [LOCALITY] COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, SRO shall follow the chain of command as set forth in the [LOCALITY] COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE Policies and Procedure Manual. In the performance of their duties, SRO shall coordinate and communicate with the principal or the principals' designee of the school to which they are assigned.

Interview Data

In general, SROs appear to be operating somewhat on their own, although they officially report to their LE supervisors via the chain of command. As the number of SROs grows within a county, the chain of command becomes more complex. From interview responses, it is clear that, while part of the school community, SROs are different than most other school personnel, as the principal does not directly supervise them. Unlike many other law enforcement officers, they do not have daily contact with their supervisor.

> *As a school resource officer, they're independent a lot more than other officers, because there might be a time, might be two week that I won't even see one of the resource officers because they're out at their schools, they're in the field. So one of the I guess challenges is that you know, to continue to reach out to them and let them know that you're not on the island and you're not by yourself. And it's, you know, the supervisor here if you need anything. (Alex, SRO Supervisor, Region 2)*

One SRO acknowledged the difficulty that SROs can face when working in a school but not being a SD employee. They suggested having an independent third party available when conflict between the SRO and school administration arises.

> *I'd like to see another layer of go-between between the police department and the school system, and somebody that works independently of both. How it works right now to settle*

a dispute or if there is a concern or something that's not being done right, if we don't get any satisfaction bringing it up through the schools in which we work, we're to bring it to the official channels, so bring it to our supervision. We'll bring it to our lieutenant, who is our go-between. But he's our lieutenant who works for our police department who is responsible for our officers. He then brings it to the head of school security, who is a school employee who works for their administration and brings things to their attention. So you have two people that work for opposite organizations having these discussions. (Daniel, SRO, Region 1)

Even without daily contact between SROs and their supervisor, the supervisor still plays a big role in an SRO's job. SRO supervisors are seen as the go-between for the SRO and administration if a problem arises. SRO Supervisors see themselves as a source of support for SROs and SROs frequently cited their supervisors as a source of support.

Well, a lot of our stuff falls back on our supervisor. They're kind of like that liaison between the upper management of the school and the upper management of the police department. So that supervisor is kind of like the one that bridges the gap. So if I come up with something that's not covered in the memorandum of agreement or is outside the lines of the police department, they will be that one that kind of gets clarity on what direction we're going from there. (Curtis, SRO, Region 2)

In addition to providing support for the SROs and acting as a liaison between SROs and school administration, SRO Supervisors have administrative duties such as program evaluation and management (including creating and managing a chain of command), SRO evaluation, and training of new SROs.

In terms of best practices for SRO Supervisors, two SRO Supervisors emphasized the importance of knowing the officers who work under you.

Most important thing to know is that everybody is unique. Everybody has different concepts, everybody has different ways of handling things, and understanding your subordinates is probably the most important thing as a supervisor. (Glenn, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)

I would say in my particular position, understanding nuances with new officers. (Alex, SRO Supervisor, Region 2)

SRO support. While SRO Supervisors were cited several times as a source of support for

SROs, other people were mentioned as sources of support. These included other SROs, other law

enforcement officers, school staff and administration, and students. SROs often mentioned that

they identify and seek out support from others who have more experience.

> *At my previous school I had a partner, so I would generally consult with my partner first. I'm on my third supervisor and I've had some great supervisors. So if my partner and I couldn't figure it out, I would look to my supervisor. But I would also look, depending on what the situation was, on some of the seasoned administration that I was working with and I would say "Hey, has this happened before and how was it handled?" just to see if there was already information that I could look up or deal with that would assist me with whatever I had going on at that point. (Mark, SRO, Region 1)*

> *I guess it's just a myriad of just relationships with many different people, to include my supervisors. My fellow employees at the sheriff's office. My fellow SROs. And the students themselves. And the staff here at the school. So it's one of those things where it's constantly fluid, and you're always, constantly relying on other people. Whether it's a student to help you get information. Whether it's a teacher to help you get more background on a student. (Spencer, SRO, Region 3)*

SSO Supervision

Survey Data

SSOs were asked to provide the job title of their supervisor. Of the 83 respondents, over

half (66%) named a school administrator as their supervisor, with 41% responding with

principal, 24% with assistant principal, and 1% with administrator. The rest of the responses

included a range of job titles.

Table 40. SSO-Provided Supervisor Job Title

SSO Supervisor Job Title	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Principal	34	31.5%	
Assistant principal	20	18.5%	
School security officer	5	4.6%	6.0%
School security specialist	3	2.8%	3.6%
LEA (Sergeant)	3	2.8%	3.6%
Administrative assistant	2	1.9%	2.4%
Director/Assistant director safety and security	2	1.9%	2.4%
Director of operations	2	1.9%	2.4%
Security coordinator pupil personnel	2	1.9%	2.4%
Security supervisor	2	1.9%	2.4%
SSO supervisor	2	1.9%	2.4%
Administrator	1	0.9%	1.2%
Director of security and student safety	1	0.9%	1.2%
Supervisor	1	0.9%	1.2%
Supervisor of school security/emergency management	1	0.9%	1.2%
Supervisor security	1	0.9%	1.2%
School security manager	1	0.9%	1.2%
Total	83	76.9%	100.0%
Missing	25	23.1%	
Total	108	100.0%	

SSOs were asked if they felt adequately supervised in their work. The majority of the 103 respondents (83%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had adequate supervision at work.

SSO Survey Question: I feel adequately supervised in my work.

Table 41. SSO Level of Agreement with Statement Regarding Adequate Supervision

SSO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Strongly Disagree	1	0.9	1.0
Disagree	6	5.6	5.8
Neutral	11	10.2	10.7
Agree	48	44.4	46.6
Strongly Agree	37	34.3	35.9
Total	103	95.4	100.0
Missing	5	4.6	
Total	108	100.0	
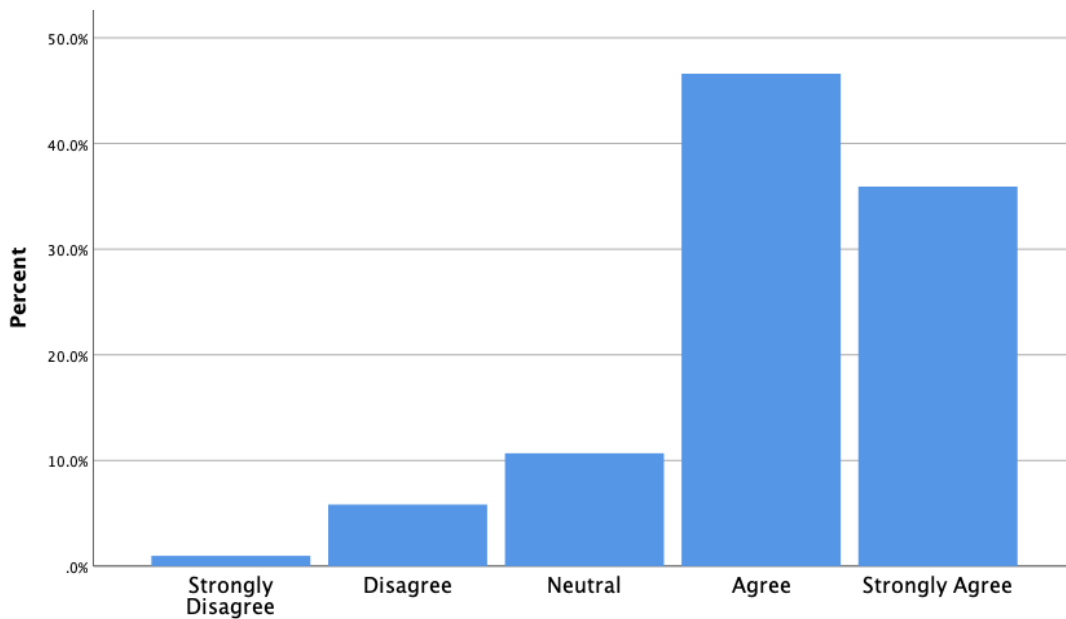
Figure 22. Level of SSO agreement with statement about adequacy of their supervision.

108

SSOs were also asked about the type and frequency of contact they had with their supervisor. When asked about how frequently they had individual meetings with their supervisor, 91 respondents provided a range of frequency. Phone/radio contact between SSOs and their supervisors was the most frequently occurring type of contact, with 35% reporting daily phone/radio contact and 38% reporting hourly phone/radio contact. Twenty percent said individual meetings happened once a year, 22% said monthly, 14% reported weekly individual meetings, and 29% and 10% reported daily and hourly individual meetings respectively. SSOs indicated that staff/group meetings were most likely to occur on a monthly basis, with nearly half (47%) saying staff/group meetings happened once a month.

Table 42. SSO Responses about Frequency of Phone/Radio Contact with their Supervisor

SSO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	5	4.6	5.3
Once a year	1	0.9	1.1
Once a month	9	8.3	9.6
Once a week	10	9.3	10.6
Once a day	33	30.6	35.1
Hourly	36	33.3	38.3
Total	94	87.0	100.0
Missing	14	13.0	
Total	108	100.0	
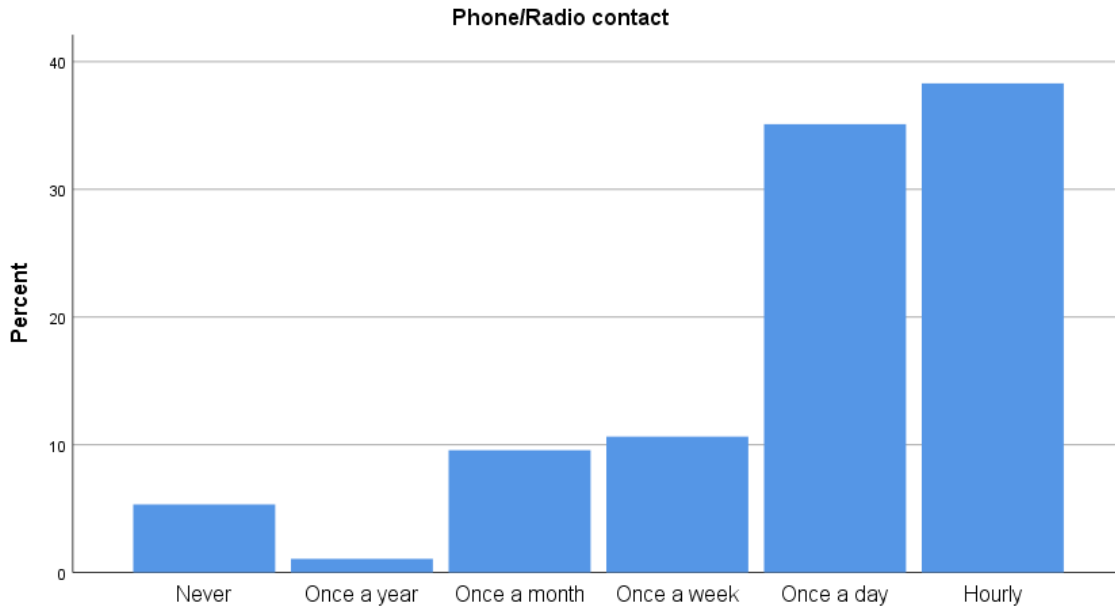
Figure 23. SSO-reported frequency of phone/radio contact with their supervisor.

Table 43. SSO Responses about Frequency of Individual (Face-to-Face) Meetings with their Supervisor

SSO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	5	4.6	5.5
Once a year	18	16.7	19.8
Once a month	20	18.5	22.0
Once a week	13	12.0	14.3
Once a day	26	24.1	28.6
Hourly	9	8.3	9.9
Total	91	84.3	100.0
Missing	17	15.7	
Total	108	100.0	
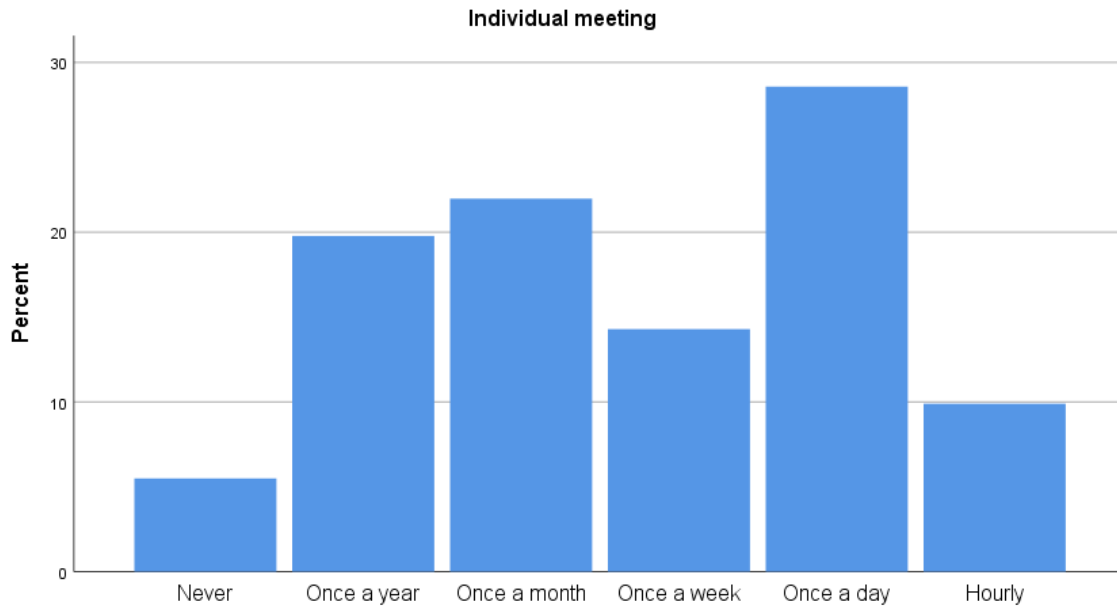
Figure 24. SSO-reported frequency of individual meetings with their supervisor.

Table 44. SSO Responses about Frequency of Group Meetings with their Supervisor

SSO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	3	2.8	3.2
Once a year	20	18.5	21.5
Once a month	44	40.7	47.3
Once a week	17	15.7	18.3
Once a day	7	6.5	7.5
Hourly	2	1.9	2.2
Total	93	86.1	100.0
Missing	15	13.9	
Total	108	100.0	
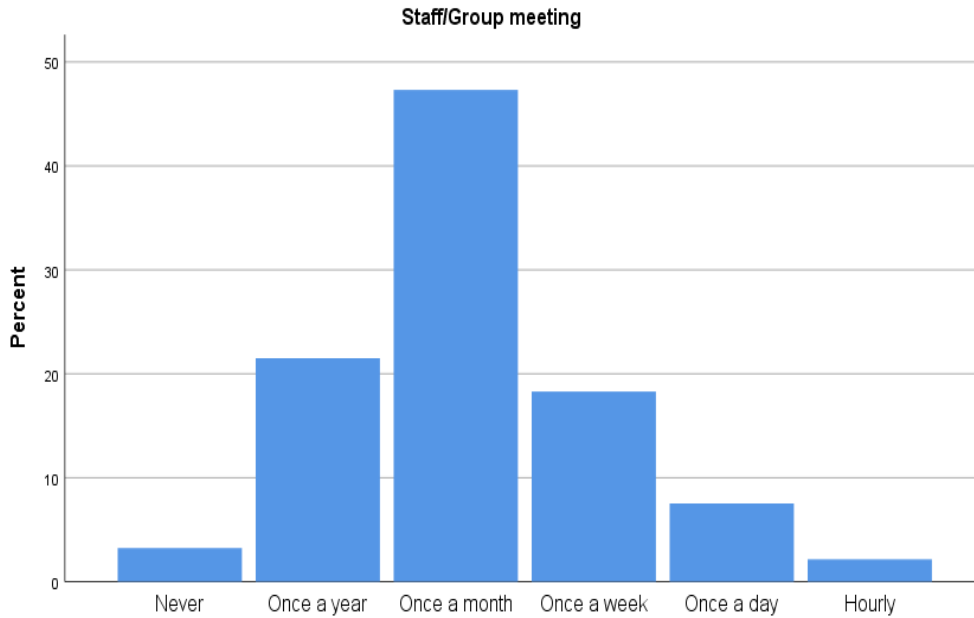
Figure 25. SSO-reported frequency of group meetings with their supervisor.

Interview Data

SSO supervisors. Based on the interview data, principals were the main supervisors of

SSOs as they are responsible for the hiring process, providing assignments, and conducting

evaluations. In schools with lots of SSOs, there may be a designated SSO Specialist that

manages the SSOs within that school. In some SDs, there is someone in the central office who

manages the SSO program in that county. The central office of the SD may assist in hiring,

provide funding and equipment, provide training, and manage an SSO substitute pool, but

ultimately all SSOs report to the school principal.

> *We're not a central based office for school security officers. We're more so just their*
> *liaison to provide them with uniforms and to make sure they're getting their training that*
> *they're supposed to have. But they work for the principal. So everybody has a little bit of*
> *different duties and roles and assignments at each school. (Christina, SSO Supervisor,*
> *Region 1)*

112

SSO Support. For support, SSOs reported that they turn to a variety of people: Central

Office personnel, other SSOs, school administration and staff, SROs and other law enforcement

officers, and DCJS personnel.

> *But yeah, I think my principal is, he's a veteran principal, he's been in the county a long time, and I think the Office of Safety and Security and my School Resource Officer. Those probably would be the biggest three that I'd probably rely on. (Cody, SSO, Region 4)*

> *Well, I'd say I work directly with my principal. She's a great person to deal with. If I need assistance with anything, she makes sure that I get it with either technology or supplies or materials. But I have a staff of three that work for me and I lean on them heavily. And they're great. They're also retired police officers like myself, and I think that's who I get the most support from are those three guys. (Bruce, SSO, Region 4)*

> *The assistant principals. I work closely with the assistant principals at the school. We separate the school into four separate sub schools within the school. So each sub school has an alphabet, say capital A through K and on of the alphabet. So I work with them constantly. (Terry, SSO, Region 4)*

Research Question 5: Evaluation

What criteria are used to assess SRO and SSO performance?

SRO Evaluation

Survey Data

SROs, SRO Supervisors, and SRO Liaisons were asked about how often the LEA

supervisor asks school officials for feedback about SRO performance. Responses from 196

SROs, 53 SRO Supervisors, and 40 SRO Liaisons indicates possible mismatch among the

perceptions of each group about the level of feedback solicited from school officials. Forty-three

percent of SRO Liaisons reported that they never give feedback to the LEA, compared to 12% of

SROs and 7% of SRO Supervisors (although an additional 17% of SRO Supervisors felt like

they received feedback from school officials only when there was an issue). Most SROs and

SRO Supervisors reported school officials provided feedback on a yearly or monthly basis. Of

the SRO Liaisons who felt they provided feedback, most did so on an annual basis.

SRO Survey Question: How often does your law enforcement agency supervisor solicit feedback
from school officials about your performance as an SRO?

Table 45. SRO Reported Frequency of Feedback from School Officials

SRO Response	*N*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	24	11.9	12.2
Once a year	103	51.0	52.6
Once a month	52	25.7	26.5
Once a week	16	7.9	8.2
Hourly	1	0.5	0.5
Total	196	97.0	100.0
Missing	6	3.0	
Total	202	100.0	

114

SRO Supervisor Survey Question: How often do you get feedback from school officials about the performance of the SROs?

Table 46. SRO Supervisor Reported Frequency of Feedback from School Officials

SRO Supervisor Response	n	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	4	7.4	7.5
Once a year	11	20.4	20.8
Once a month	26	48.1	49.1
Once a week	3	5.6	5.7
Only when there is an issue	9	16.7	17.0
Total	53	98.1	100.0
Missing	1	1.9	
Total	54	100.0	

SRO Liaison Survey Question: How often do you give feedback to the Law Enforcement Agency about the performance of SROs at your school?

Table 47. SRO Liaison Reported Frequency of Providing Feedback to the LEA

SRO Liaison Response	n	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	17	42.5	42.5
Once a year	19	47.5	47.5
Once a month	3	7.5	7.5
Once a week	1	2.5	2.5
Total	40	100.0	100.0
Missing	0	0	
Total	40	100.0	
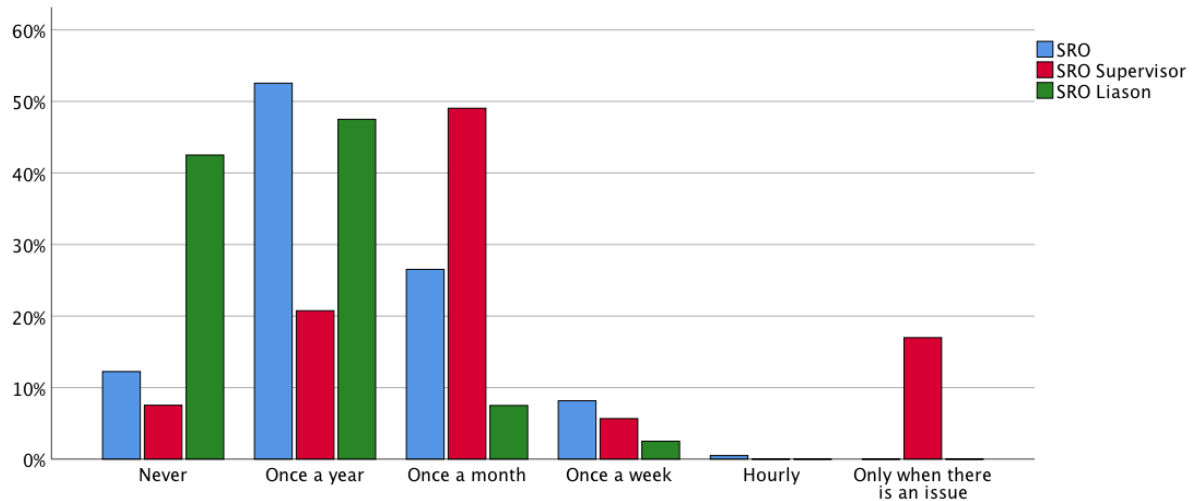
Figure 26. Comparison of reported frequency levels of feedback from school officials provided to or solicited from the LEA.

As part of the survey, SRO Supervisors and SRO Liaisons were asked an open-ended question about what criteria are used the evaluate the performance of the SROs they supervise or work with.

SRO Supervisor Survey Question: What criteria are used to evaluate the performance of the SROs you supervise?
SRO Liaison Survey Question: What criteria does the Law Enforcement Agency use to evaluate the performance of the SROs at your school?

Of the 54 SRO Supervisor respondents, 32% ($n = 17$) mentioned that feedback and input from school administration or other members of the school community were considered when evaluating SRO performance. Forty-eight percent ($n = 26$) described criteria used to evaluate SRO performance, with 39% ($n = 21$) referencing general criteria such as criteria used to evaluate all departmental patrol officers/deputies. Twenty-two percent of the SRO Supervisors ($n = 12$) named criteria specific to SROs such as the ability to recognize their role is fundamentally different than that of when they are on patrol, working relationship with the school staff, and relationships with students, faculty, and staff.

116

Of the 40 SRO Liaisons, over half (53%, $n = 21$) indicated they were not sure about or did not know what the SRO evaluation process involved. Fifteen percent ($n = 6$) mentioned that the process involved feedback from school administration. Thirteen percent ($n = 5$) named criteria used to evaluate SRO performance, with 8% ($n = 3$) referencing general criteria such as criteria used to evaluate all departmental patrol officers/deputies. Eight percent of the SRO Liaisons ($n = 3$) named criteria specific for SROs such as the implementation of school programs (e.g., Virginia Rules) and communication with school administration.

MOU Data

Of the 73 MOUs, 50 MOUs contained text related to the evaluation of SROs. Of those 50, only 3 included any text that addressed the criteria used to evaluate SRO performance. The same relevant line of text occurred in all 3 MOUs. It is only a very general description of what SROs are evaluated on: *"They are evaluated on their interaction with their school community."* Besides this one general statement, we found no other text describing what criteria is used to evaluate SROs.

While only 3 MOUs talked about criteria for SRO evaluation, 47 other MOUs referenced some other aspect of SRO evaluation; these other evaluation topics are described next.

Partner Organization Responsible for SRO Evaluation. Forty-seven MOUs addressed which partner organization is ultimately responsible for SRO evaluation. 37 MOUs identified the LEA as having the final authority when it comes to the evaluation of the SRO. The text of 4 MOUs indicated that the LEA alone was responsible for SRO evaluation.

> *The SROs remain employees of the County and as such are ultimately supervised, evaluated, and directed by the Chief of the Police Department.*

> *The Police Department shall provide for the employment, equipment, supervision, and evaluation of each School Resource Officer (SRO).*

117

Thirty-three of the 37 MOUs that named the LEA as being responsible for SRO

evaluation also indicated the SD would provide input into the evaluation.

The [LOCALITY] PD evaluator of each SRO will request feedback from the assigned schools designated SRO contact person during the evaluation process.

Selection, assignment, scheduling, training, supervision, and evaluation of school resource officers (SROs) will be the responsibility of the SO. However, each of these actions will take into account the input of school personnel, and identified needs and conditions of schools.

Annually the assigned school principal and Superintendent or designee will provide his/her assessment of the SRO with the SO designee.

The SRO supervisor will meet at least once each school year with the superintendent of schools, or his designee, and the school principals. The purpose of this meeting will be to evaluate the SRO program, the assigned officers and to address areas of concern.

It is mutually agreed that the [LOCALITY] COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD shall evaluate annually the SRO Program and the performance of each SRO on forms developed jointly by the parties. It is further understood that the [LOCALITY] COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD'S evaluation of each officer is advisory only and that the [LOCALITY] COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE retains the final authority to evaluate the performance of the SRO.

Ten MOUs contained text suggesting that SRO evaluation is a collaboration between the

LEA and SD, with neither organization assigned final authority.

There will be an annual review of the SRO program at each school. This review will be a collaborative effort of the building administrator and the police sergeant assigned to supervise the SROs.

The school principal will evaluate the SRO annually and share his/her assessment with the Sheriff or his designee at the end of each school year.

The principal shall provide the Superintendent and Chief of Police a quarterly program evaluation report. In the case where a specific SRO's performance is documented to be unsatisfactory by the principal, the Chief of Police and the Superintendent of Schools will cooperatively rectify the situation.

Frequency of SRO Evaluation. Fourteen MOUs contained text explaining how often an

SRO should be evaluated. 12 MOUs said evaluation should happen annually or, at a minimum,

once a year.

> *The SRO Supervisor and the Sheriff will meet with the Superintendent and the school principals' designees at least once a year. The purpose of this meeting will be to evaluate the SRO program and the assigned officers and to address any issues or areas of concern.*

> *There will be an annual review of the SRO program at each school.*

Two MOUs referenced a semi-annual evaluation process.

> *It is mutually agreed that the [LOACLITY] County School System (Administrators) shall evaluate semiannually the SRO Program and performance of each SRO on forms developed by the Sheriff's Office.*

> *The SRO's supervisor will meet at least once each semester with the Superintendent of Schools (or his designee) and school principals. The purpose of this meeting will be to evaluate the SRO Program and the assigned officers, to remain aware of current trends and strategies and to address any issues of concern.*

> ***Format for the SRO Evaluation Process.*** Six MOUs had text coded as describing what

the SRO evaluation process involves. Four MOUs described the evaluation process as taking

place at meetings.

> *The SRO Supervisor and the Sheriff will meet with the Superintendent and the school principals or designees at least once a year. The purpose of this meeting will be to evaluate the SRO program and the assigned officers and to address any issues or areas of concern.*

> *There will be an annual review of the SRO program at each school. This review will be a collaborative effort of the building administrator and the police sergeant assigned to supervise the SROs. The evaluation will document all actions taken by the SRO and the effectiveness of the program at each school. To aid in that evaluation, the SRO sergeant will meet with building administrators on a regular basis, at least once a semester, to discuss the performance of an SRO. Administrators are encouraged to contact the SRO sergeant directly during the course of the year with any concerns, compliments or questions about an SRO's performance, duties, roles, or effectiveness.*

> *The SRO's supervisor will meet at least once each semester with the Superintendent of Schools (or his designee) and school principals. The purpose of this meeting will be to*

119

evaluate the SRO Program and the assigned officers, to remain aware of current trends and strategies and to address any issues of concern.

The Crime Prevention Unit Supervisor will meet at least once each school year with the Division Superintendent (or his designee) and the principals of schools to which SROs are assigned. The purpose of this meeting will be to evaluate the SRO program, the performance of assigned officers, and to address any areas of concern.

Two MOUs referenced written documents or forms that need to be completed.

The school principal or designee will provide a written evaluation of the SRO to the SRO supervisor on a form provided by the Sheriff's Office.

It is mutually agreed that the [LOCALITY] County School System (Administrators) shall evaluate semiannually the SRO Program and performance of each SRO on forms developed by the Sheriff's Office.

Interview and Focus Group Data

SRO Evaluation Process. For SROs, the evaluation process often appears to involve a standard process that is used for all law enforcement officers within the given department. Sometimes these evaluations include metrics and criteria specific to the job of SRO. The SRO evaluations are conducted by the LEA with the SRO Supervisor frequently named as the main evaluator. Interviewees and focus group participants shared that the LEA often asks for feedback from school administration and staff, either to be incorporated into one main evaluation or to create a second evaluation of the SRO.

Yes, so I have evaluations through the sheriff's office. And then the sheriff's office provides a form to the principals, in which the principals get to grade us based on our performance and what they feel is, what our performance is in their school. So we get graded twice. We get graded by the sheriff's office, and then we get graded by the principal. (Spencer, SRO, Region 3)

We do two different things. We have a, through the county that we work for, we have to do annual evaluations. Furthermore, I do an evaluation with each SRO with the school principal to where they're assigned. So, not only do a do an evaluation as a supervisor for them, but I also do an evaluation through the school principal to find out where that SRO is and how they're performing in their daily functions. (Glenn, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)

We, our SROs, they fall under, even though they're assigned to the schools and that's their daily patrol, they're still police department employees. And myself as a supervisor, I conduct their annual evaluation. But what I can do is I start with their administrators at least twice a year. And I even print them out an evaluation form to evaluate and rate their officer that's assigned to their particular school. Not just in a negative aspect, but positive as well. (Alex, SRO Supervisor, Region 2)

SRO Evaluation Criteria. In addition to standard evaluation questions for all law enforcement officers, some SRO evaluations included criteria specific to the job of an SRO. These additional criteria relate specifically to tasks and goals that are part of a school environment. For example, one SRO was expected to start a program for students at the high school where they were assigned. SROs were often evaluated based on their interactions with students and school staff and administration

Well it's, our job performance is evaluated by the police department. They have the same citywide evaluation system as other employees within the police department. But our goals are set different than the average officer. Like one of my goals is to start a program at the high school. So I had to start a program which incorporated the community, the school, the police department. So that was like, those are things we're evaluated on. And then our normal officer duties, we're evaluated on that. The cleanness of the police car. Are you on work on time. What have you done above and beyond, those type of things. But our supervisors normally meet with the principals that are responsible, the schools we're responsible for. And they kind of interview them and get an evaluation and get a feel for how we're doing at the position, what things we can do better, what things we've done great. And then they incorporate that into our evaluation. (Curtis, SRO, Region 2)

Some strategies are seeing how the SRO handles situations when it deals with parents, how they communicate with the students and parents as well, how they communicate with the school division and employees within the school system and, generally speaking, asking the SRO as well what are their daily—you know, if they have needs within that school, if there's daily things that they need or if there's other things that I'm overlooking that they may require. So, based upon those things, it helps to evaluate them. (Glenn, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)

One recommendation emerged from the interview data regarding SRO evaluation and that was to keep track of positive feedback.

And something I've always done, and our supervisor has kind of adopted this as a good practice to do it, I'll keep, I call it a brag sheet. I'll keep a file throughout the year of

anything good or notable or important that I've done. So if I receive a commendation, I'll make a note of that. Or if I get this good feedback, or if I receive a positive e-mail from a parent thanking me for something I did, I'll put that in there. And then I'll then give that to my supervisor and she'll take that into account, as well. (Daniel, SRO, Region 1)

SSO Evaluation Process

Interview and Focus Group Data

Like the evaluation process for SROs, the SSO evaluation often appears to involve a standard process that is used for all SD employees within the given school district. Sometimes these evaluations include metrics and criteria specific to the job of SSO. According to the interviewees and focus group participants, school administration has previously been solely responsible for SSO evaluation, although two interviewees talked about the evaluation process being transferred to the SD central office. In most cases, it appears a standard evaluation form that is used for all SD personnel is often used to evaluate SSOs.

> *At this moment, they are evaluated directly by their building principal and that's one of the things that organizationally is going to be changing in the next 30 to 60 days. We're actually creating a position to oversee the school security officers and will be evaluating them this school year. (Jack, SSO Supervisor, Region 4)*

> *The reviews happen through their principal and they're hired and fired if that comes to it by their principal. (Christina, SSO Supervisor, Region 1)*

> *I'm evaluated by an assistant principal that's above me. (Wes, SSO, Region 4)*

One SSO interviewee viewed their DCJS certification and recertification process as a form of evaluation.

> *And then to maintain that SSO certification through VADCJS...I have to have 16 hours. To get recertified I have to have 16 hours every 2 years. So I kind of answer to both the school and then I answer to VADCJS as an SSO. (Wes, SSO, Region 4)*

SSO Evaluation Criteria. No clear pattern emerged concerning SSO evaluation criteria, other than frequent use of the standard SD personnel evaluation form. Criteria seems to be

122

general, such as is the SSO doing their job, how is their interaction with students and staff, and

are they seeking out professional development.

> *And that would be my overall job performance; whether I'm performing at well, how I'm handling it, whether I'm showing improvement, whether I seek out professional development. (Wes, SSO, Region 4)*

> *Well, that's a … we do an annual evaluation for all of our employees and that's just a part of that that we evaluate how they do their job essentially. (Robert, SSO Supervisor, Region 2)*

> *But we're looking, again, at the quality of work, their investigations, their ability to deal with students, staff and parents. Those interactions are part of the evaluation. (Joan, SSO Supervisor, Region 4)*

One interviewee referenced the Virginia School Climate Survey as one tool they use to pull data

when evaluating SSOs.

> *The state of Virginia has a climate survey and there's a security component in that, and we also have the state safety audit that we do at every one of our schools physically every year. There's a security component in that and part of those components include how the security force, the SSO's and the SRO, are doing in that school. So there's a formal employment performance evaluation and then there's metrics associated with the safety audit, the school climate audit. (Joe, School Leader, Region 4)*

Interviewees and focus group participants at times acknowledged a lack of clear evaluation

criteria or reported on future efforts to improve the evaluation process.

> *Honestly, I think the real challenge is that there are not … that you have to work at developing clear metrics around their performance and actually measuring their contribution and I don't think that happens enough. (Stephanie, School Leader, Region 4)*

> *I do maintain metrics on activities that occur in the schools. Part of it is for us so we know what's going on in the school. But we're going to start using those metrics also to help in working in that evaluation process kind of what are you doing? How much time are you spending wandering? You know, I shouldn't say "wandering the halls" because it's not really wandering. How much time are you spending out in the hallways doing that kind of patrol and those interactive conversations that you're having with kids? I also want to know how much time are you really spending talking to kids, doing those investigations? How much time are you spending doing lunch duty because lunchtime tends to be when you get all those kids together a big time for fights because you have so many kids in one place and it's a little bit looser than a classroom in there. (Joan, SSO Supervisor, Region 4)*

123

Research Question 6: School Discipline

To what extent are SROs and SSOs involved in addressing school disciplinary matters that do not rise to the level of criminal activity?

Research Question 6a: Initiation and Handling of School Discipline

How are these situations initiated and handled?

SROs Initial Involvement in School Discipline

Survey Data

SRO Supervisors and SRO Liaisons were asked about the frequency with which school staff request SRO assistance in school discipline issues that do not rise to the level of criminal activity or threat to public safety. The two groups differed in their perceptions of SRO requests for assistance in non-criminal school discipline activity with 64.1% of SRO Supervisors generally believing these types of requests occur once a week, once a day, or hourly. In contrast, SRO Liaisons indicated they believed such requests occur much less frequently, with only 20% of SRO Liaisons indicating these requests occur once a week or once a day. Figure 27 provides a comparison of the SRO Supervisor and SRO Liaison survey data that appear in Tables 48 and 49.

SRO Supervisor Survey Question: On average, how often do school staff request SRO assistance with school disciplinary incidents that do not involve criminal activity or threaten public safety?

Table 48. SRO Supervisor Reported Frequency of Request for SRO Assistance in Non-Criminal School Discipline Activity

SRO Supervisor Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	8	14.8	15.1
Once a month	11	20.4	20.8
Once a week	21	38.9	39.6
Once a day	12	22.2	22.6
Hourly	1	1.9	1.9
Total	53	98.1	100.0
Missing	1	1.9	
Total	54	100.0	

<u>SRO Liaison Survey Question:</u> On average, how often do school employees request SRO assistance with school disciplinary incidents that do not involve criminal activity or threaten public safety?

Table 49. SRO Liaison Reported Frequency of Request for SRO Assistance in Non-Criminal School Discipline Activity

SRO Liaison Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Never	8	20.0	20.0
Once a year	4	10.0	10.0
Once a month	20	50.0	50.0
Once a week	7	17.5	17.5
Once a day	1	2.5	2.5
Total	40	100.0	100.0
Missing	0	0	
Total	40	100.0	
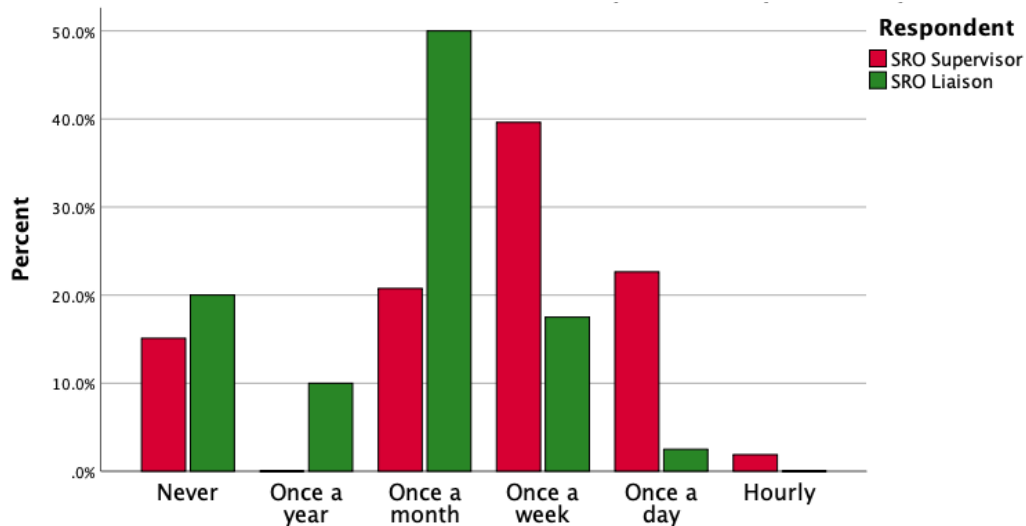
Figure 27. Comparison of SRO Supervisor and SRO Liaison reported frequency of request for SRO involvement in non-criminal school discipline activity.

MOU Data

Of the 73 MOUs, 56 contained text that we coded as relevant to SRO involvement in school discipline. Of the 56 MOUs with references to school discipline, we coded text in 6 MOUs as being unclear about the role of SROs in school discipline. In these MOUs, conflicting statements or poorly worded text did not clearly indicate how, when, or if an SRO should be involved in school discipline. For example, one MOU initially and clearly states that the SRO should not be involved in school discipline:

> *The SRO shall not enforce school policy or apply any discipline for violations of such. The SRO shall not monitor any imposed school discipline… Routinely, rule infractions will not be handled as violations of law, but rather referred to the principal for action. Any questions related to the enforcement of rules versus laws within the schools should be discussed with the principal.*

In the same MOU, however, other text indicates the possibility that SROs may be asked to be involved in school discipline—in cases where a law violation has occurred or not:

> *While disciplinary actions are the primary responsibility of the principal, the SRO may assist the principal with disciplinary responses and/or may be assigned to investigate suspected Violations of the Code of Virginia.*

126

In another MOU, text clearly says that the SRO is not to be used as a disciplinarian:

Officers/deputies shall not be used as a disciplinarian or to frighten/threaten students.

In the same MOU, other text refers to SROs acting in consultation with school staff, but it is unclear what consultation means:

Assigned Officers/deputies will act as a resource for consultation with school faculty/staff in relation to disciplinary issues and will exercise law enforcement responsibilities as required by law and/or departmental policies and procedures.

Another MOU coded as being unclear in reference to the role of SROs in school discipline contained text saying that the SRO is not a disciplinarian:

The School Resource Officer is not a school disciplinarian.

The same MOU described SROs as being allowed to assist in the enforcement of school policies:

The School Resource Officer may assist school administrators in the enforcement of policies established by the [LOCALITY] County School Board that do not conflict with the Policies or Procedures of the [LOCALITY] County Sheriff's Office or the Virginia State Code.

Forty-two MOUs contained text indicating that SROs should only be involved in school discipline when there is law violation or a safety concern.

SROs will not be involved in the enforcement of school rules and policies. SROS will assist school administrators in addressing pressing administrative violations involving the safety of students. SROs will not be assigned administrative functions as they pertain to school rules and regulations, unless a probability of violence exists.

The SRO is expected to be familiar with the School Board policies relating to personnel and students and student policy handbooks. The SRO will not address violations of school policy not otherwise defined as crimes.

Designated school personnel supervise school affairs. The SRO assigned to the school should be available to advise, assist, and counsel, but those matters which are the exclusive concern of the school administrator, should be handled by school officials rather than being referred to the officer. Infractions of the school rules, as opposed to violations of the law or crimes, will be handled at the school level

The [LOCALITY] PS will handle discipline within the school disciplinary process without involving SROs. [LOCALITY] PS policies, administrative guidance, training, and

127

ongoing oversight will clearly communicate that school administrators and teachers are responsible for school discipline and that law enforcement is not to be involved with disciplinary action. The [LOCALITY] PS is responsible for communicating the goals and role of the SRO to all school administration, staff, and students.

The SROS are not authorized to enforce violations of school rules, policies, regulations or administrative rules, and will not serve in any other capacity than that of a law enforcement officer performing those duties authorized by the Department and contained in this MOU, as it may be amended.

Eight MOUs described circumstances where the SRO may become involved in school discipline even if the incidents are not a law violation or a safety concern. Three MOUs described how the SRO may become involved in school discipline at the request of school administration.

School employees will address routine student discipline issues without involving the SRO unless it is considered necessary for the safe operation of the school, in the judgment of school staff, or as may be required by law. Clearly said, SROs must be invited into discipline situations unless there is a violation of existing law.

[LOCALITY] PS will handle discipline within the school disciplinary process without involving SROs unless requested by a school administrator. [LOCALITY] PS policies, administrative guidance, training, and ongoing oversight will clearly communicate that school administrators and teachers are responsible for school discipline and that law enforcement is not to be involved with disciplinary action unless requested by a school administrator.

All normal discipline matters should be referred to the principal for appropriate action with the SRO assisting when requested.

Three MOUs indicated that the level of SRO involvement in school discipline is determined by the individual policy of each school. All 3 MOUs contained some version of the following text with minimal variation:

The SRO's will address violations of school policy not otherwise defined as crimes whenever necessary according to procedures set forth by the school.

Two MOUs supported SRO involvement in school discipline in general.

The SRO will assist school administration with violators of school policies. Likewise, the officer will be involved in the enforcement of administrative rules and regulations.

128

To enforce Federal, State and Local criminal laws and ordinances, and to assist school officials with the enforcement of Board of Education Policies and Administrative Regulations regarding student conduct.

While 42 MOUs clearly stated that SROs should not be involved in school discipline unless there is a safety concern or law violation, it was not clear (in either these 42 or any of the 56 MOUs that addressed school discipline) how the involved parties determine (1) whether an incident is a violation of school rules, the law, or both, and (2) in cases where an incident is both a school rule and law violation, whether law enforcement intervention is warranted or not. Sometimes, MOUs appeared to suggest that there is no overlap between school rules and the law:

School Officers will follow Division policies and enforce any violations of the Code of Virginia and/or-County Codes. School Officers are not authorized to enforce violations of school rules, policies, regulations, or administrative rules.

The SB will handle discipline within the school disciplinary process without involving SROs. SB policies, administrative guidance, training, and ongoing oversight will clearly communicate that school administrators and teachers are responsible for school discipline and that law enforcement is not to be involved with disciplinary action. The SB is responsible for communicating the goals and role of the SRO to all school administration, staff, and students.

At no time should the SRO recommend or make decisions about student discipline or otherwise involve himself/herself directly or indirectly in disciplining a student.

Other MOUs acknowledged the complexity of the interface between school rules and laws.

The parties acknowledge that not every criminal act will be handled through the criminal justice system. There will be times when the administration of typical school disciplinary measures and/or availability of intervention services will be sufficient to address behaviors.

SROs were sometimes given sole responsibility for determining if a law has been broken and, if so, if law enforcement intervention is warranted.

The SRO shall differentiate between school disciplinary issues and criminal activity and respond accordingly...If asked to intervene in a matter related to discipline, the SRO may decline should the SRO determine the act does not present a risk to safety/ harm, and is more appropriately addressed by the school principal… In determining whether law

129

enforcement intervention is appropriate, the SRO shall consider factors such as age of the student, circumstances of the situation, and whether the situation could be better addressed through the school's disciplinary process.

When requested to intervene by school personnel in a matter involving student alleged misconduct, the SRO may decline to intervene, if the SRO determines that the situation does not present a significant risk of harm or safety concern, and is more appropriately handled by school administration.

Finally, other MOUs advocated for a collaborative approach among SROs and school

staff to determine whether a law violation has occurred and/or whether law enforcement

intervention is needed.

[LOCALITY] PS and Police Department will work as a team to differentiate between disciplinary issues and crime problems and respond appropriately, as is further outlined in this MOU.

In deciding when to resort to the criminal justice system in lieu of, or in addition to, school discipline, the Principal and SRO will confer and each strive to accommodate the opinions of the other as to how to best handle a particular situation.

Routinely, rule infractions will not be handled as violations of law, but rather referred to the principal or designee for action. Any questions related to the enforcement of rules versus laws within schools should be discussed with the principal or designee. This specifically applied to underage smoking and general standards of conduct.

In general, the MOUs supported an emphasis on minimizing law enforcement

intervention and considering alternatives and circumstances when deciding course of action. The

particular case of students with special needs was occasionally highlighted.

The parties agree that, whenever possible, a prevention before enforcement approach will be taken when addressing student behavioral concerns.

[LOCALITY] CS administrators and employees shall make every effort to handle routine student discipline (violations of the code of student conduct) within the school without involving the SRO in a law enforcement capacity, unless necessary for the safe operation of the school or as required by law.

It is the intention of all parties in this MOU to minimize the use of the [LOCALITY] COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE where possible; excepting those situations where there exists a clear violation of law or the safety of school/ individuals are at risk. In determining whether law enforcement intervention is appropriate, the SRO shall consider

factors such as age of the student, circumstances of the situation, and whether the situation could be better addressed through the school's disciplinary process.

When appropriate, and to the extent the law allows, the SD should notify SROs of any special needs of a student involved in a school-based infraction that is not routine discipline, in order to assist the SRO in recognizing and accommodating behaviors that may be manifestations of the student's disability.

Interview and Focus Group Data

Some interviewees and focus group participants felt SROs should not be involved in school discipline, or at least hinted that is an accepted generalization. A major exception noted by several interviewees and focus group participants was if a disciplinary issue is also a legal/criminal issue. In cases where administrators feel a law has been broken, they may request the involvement of the SRO.

We are not a disciplinary factor for the schools. We are not utilized that way at all. We don't get involved in any discipline at all. Anything that deals with school discipline is handled by the administrators of that particular school, and we do not have any influence over that. (Glenn, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)

Generally, disciplinary, I think most of them are handled by the administration. (Gary, SRO, Region 5)

So I don't generally get involved in school discipline. That's usually the school security officers and the administrators. We don't normally get involved in that. (Spencer, SRO, Region 3)

Legal. There's that line that we don't cross right now, and sometimes if there's a student that I've developed a good rapport with I'll mess with him and be like, "Pull your pants up," you know, that kind of thing…But other than that, you know, unless the principal asks me to stand by or assist or I know where it's something where it's probably gonna escalate, I'll just place myself there strategically. You know, I wish my principal enforced a little more discipline for some of the students, but it is what it is and as long as it doesn't cross that line I don't get involved. (Jill, SRO, Region 2)

I'd say when it comes down to school disciplinary issues, it's a fine line. Because if it's a school disciplinary issue, if it's strictly school discipline, I mean, the school handles that. But if there's sometimes it becomes school and criminal. I'll give you an example. Like if a student assaults another student. At that point the school is going to do what they have to do. Suspend the student for the assault. And they're going to take treatment for the

131

student. They're going to do everything they need to do as far as XXXXX public schools go. And then they'll call me and say hey, this assault took place. And I'll contact the parents, and if they want to file a report and pursue charges, that's where I'll take, that's where we interact with each other. But definitely, it's one of those situations where the discipline is taken care of by the school. But if this is a criminal act, that's when I get directly involved. (Curtis, SRO, Region 2)

Typically, school discipline, we try to take out of our law enforcement officer's hands unless it's both a violation of school board policy and the law. Then in that case, the two go hand in hand. (Jack, SSO Supervisor, Region 4)

One interviewee reported an instance where they (as an SRO) felt they should be

involved, but the school administration did not want them involved.

And there has been a couple times where an administrator has gotten in between myself and the student to say "No, let me handle it." Well, the last thing I ever want to see is a student think that they can get away with something the minute the police get involved. And it's happened a time or two and I spoke with that said administrator and said look, unfortunately, authority every now and then gets thrown out the window and these kids pick up on it. And you saying you're gonna take care of it after I say I'm going to arrest you and then they don't get arrested, that student may feel that they've got one over not only the police but also on the school and I said that's not doing anyone any good. But only a couple times do I remember over the last five years in this position has that happened. (Mark, SRO, Region 1)

SSOs Initial Involvement in School Discipline

Survey Data

SSOs were asked how they typically become involved in a school disciplinary matter. Of

the 103 SSOs who responded to this question, 43% report a school employee requests their help

and the 40% report they were already present at the time the incident began. Two SSOs indicated

they do not become involved in school discipline. Seven percent selected the "Other" option and

several of these respondents entered text indicating that more than one of the options often

applies at the same time.

SSO Survey Question: In a typical case, how do you become involved in a school disciplinary matter?

Table 50. SSO Reported Description of How They Become Involved in School Discipline

SSO Response	n	%	Valid %
Valid			
I am present in the area where an incident begins and I respond when needed.	41	38.0	39.8
A school employee requests help after an incident has begun.	44	40.7	42.7
A school employee requests my presence in advance of a meeting or event that is likely to escalate.	9	8.3	8.7
I do not become involved in these incidents	2	1.9	1.9
Other	7	6.5	6.8
Total	103	95.4	100.0
Missing	5	4.6	
Total	108	100.0	
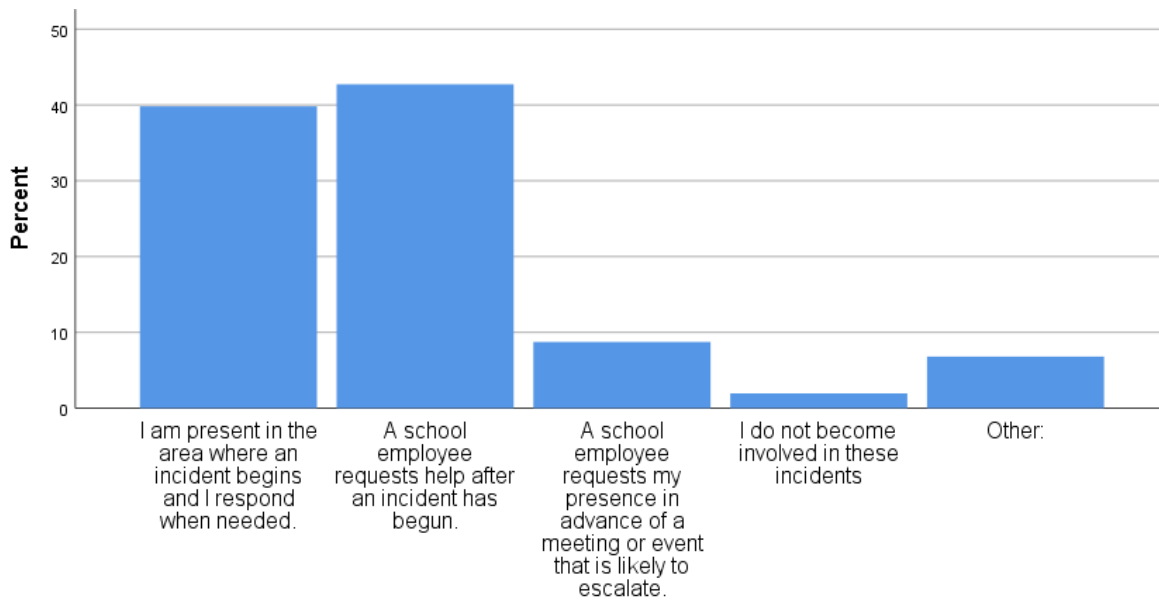
Figure 28. SSO's descriptions of how they become involved in a school discipline matter.

Interview and Focus Group Data

For some SSOs, one of their roles is to look out for instances where school rules are broken and to intervene as needed, suggesting they feel free to insert themselves into school discipline issues. SSOs may also be invited by administration to become involved in school discipline matters. SSOs are involved in student searches, breaking up fights, suspected drug activity, and attendance and tardiness issues.

> *The assistants and the SSO's supervisors and specialists, they help enforce the SR&R [students rights and responsibilities booklet] and if a student violates a significant piece of the rights and responsibilities booklet – for instance say they bring a knife with a six inch blade to school and they're stopped, which that's a violation clearly, they have to go to a hearing. It goes beyond in school suspension level of discipline, so it comes to our hearings officers. They will help school administrators prepare a case and many times come to the hearings office with our legal department and testify as to the discipline and then the hearings office decides what level of discipline needs to be imposed. (Joe, School Leader, Region 4)*

> *Well, in our building, I won't say there's a lot of drugs, but our kids—it's an affluent area, and of course, our kids have a lot of disposable income. So, usually what we're dealing with in discipline lies—other than tardies and attendance, attendance is the biggest problem as far as I'm concerned at our school. But, you know, there is issues with kids that are either self-medicating with medication they get from home or contraband drugs. And, you know, for example, if you leave school grounds without authorization, you're not checked out, you're not with a parent, and you leave school grounds, when you come back, your bags and your jacket then are subject to search. So, if a student leaves school grounds, if we see him coming back, we'll bring into the Security Office, explain to them the SR&R about leaving school grounds, how that's against the rules, and they're also subject to search. And we'll search students. If we find any kind of contraband on them, we immediately turn them over to an administrator. (Bruce, SSO, Region 4)*

> *So, that happens from time to time. We've had some skirmishes in the past where I had to jump in. I had a couple girls last year, me and one of my new assistants that I had on staff last year had (audio distorted) two girls decided to, they'd been having some inner strife between each other and they decided to take it out on each other (audio distorted) and we had to jump in the middle. That's a hard piece, too, because now you've got 150, 200 kids around and you're trying to get in the middle and break it up. Luckily, we were there pretty quick, so. (Cody, SSO, Region 4)*

Research Question 6b: SRO and SSO Actions in School Discipline

What does the SRO or SSO do in these situations?

SRO Actions in School Discipline

Survey Data

SROs were asked an open-ended question to describe how they respond to requests for assistance with school discipline that are not at the level of criminal activity or threaten public safety. Of the 202 SROs, 183 entered a written response with 14 of those responses coded as being unclear or not answering the question. The remaining 169 responses were coded thematically and the results are presented in Table 51. Each individual response could be coded as having multiple themes/category of response. For example, one respondent provided the answer of "Give advice and define my role." This response was coded to both the "Give advice to administration" and "Define what role of SRO is" categories.

Over a third of the SROs who responded (36.6%) provided an answer that was coded as making a statement that the school handles school discipline. The primary description of action taken was to standby/be present/monitor, with 24% of respondents describing this action. Talking to students (19.1%) and giving advice to administrators (15.3%) also received multiple mentions.

SRO Survey Question: How do you respond to requests for assistance with school disciplinary incidents that do not rise to the level of criminal activity or threaten public safety?

Table 51. SRO Descriptions of Response to School Discipline Requests

SRO-Provided Written Response	*n*	%	Valid %
School handles school discipline	67	33.2	36.6
Standby/ be present /monitor	44	21.8	24.0
Talk to student/mentor/counsel	35	17.3	19.1
Give advice to administration	28	13.9	15.3
Do what is needed or asked	17	8.4	9.3
Define what role of SRO is	16	7.9	8.7
De-escalate the situation	11	5.4	6.0
Offer resources	7	3.5	3.8
Document the activity and own involvement	6	3.0	3.3
Work to prevent problems through class presentations/education	5	2.5	2.7
Assist in a secondary position/provide support	4	2.0	2.2
Do what is needed as long as within the role of SRO	4	2.0	2.2
Assist by providing access to camera system	3	1.5	1.6
Every situation is different	3	1.5	1.6
Contact parents	2	1.0	1.1
Escort student to administrator/Stay with student until administrator arrives	2	1.0	1.1
Part of threat assessment team	2	1.0	1.1
Ask student to come with me to remove them from situation	1	0.5	0.5
Intervene if no one else can handle the situation	1	0.5	0.5
Intervene if no one else present	1	0.5	0.5
Investigate	1	0.5	0.5
Notify school administrator of issue	1	0.5	0.5
Participate as member of school PBIS team	1	0.5	0.5
Response unclear	14	6.9	7.7
Total respondents	183	90.6	100.0
Missing	19	9.4	
Total respondents and non-respondents	202	100.0	

In the 6 MOUs that indicated an SRO may become involved in school discipline even
when safety and law violations are not of concern, little text appeared that described what an
SRO should do in these situations. The small amount of text from the 6 MOUs that offered some
insight into the SRO role in these instances included:

> *Furthermore, the SRO will assist any staff or faculty member with disciplinary and*
> *security tasks, such as monitoring of the lunchroom, the halls and parking lots within the*
> *school.*

> *SROs may remind students of school rules or disciplinary infractions with prior approval*
> *from school administrators.*

> *The SRO will attend disciplinary meetings with students and/or parent(s) upon the*
> *request of a staff or faculty member with the approval of the Assistant Principal or*
> *Principal of the School.*

Another MOU offered the option of SROs declining the invitation to be involved:

> *If asked to intervene in a matter related to discipline, the SRO may decline should the*
> *SRO determine the act does not present a risk to safety/ harm, and is more appropriately*
> *addressed by the school principal.*

Some of the 6 MOUs included text detailing what an SRO should not do in these
situations, mainly indicating that SROs should not be involved in the assignment of disciplinary
consequences:

> *…will refrain from functioning as a school disciplinarian and will only provide testimony*
> *for school disciplinary or expulsion hearings when requested to do so by the proper*
> *authority.*

> *At no time. however, will an SRO become directly or indirectly involved in assigning*
> *discipline to a student. The SRO's will also not discuss matters of student discipline with*
> *parents/guardians; all such questions will be referred to a school administrator.*

> *The SRO will be familiar with school rules and regulations. In general, rule infractions*
> *should not be handled as violations of law, but referred to the principal for appropriate*
> *school action.*

Throughout the 56 MOUS that addressed school discipline we coded text as relevant that referenced how SROs should be familiar and supportive of the school discipline rules, policies, and approaches.

> *School Resource Officers are expected to be familiar with school rules and their application with the school.*
>
> *The SRO will not be responsible for enforcement of violations of school rules, regulations or administrative rules, but as appropriate will encourage students to obey school rules.*
>
> *Emphasis is to be placed on de-escalating issues, familiarity with school implantation of the Student Code of Conduct, and restorative approaches to misconduct, unless it is a violation of existing law.*

23 MOUs contained text instructing the SRO to refer disciplinary issues to school administration.

> *The police officer will not become associated with oppressive (intimidating) tactics by handling such incidents as school jokes or pranks. SROs should not look away from school infractions. He/She should send the offender to the proper school authority with an explanation.*
>
> *Routinely, rule infractions will not be handled as violations of law, but instead referred to the principal for action. Any questions related to the enforcement of rules versus laws within the school should be discussed with the principal. This specifically applies to general standards of conduct*

Interview and Focus Group Data

SROs reported instances where they had to determine if laws had been broken, and if so, they took appropriate action as a law enforcement officer. If SROs were called into a matter that they did not feel rose to the level of a broken law, they talked with school administrators to let them know this.

> *So if it's something that they think could possibly have some criminal implications, they'll bring me in and I'll just sit there while they're conducting the interview with the student, or gathering the information. And if at any point that we decide that there's something more than some school policy violation, then we can take whatever steps necessary for my intervention. (Daniel, SRO, Region 1)*

There have been other times with different administrators where they'll call you and they say, "This happened. What are you going to do about it?" And sometimes the answer is, "Well, there's nothing." You look at all the information. Well, no law has been broken. And different administrators – you know, people are people. Different people take that better than others. I had administrators that understood it, said, "Okay. Well, that's interesting." You know, "Oh, wow. I can't believe there's not a law like that. But thanks for looking at it." And then there are others that get all, very upset about it, and will want to call a supervisor, and want to know why you're not doing your job properly when the fact is there's no legal violation to it. So I've seen it throughout the spectrum. (Daniel, SRO, Region 1)

Interviewees and focus group participants did report times when school administration asked the SRO to become involved in a potentially criminal investigation, but only in the capacity of talking to a student.

There will be times where an administrator will call me and say, "Hey, little Johnny did X, Y, Z. We don't really want to push an issue with it legally right now, but could you come down in and give him the, – " You know, basically read him the riot act. Tell him what could happen, stuff like that. I'll do that. (Luke, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)

So if it already is some of that stuff that could technically be charged, a lot of times the SROs, given their mentoring role, will be asked to come in to talk to the kids to explain some of the consequences of continued behavior like that. And again to try to steer the kids in the right direction. But they're not involved in handing out discipline, responsible for the discipline. (Daniel, SRO, Region 1)

Interviewees and focus group participants also described the role of SROs in school discipline as that of a reporter—if either witnessed a major violation of school rules or obtained knowledge about possible issues, their role was to report to administration.

And along the lines of the discipline, once again, it's where we read the climate. If I'm wandering the hallways and I can hear some talk, names mentioned, that's about the only time we really get in with discipline. I might go tell the principal, hey, I don't know what's going on, but here's some names, and the principals go and investigate to see what all the ruckus is about. But yeah, we don't get in any type of disciplinary action unless it's law-related. (Ryan, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)

For SROs, enforcement of school rules was not their role, but they felt comfortable reminding students about school policy.

My role is to enforce laws. I do not enforce school policy. I can suggest school policy to a student, but I do not enforce it. So if I see a kid in a hall, I can say, "Hey, Jabril, you're wearing your hat again. You know what's going to happen if you get caught doing that?" And hopefully they'll take the hint. But what I don't say is, "Hey, Jabril, that that hat off, or else." Why? Because if he challenges me on it, I have no authority to actually make him take that off. Plus, that also takes the power away from the teachers. (Daniel, SRO, Region 1)

SSO Actions in School Discipline

Survey Data

Like SROs, the SSOs were asked to provide a written response describing the actions they typically take during a school disciplinary matter. Of the 108 SSO respondents, 78 provided a written response. Responses were thematically coded and a single response could be coded as demonstrating more than one theme/category. Three of the 78 responses were coded as unclear. The most commonly reported action was escorting students (33.3%). Table 52 presents a tabulation of the coded responses.

SSO Survey Question: In a typical case, describe your actions during a school disciplinary matter.

Table 52. SSO Descriptions of School-Discipline-Related Actions

SSO-Provided Written Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Escort students (to admin/lockers/parents)	26	24.1	33.3
Listen, observe, understand, evaluate	15	13.9	19.2
Interview/talk to students	14	13.0	17.9
Remove/separate students	14	13.0	17.9
Contact/report to/brief administrators	13	12.0	16.7
Investigate/collect evidence	13	12.0	16.7
Work with/support administrators	12	11.1	15.4
Provide physical security for school staff	10	9.3	12.8
De-escalate/redirect students	10	9.3	12.8
Interview teacher, staff, other witnesses	9	8.3	11.5
Be present	7	6.5	9.0
Conduct searches	7	6.5	9.0
Intervene physically	6	5.6	7.7
Take written statements	6	5.6	7.7
Write disciplinary referrals	6	5.6	7.7
Write reports	6	5.6	7.7
Be present during interview	4	3.7	5.1
Counsel students	4	3.7	5.1
Call parents	4	3.7	5.1
Review camera footage	4	3.7	5.1
Witness search	2	1.9	2.6
Monitor in-school suspension (ISS)	2	1.9	2.6
Brief SRO	1	0.9	1.3
Call police/SRO	1	0.9	1.3
Call central office	1	0.9	1.3
Testify in court	1	0.9	1.3
Unclear response	3	2.8	3.8
Total respondents	78	72.2	100.0
Missing	30	27.8	
Total respondents and non-respondents	108	100.0	

Interview and Focus Group Data

Some participants reported high level of involvement from SSOs in school discipline. For example, one interviewee described an investigative role in school disciplinary matters and a responsibility to monitor in-school suspension programs.

> *The SRO's get involved in the criminal matters, but the SSO's, the specialists, they do all the administrative investigations involving student discipline. Then in the middle schools, many of the SSO's, the security assistants, are used for alternative programs, kind of your in school suspension programs where they'll monitor the middle school children involved in those. (Joe, School Leader, Region 4)*

Similar to SROs, SSOs reported that they sometimes felt their role was to simply talk to students, even if called upon to do more.

> *And when I go to a classroom, I get called to a classroom or we get called to a classroom, I try to convey to my staff, "Listen, just talk to the kid." Because I think sometimes teachers, believe it or not, don't want to hear what a kid has to say. And if you let a student vent or hear their side out, whether they're right or wrong, I think that they kinda understand a little more and build those relationships. Having those positive relationships like (distorted audio) that are impactful. That way, they understand they have somebody that might be on their side, but might also just kinda wanna hear them out a little bit, whether they—like I said, whether they were right or wrong, whatever happened in the classroom, so. (Cody, SSO, Region 4)*

Also similar to SROs, participants described the role of SSOs in school discipline as that of a reporter to help keep school administration informed.

> *Well, again, they [SSOs] are the eyes and ears. Most often, they can be the first reporters or certainly the second reporters in issues with kids whether it's coming out of a classroom or whether it's just in first hand information on kids' poor decision making that oftentimes goes back to an administrator. So as I said, they're kind of like they're the traffic cops. Some things they may report. Some things, they may elect not to report and depending on how they wish to develop a relationship with the child. So they're always evaluating and working on what might be the best outcome in the relationship. (Stephanie, School Leader, Region 4)*

Research Question 6c: Reasons for SRO and SSO Involvement in School Discipline

Why is the SRO or SSO involved in these situations?

Reasons for SRO Involvement in School Discipline

Survey Data

SROs were asked for their level of agreement with the following statement: I don't feel comfortable letting school staff know when they ask me something outside of my job duties. Based on 202 SRO responses, 70% disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement, 20% reported feeling neutral about the statement, and 10% agreed with the statement.

SRO Survey Question: I don't feel comfortable letting school staff know when they ask me something outside of my job duties.

Table 53. SRO Level of Agreement Regarding their Comfort with Letting School Staff Know When Something is Outside the Role of an SRO

SRO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Strongly Agree	8	4.0	4.0
Agree	11	5.4	5.4
Neutral	42	20.8	20.8
Disagree	100	49.5	49.5
Strongly Disagree	41	20.3	20.3
Total	202	100.0	100.0
Missing	0	0.0	
Total	202	100.0	
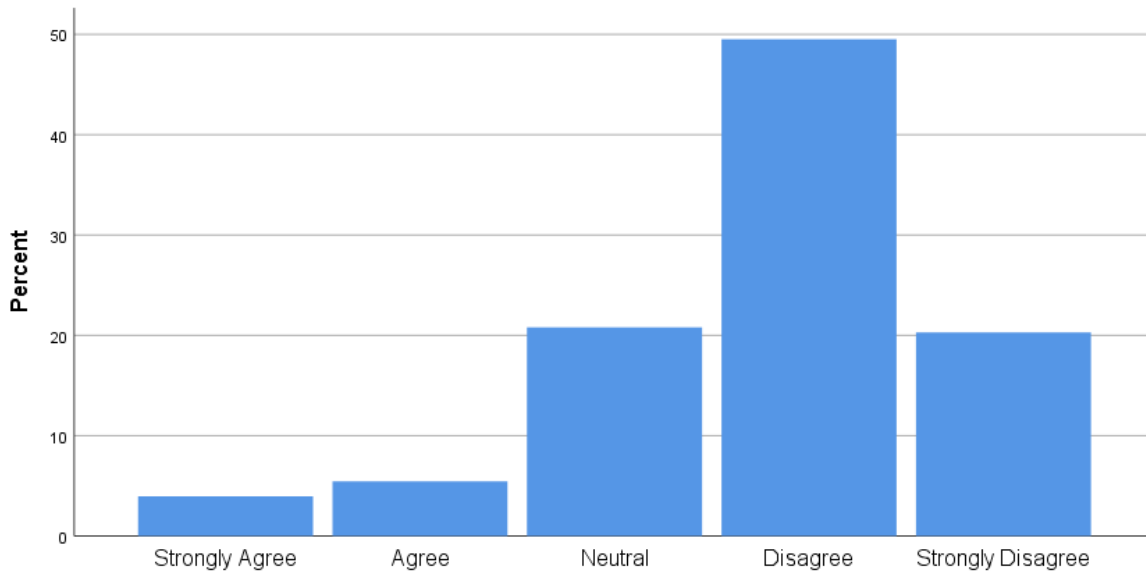
Figure 29. SRO's level of agreement with statement regarding their comfort with letting school staff know something is outside their role as an SRO.

SROs, SRO Supervisors, and SRO Liaisons were asked about their level of agreement concerning training for SROs, school administrators, and teachers that addressed the role of SROs. For each group, all respondents provided an answer to this question so no missing data is reflected in the data tables and figures. As Table 54 and Figure 30 show, the majority of all three groups agree or strongly agree that *SROs* would benefit from more training about the role of SROs. SRO Supervisors were even more likely to agree with this statement than SROs or SRO Liaisons, with 82% of SRO Supervisors agreeing versus 71% of SROs and 63% of SRO Liaisons.

SRO, SRO Supervisor, and SRO Liaison Survey Question: SROs would benefit from more training about the role of the SROs.

144

Table 54. SRO, SRO Supervisor, and SRO Liaison Agreement Concerning Benefit of Training for SROs that Addresses SRO Role

Responses for SRO Training	SROs		SRO Supervisors		SRO Liaisons	
	n	Valid %	n	Valid %	n	Valid %
Strongly Agree	61	30.2	15	27.8	9	22.5
Agree	82	40.6	29	53.7	16	40.0
Neutral	52	25.7	9	16.7	8	20.0
Disagree	7	3.5	1	1.9	3	7.5
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	4	10.0
Total	202	100.0	54	100.0	40	100.0
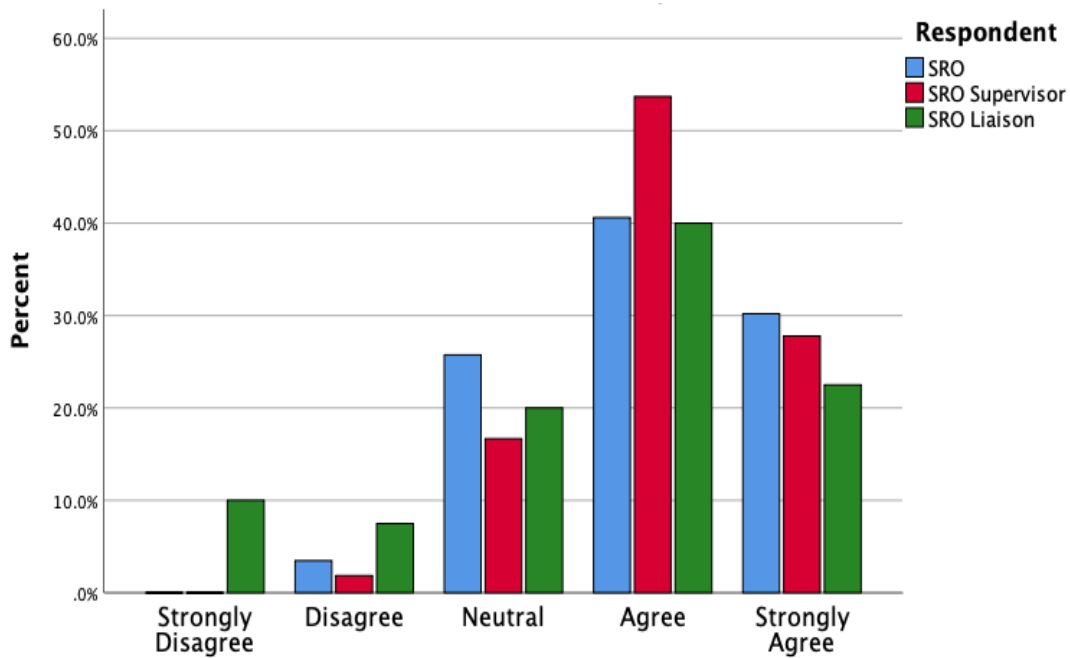
Figure 30. Comparison of SRO, SRO Supervisor, and SRO Liaison agreement with statement saying SROs would benefit from more training about the role of SROs.

When asked whether *principals and assistant principals* would benefit from additional training about the role of SROs, nearly all the SROs (95%) and SRO Supervisors (90%) agreed or strongly agreed that principals and assistant principals would benefit from additional training

about the role of SROs. While the majority of SRO Liaisons (68%) also agreed or strongly

agreed with this statement, the percentage of SRO Liaisons showing agreement was less than

that of SROs and SRO Supervisors (see Table 55 and Figure 31).

SRO, SRO Supervisor, and SRO Liaison Survey Question: Principals/Assistant Principals
would benefit from more training about the role of the SROs.

*Table 55. SRO, SRO Supervisor, and SRO Liaison Agreement Concerning Training for
Principals/Assistant Principals that Addresses SRO Role*

Responses for Principal/Assistant Principal Training	SROs		SRO Supervisors		SRO Liaisons	
	n	Valid %	n	Valid %	n	Valid %
Strongly Agree	120	59.4	34	63.0	9	22.5
Agree	71	35.1	14	25.9	18	45.0
Neutral	10	5.0	6	11.1	7	17.5
Disagree	1	0.5	0	0	4	10.0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	2	5.0
Total	202	100.0	54	100.0	40	100.0
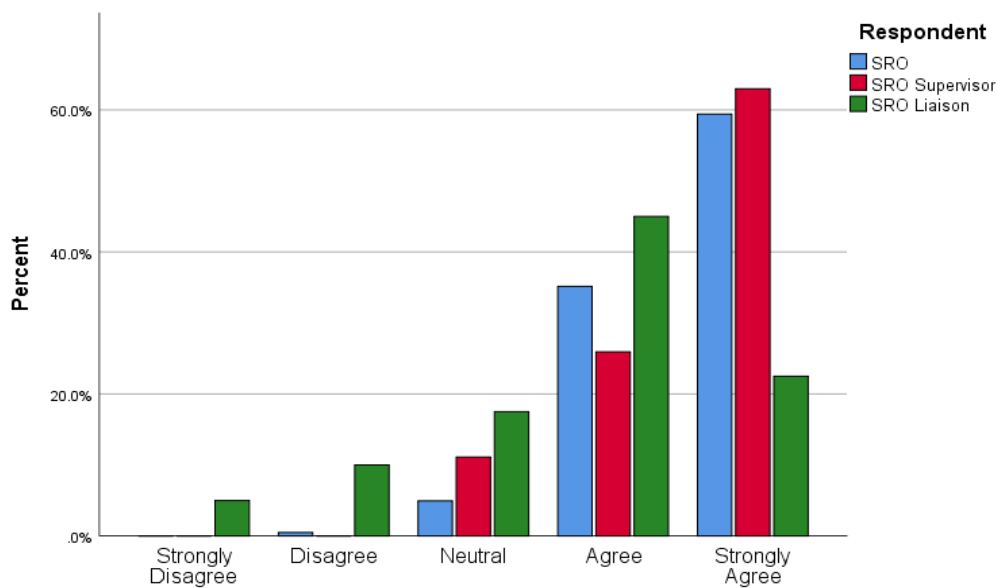
Figure 31. Comparison of SRO, SRO Supervisor, and SRO Liaison agreement with statement
saying principals/assistant principals would benefit from more training about the role of SROs.

Finally, when asked about additional training for *teachers* concerning the role of SROs, nearly all SRO (95%) and SRO Supervisors (93%) agreed or strongly agreed that teachers would benefit from additional training on the role of SROs. Similar to responses about principals/assistant principals needing more training about the SRO role, the majority of SRO Liaisons also agreed or strongly agreed with the survey statement but the percentage of SRO Liaisons (70%) was less than that of SROs and SRO Supervisors.

SRO, SRO Supervisor, and SRO Liaison Survey Question: Teachers would benefit from more training about the role of the SROs.

Table 56. SRO, SRO Supervisor, and SRO Liaison Agreement Concerning Training for Teachers that Addresses SRO Role

| Responses for Principal/Assistant Principal Training	SROs		SRO Supervisors		SRO Liaisons	
	n	Valid %	n	Valid %	n	Valid %
Strongly Agree	130	64.4	35	64.8	13	32.5
Agree	62	30.7	15	27.8	15	37.5
Neutral	10	5.0	4	7.4	8	20.0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	3	7.5
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	1	2.5
Total	202	100.0	54	100.0	40	100.0
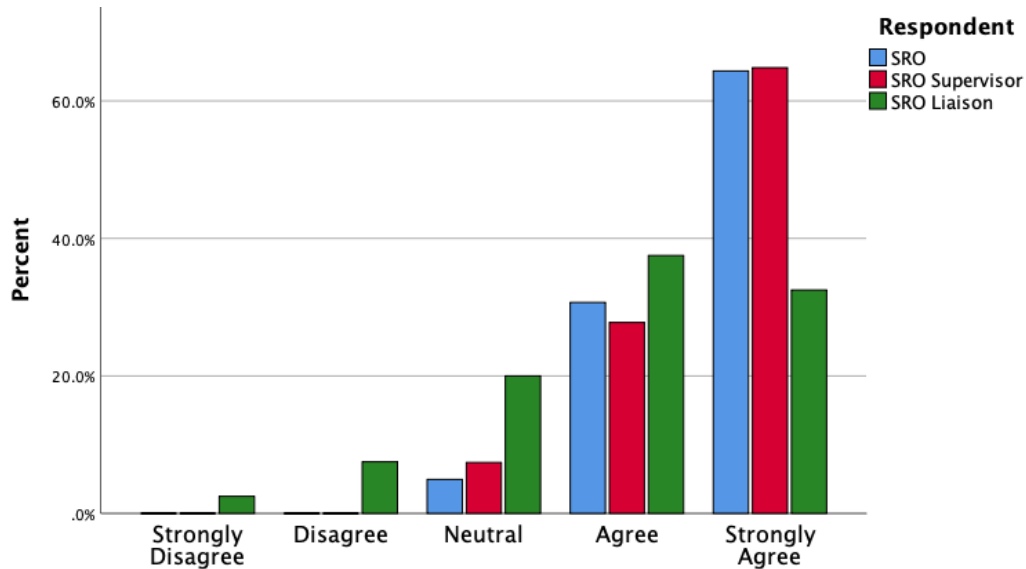
Figure 32. Comparison of SRO, SRO Supervisor, and SRO Liaison agreement with statement saying teachers would benefit from more training about the role of SROs.

MOU Data

For the 42 MOUs that indicated SROs should only be involved in school discipline when there is a safety concern or law violation, we assume the SROs are involved due to safety concerns and a desire to comply with the law. Additionally, 2 MOUs that referenced school discipline included text suggesting that the SDs and LEAs are aware that having police officers in schools could be threatening to students and be a threat to the authority of school administration. These beliefs hint at explanations of why SROs may *not* be involved in school discipline:

> *Officers/deputies shall not be used as a disciplinarian or to frighten/threaten students…*
> *Due to potentially embarrassing or intimidating confrontations, officers/deputies may*
> *wait outside the classroom when accompanying school administrators/staff members.*

> *The presence of the SRO at the school is not intended to usurp the rights and*
> *responsibilities of the Principal to enforce the rules of the Student Code of Conduct and*
> *to administer discipline in the school… The school principal will retain chief*
> *responsibility for administration of discipline in the school.*

No reasoning for SRO involvement in school discipline was provided in the 6 MOUs that supported SRO involvement even when no safety or legal concerns exist.

Reasons for SSO Involvement in School Discipline

Survey Data

SSOs were asked about how comfortable they were letting school staff know when school staff had asked the SSO to do something outside of SSO job duties. Of the 103 SSO responses, 60% indicated they were comfortable letting school staff know a requested task was not part of their job, 14% were neutral, and 26% indicated that they do not feel comfortable alerting school staff that a request does not fall under SSO duties.

<u>SSO Survey Question:</u> I don't feel comfortable letting school staff know when they ask me to do something outside of my job duties.

Table 57. SSO Level of Agreement Concerning Comfort Level with Letting School Staff Know Something is Outside SSO Job Duties

SSO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Strongly Agree	8	7.4	7.8
Agree	19	17.6	18.4
Neutral	14	13.0	13.6
Disagree	39	36.1	37.9
Strongly Disagree	23	21.3	22.3
Total	103	95.4	100.0
Missing	5	4.6	
Total	108	100.0	
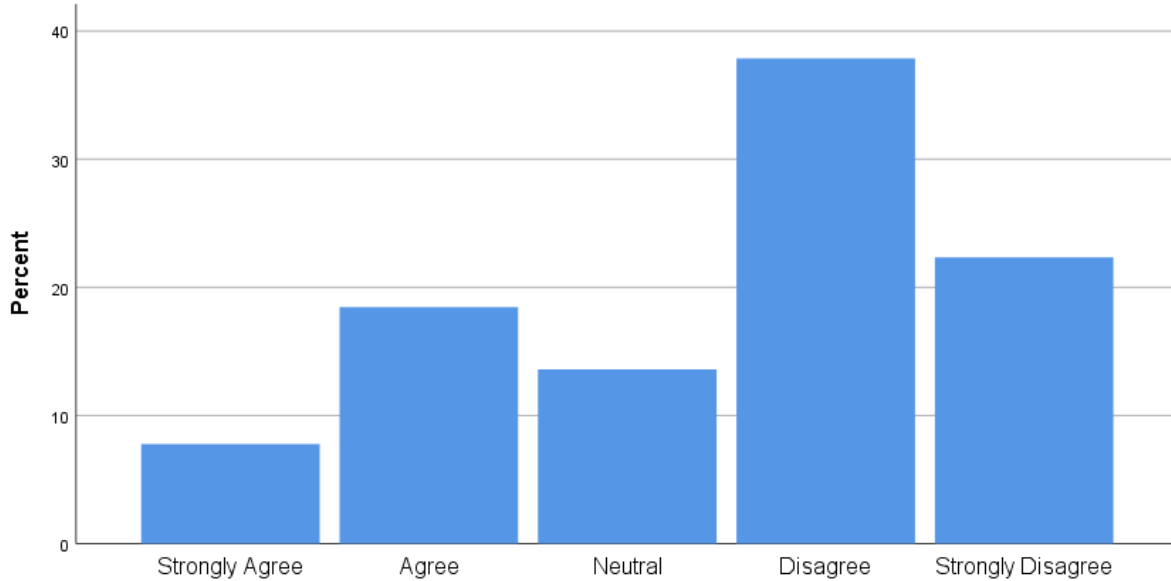
Figure 33. SSO's level of agreement with statement regarding their comfort with letting school staff know something is outside their role as an SSO.

SSOs were asked if they felt SSOs, principals, and teachers needed more training about the role of SSOs. In regards to additional training for SSOs, 77% of SSOs agreed that *SSOs could benefit from more training about the SSO role* (see Table 58 and Figure 34). Eighty-three percent of SSO respondents felt *principals and assistant principals* would benefit from more training about the role of SSOs (see Table 59 and Figure 35). Finally, 92% of SSO respondents felt *teachers* would benefit from more training about the role of SSOs (see Table 60 and Figure 36).

<u>SSO Survey Question:</u> SSOs would benefit from more training about the role of the SSOs.

Table 58. SSO Agreement Concerning Benefit of Training for SSOs that Addresses SSO Role

SSO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Strongly Agree	35	32.4	34.3
Agree	44	40.7	43.1
Neutral	18	16.7	17.6
Disagree	4	3.7	3.9
Strongly Disagree	1	.9	1.0
Total	102	94.4	100.0
Missing	6	5.6	
Total	108	100.0	
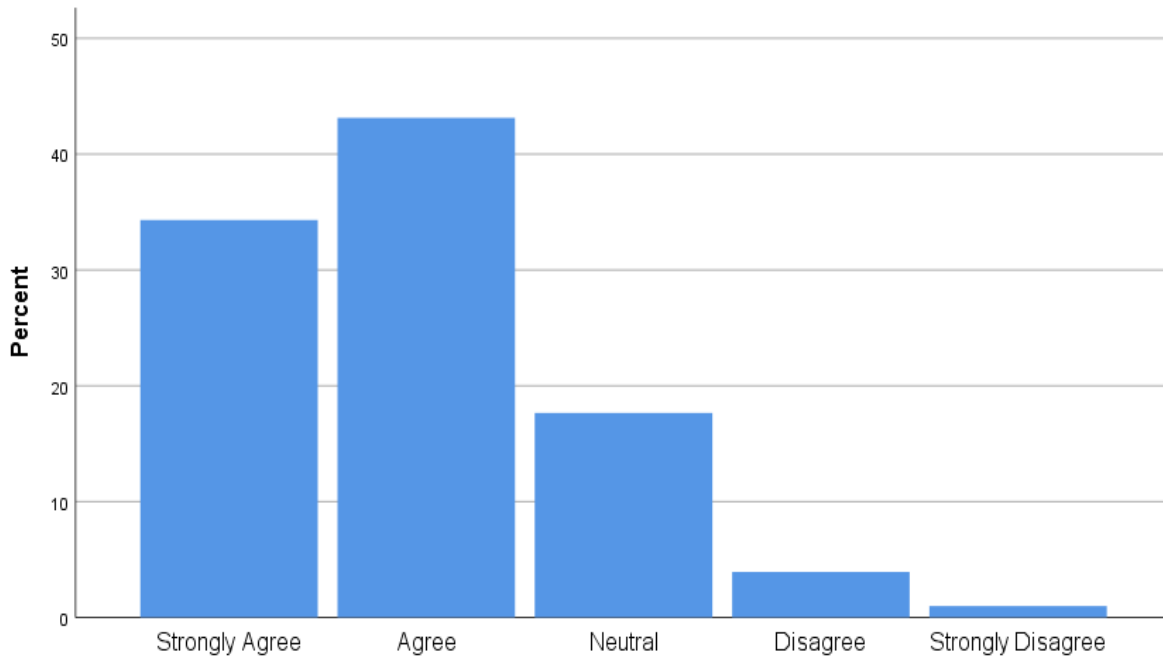
Figure 34. SSO agreement with statement saying SSOs would benefit from more training about the role of SSOs.

SSO Survey Question: Principals/Assistant Principals would benefit from more training about the role of the SSOs.

Table 59. SSO Agreement Concerning Benefit of More Training for Principals/Assistant Principals that Addresses SSO Role

SSO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Strongly Agree	52	48.1	50.0
Agree	34	31.5	32.7
Neutral	15	13.9	14.4
Disagree	2	1.9	1.9
Strongly Disagree	1	0.9	1.0
Total	104	96.3	100.0
Missing	4	3.7	
Total	108	100.0	
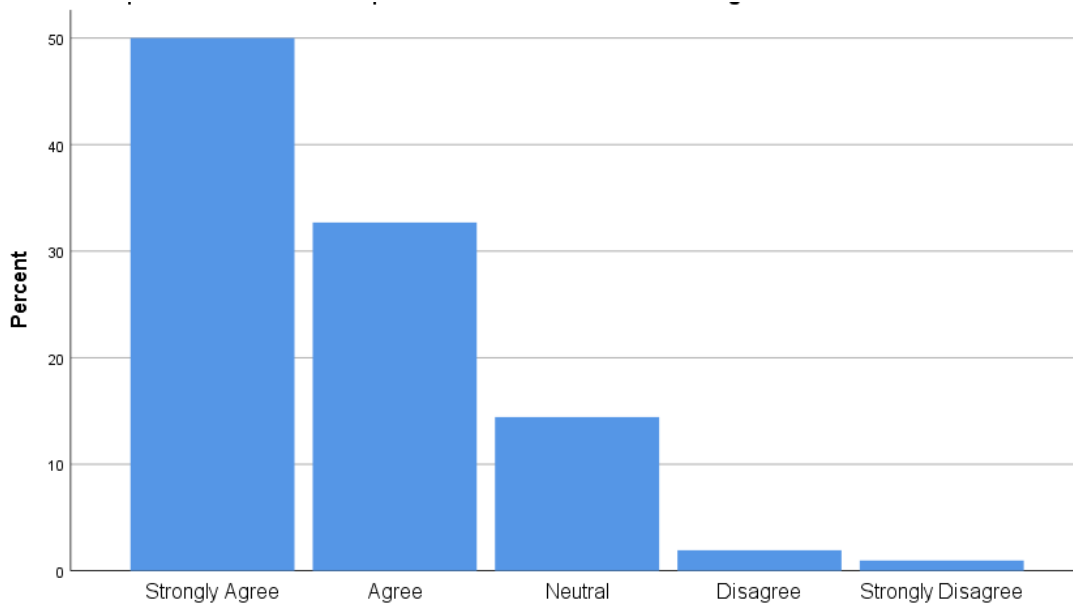
Figure 35. SSO agreement with statement saying principals/assistant principals would benefit from more training about the role of SSOs.

<u>SSO Survey Question:</u> Teachers would benefit from more training about the role of the SSOs.

Table 60. SSO Agreement Concerning Benefit of More Training for Teachers that Addresses SSO Role

SSO Response	*n*	%	Valid %
Valid			
Strongly Agree	62	57.4	61.4
Agree	31	28.7	30.7
Neutral	6	5.6	5.9
Disagree	1	.9	1.0
Strongly Disagree	1	.9	1.0
Total	101	93.5	100.0
Missing	7	6.5	
Total	108	100.0	
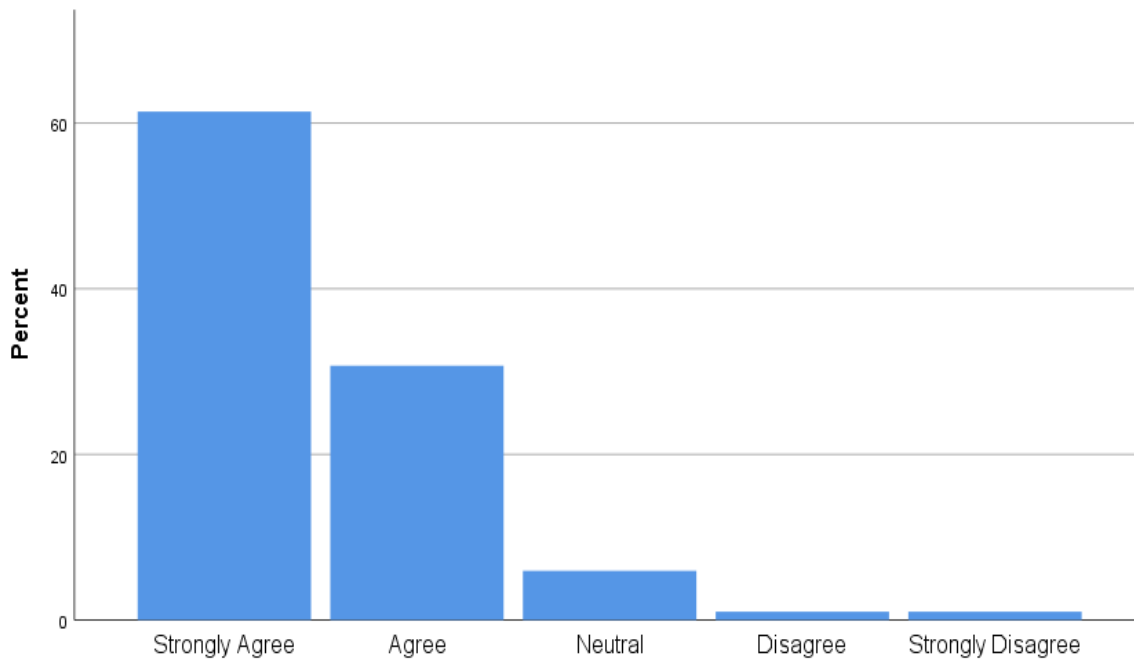
Figure 36. SSO agreement with statement saying teachers would benefit from more training about the role of SSOs.

Research Question 7: Impact of MOUs

Are there differences when comparing between school districts that have MOUs with local law enforcement, and school districts that do not have formal arrangements with local law enforcement?

Research Question 7a: Differences in SRO Turnover

Are there differences in SRO turnover between school districts that have MOUs and those that do not?

Incomplete data in the School Safety Survey made meaningful analysis of this research question difficult. There is no statewide list of SROs and the schools to which they are assigned. Respondents on the School Safety Survey are asked to indicate whether there is an SRO or SROs present in their school and if so, list the name and email address for each individual. Had this data been complete, we would have been able to compare year-to-year and determine if the SROs remain in their posts over time.

There were 65 respondents who answered they did not have any SRO (Full-Time/Part-Time) but provided an SRO name, which is 7.1% of those who answered they did not have any SRO. There were 15 respondents who answered they did have at least one SRO but did not provide the SRO's name, which is 1.4% of those who answered they did have at least one SRO. Many of the provided names were incomplete (e.g., "Sgt. Smith", meaning even the provided data would not offer valid results.)

There are 61 respondents who answered they did not have any SRO (Full-Time/Part-Time) but provided an SRO email address, which is 6.7% of those who answered they did not have any SRO. There were 15 respondents who answered they did have at least one SRO but did not provide the SRO's email address, which is 6.3% of those who answered they did have at least one SRO. Many of the email addresses that were provided were group or shared email

address (e.g., SRO@K12schoolemailaddress.org) therefore not helpful for determining

continued presence of a specific SRO.

See Tables 61 and 62 for data showing how many respondents reported SROs present and

provided names or emails, and how many respondents reported not having SROs but reported

names or emails.

Table 61: SRO Present and SRO Names Crosstabulation

15a-1. sec types FT_SRO				SRO Name Provided? 0	1	Total
0	SRO Present	0	Count	65	851	916
			% within anySRO	7.1%	92.9%	100.0%
		1	Count	447	9	456
			% within anySRO	98.0%	2.0%	100.0%
	Total		Count	512	860	1372
			% within anySRO	37.3%	62.7%	100.0%
1	SRO Present	1	Count	578	6	584
			% within anySRO	99.0%	1.0%	100.0%
	Total		Count	578	6	584
			% within anySRO	99.0%	1.0%	100.0%
Total	SRO Present	0	Count	65	851	916
			% within anySRO	7.1%	92.9%	100.0%
		1	Count	1025	15	1040
			% within anySRO	98.6%	1.4%	100.0%
	Total		Count	1090	866	1956
			% within anySRO	55.7%	44.3%	100.0%

Table 62: SRO Present and SRO Email Crosstabulation

15a-1. sec types FT_SRO				SRO Email Provided?		
				0	1	Total
0	SRO Present	0	Count	61	855	916
			% within anySRO	6.7%	93.3%	100.0%
		1	Count	418	38	456
			% within anySRO	91.7%	8.3%	100.0%
	Total		Count	479	893	1372
			% within anySRO	34.9%	65.1%	100.0%
1	SRO Present	1	Count	556	28	584
			% within anySRO	95.2%	4.8%	100.0%
	Total		Count	556	28	584
			% within anySRO	95.2%	4.8%	100.0%
Total	SRO Present	0	Count	61	855	916
			% within anySRO	6.7%	93.3%	100.0%
		1	Count	974	66	1040
			% within anySRO	93.7%	6.3%	100.0%
	Total		Count	1035	921	1956
			% within anySRO	52.9%	47.1%	100.0%

The SRO survey did gather relevant information that can be reported here. The majority of SRO respondents had been in their primary placement for 2 or more years.

SRO Survey Question: How long have you been at this assignment?

Table 63: SRO Reported Length of Current Assignment

SRO Response	*n*	%
Less than a year	33	16.34%
1 - 2 years	40	19.80%
2 - 5 years	77	38.12%
5 - 10 years	36	17.82%
>10 years	16	7.92%
Total	202	100%

Further, very few localities continue to set a term limit on how long an SRO can be assigned to

one school.

SRO Survey Question: Does your law enforcement agency set a term limit for your assignment
as an SRO?

Table 64: SRO Reported Length of Current Assignment

SRO Response	*n*	%
No	184	91.09%
Yes (ex. Up to 3 years)	10	4.95%
Other:	8	3.96%
Total	202	100%
	16	7.92%
>10 years		
Total	202	100%

The responses from the *Other* category in Table 64 were 5 years; 5 year terms with

options to continue after; 4; at one time they did, but currently there is no term limit; 2 years

minimum; assignment may be changed at anytime; five year assignment; they did, now it's a year

by year basis.

Research Question 7b: Impact of MOUs on Disciplinary Infractions and Sanctions

Are there differences in infractions or school responses between school districts that have MOUs
and those that do not?

DCV Data

Original DCV data is at incident level, including information such as incident ID,

student's ID (encrypted/hashed), school ID, school district ID, incident date, infraction type, and

resulting sanction. For the purpose of reasonable comparison, the data were aggregated to school and district level. When aggregating the incident level data, the number of incidents was normalized such that the values represent the number of infractions per 1,000 students. Also, the number of incidents for each infraction type was calculated and normalized. The type of incident includes "overall", "against-people", "drug and alcohol", and "weapon". Among possible sanctions, we counted the number of "short-term suspension" (up to 10 days) and "long-term suspension" (11 or more days). These counts were also normalized (i.e., the number of cases per 1,000 students). School-level and district-level descriptive statistics are shown in Appendices 11 and 12.

Before comparing school districts with and without MOU, the intraclass correlation (ICC) was computed to examine whether there is variability among school districts rather than schools. This variability is a basis for a later analysis using MOU since MOU is a district level variable.

Table 65 summarizes ICCs of each dependent variable. There are differences in ICCs across dependent variables and school levels. For example, combined schools exhibit low ICCs for all dependent variables, which mean there is little variability due to school districts. Therefore, it is anticipated that combined schools show no significant difference between those with and without MOU. In contrast, middle schools show large ICC for overall infraction, infraction against people, and short-term suspension (ICC > 0.5). This means that variability in these variables can be attributed to district-level differences, which include whether a school has an MOU or not. Elementary schools and high schools present small to moderate ICCs except for drug and alcohol. In sum, substantial amount of district-level variability is observed across

dependent variables and school levels. The district-level variability should be taken into account

in later analyses since it can lead to incorrect statistical inference.

Table 65. Intraclass Correlation of Dependent Variables (Between-District Variability)

School Level		Overall Infraction	Against People	Drug and Alcohol	Weapon	Shor-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Arrest Rate
Total	Within	23764.57	2320.92	2320.92	6.27	20960.32	67.71	18.45
N = 1,807	Between	7022.53	674.02	674.02	1.43	6724.50	6.07	0.81
	ICC	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.19	0.24	0.08	0.04
Elementary	Within	4531.33	782.78	0.61	4.94	4114.99	1.37	0.16
N = 1,100	Between	3963.36	595.64	0.01	1.70	3444.73	0.49	0.02
	ICC	0.47	0.43	0.02	0.26	0.46	0.26	0.10
Middle	Within	21822.92	2971.80	13.66	7.02	20351.13	42.89	16.61
N = 336	Between	29428.17	2929.53	2.95	2.70	27949.53	29.31	4.66
	ICC	0.57	0.50	0.18	0.28	0.58	0.41	0.22
High	Within	15840.28	557.63	43.80	4.84	14512.64	30.33	22.35
N = 307	Between	8531.78	425.53	0.61	1.32	8781.92	21.22	3.88
	ICC	0.35	0.43	0.01	0.21	0.38	0.41	0.15
Combined	Within	175351.60	8312.54	110.67	17.70	138641.79	1258.94	186.02
N = 64	Between	11212.72	1206.41	8.12	0.00	9720.83	0.00	0.00
	ICC	0.06	0.13	0.07	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.00

To address the district-level variability correctly, two types of analyses were conducted.

One was independent-samples t-test with bootstrap and the other was linear mixed effects model.

Both methods took an indicator of MOU as an independent variable and the number of each type

of incidents and sanctions per 1,000 students as a dependent variable. Analyses were conducted

at the overall level as well as by school level (i.e., elementary, middle, high, and combined).

Some results from the two methods agree but the others do not. Tables 66 and 67 show

results from independent-samples t-test with bootstrap standard error and linear mixed effects

model, respectively. As seen in these tables, t-test resulted in a significant group difference more

frequently than mixed effects model. Specifically, mixed effects showed a significant group

difference only for against-people infractions (elementary schools) and long-term suspension (middle and high schools), while t-test showed significant results more frequently (i.e., overall infractions [total and elementary schools], against-people [total and elementary schools], weapon [total], short-term suspension [total and elementary schools], and long-term suspension except combined schools). In other words, the significant results from mixed effects model are also statistically significant with t-test. These significant differences indicate that schools without MOUs had more disciplinary infractions than those with MOUs. However, for long-term suspension, the sign of the difference is reversed; that is, schools with MOUs used long-term suspension more frequently than those without MOUs. Both t-test and mixed effects model show this negative relationship. See Tables 66 and 67 on the following pages.

Table 66. Results from Independent-Samples t-Test with Bootstrap Standard Error (Infraction Type and Sanction)

	Mean Difference	Bias	*SE*	*p*	95% Confidence Interval		
Overall Infraction							
Total	25.78	-0.195	11.16	0.023	4.27	47.60	*
Elementary	21.17	0.122	9.03	0.023	3.97	39.30	*
Middle	45.49	-0.201	36.88	0.229	-24.53	120.63	
High	16.21	0.488	23.31	0.491	-28.76	62.75	
Combined	-126.60	-1.271	76.49	0.348	-299.67	-22.40	
Against-People							
Total	10.71	0.047	3.87	0.008	3.50	18.49	**
Elementary	10.32	-0.026	3.83	0.013	3.09	18.18	*
Middle	13.95	-0.104	12.59	0.282	-9.72	40.22	
High	10.23	0.035	5.35	0.064	0.03	21.17	
Combined	-37.99	-0.044	17.62	0.089	-76.13	-7.68	
Drug and Alcohol							
Total	-0.18	0.001	0.24	0.443	-0.65	0.30	
Elementary	0.08	-0.001	0.07	0.257	-0.04	0.22	
Middle	-0.57	0.005	0.51	0.267	-1.54	0.46	
High	-1.44	-0.025	0.81	0.080	-3.04	0.13	
Combined	-2.89	0.011	1.91	0.176	-7.14	0.28	
Weapon							
Total	0.50	0.000	0.19	0.010	0.13	0.88	**
Elementary	0.36	-0.001	0.24	0.131	-0.09	0.84	
Middle	0.31	-0.002	0.46	0.512	-0.54	1.25	
High	0.75	-0.004	0.38	0.054	0.03	1.51	
Combined	0.43	0.002	1.16	0.717	-1.75	2.81	
Short-Term Suspension							
Total	27.48	-0.102	11.01	0.016	6.10	49.70	*
Elementary	20.79	-0.008	8.51	0.019	4.56	38.09	*
Middle	48.84	0.648	35.87	0.179	-18.72	121.74	
High	20.54	0.216	23.32	0.383	-24.13	66.85	
Combined	-102.08	1.388	66.43	0.371	-254.34	-9.97	
Long-Term Suspension							
Total	-1.60	-0.001	0.27	0.000	-2.18	-1.10	***
Elementary	-0.27	0.000	0.07	0.001	-0.40	-0.12	***
Middle	-4.12	-0.003	0.65	0.000	-5.46	-2.90	***
High	-3.36	-0.012	0.70	0.000	-4.77	-2.03	***
Combined	-7.43	0.066	6.17	0.417	-21.59	0.31	

Note. * … *p* < .05, ** … *p* < .01, *** … *p* < .001

Table 67. Results from Linear Mixed Effects Model (Infraction Type and Sanction)

	Estimate	SE	df	t	p	95% Confidence Interval		
Overall Infraction								
Total	17.65	20.04	149.25	0.881	0.380	-21.95	57.24	
Elementary	19.15	14.76	131.05	1.298	0.197	-10.05	48.35	
Middle	27.02	43.13	140.58	0.626	0.532	-58.25	112.29	
High	5.44	27.48	160.83	0.198	0.843	-48.83	59.71	
Combined	-129.81	123.18	20.12	-1.054	0.304	-386.66	127.05	
Against-People								
Total	9.09	6.19	141.88	1.468	0.144	-3.15	21.33	
Elementary	12.04	5.78	121.95	2.082	0.039	0.59	23.48	*
Middle	8.07	14.39	149.54	0.561	0.576	-20.36	36.49	
High	8.93	5.58	142.54	1.601	0.112	-2.10	19.96	
Combined	-40.53	28.69	29.55	-1.413	0.168	-99.15	18.10	
Drug and Alcohol								
Total	-0.22	0.31	306.72	-0.701	0.484	-0.82	0.39	
Elementary	0.06	0.07	79.56	0.843	0.402	-0.08	0.21	
Middle	-0.93	0.69	67.56	-1.344	0.183	-2.30	0.45	
High	-1.45	1.01	219.15	-1.443	0.150	-3.44	0.53	
Combined	-2.71	3.13	40.88	-0.865	0.392	-9.03	3.61	
Weapon								
Total	0.14	0.30	131.62	0.482	0.631	-0.45	0.74	
Elementary	0.03	0.36	123.24	0.079	0.937	-0.69	0.74	
Middle	-0.21	0.55	110.44	-0.390	0.697	-1.30	0.87	
High	0.57	0.41	83.69	1.394	0.167	-0.24	1.39	
Combined	0.43	1.17	64.00	0.366	0.716	-1.91	2.76	
Short-Term Suspension								
Total	19.38	19.32	147.13	1.003	0.318	-18.81	57.56	
Elementary	18.85	13.84	131.67	1.362	0.176	-8.53	46.22	
Middle	30.50	41.89	139.75	0.728	0.468	-52.31	113.32	
High	9.52	27.04	156.33	0.352	0.725	-43.89	62.94	
Combined	-105.29	110.59	20.35	-0.952	0.352	-335.72	125.14	
Long-Term Suspension								
Total	-1.24	0.77	271.02	-1.607	0.109	-2.75	0.28	
Elementary	-0.14	0.19	187.28	-0.730	0.466	-0.52	0.24	
Middle	-3.37	1.53	185.32	-2.198	0.029	-6.39	-0.35	*
High	-2.74	1.26	185.97	-2.169	0.031	-5.23	-0.25	*
Combined	-7.43	9.82	64.00	-0.756	0.452	-27.05	12.19	

Note. * … $p < .05$, ** … $p < .01$, *** … $p < .001$

Research Question 7c: Impact of MOUs on Arrest Rate

Are there differences in arrest rates between school districts that have MOUs and those that do not?

DCV-DJJ Data

In addition to DCV data set, which includes information on disciplinary infractions in schools, we used a dataset from DJJ. The DJJ dataset includes all incidents that did not necessarily begin at school. Thus, we needed to identify cases that appeared both in DCV and DJJ datasets. Specifically, we tried to identify cases starting at school and ending up appearing in the juvenile justice system. To this end, we used the same matching criteria as reported in "A Multiple Perspectives Analysis of the Influences on the School to Prison Pipeline in Virginia: Report of Quantitative Findings" (Lawson et al., n.d.). It was found that 2,688 cases out of 158,782 were identified and these cases are called "arrested" cases hereafter.

As with RQ7b, DCV-DJJ data were aggregated to the school level and for each school, the number of arrested cases per 1,000 students was computed. Descriptive statistics of the normalized count is shown in Appendix 11. We also computed ICCs of the normalized count to see whether there was district-level variability in the count. The last column of Appendix 12 indicates that there is a weak district-level variability in the normalized count (0.10 for elementary schools, 0.22 for middle schools, and 0.15 for high schools). Therefore, we determined to use the same analytical methods as RQ7b (i.e., t-test with bootstrap and linear mixed effects model).

Tables 68 and 69 summarize the results from the t-test and mixed effects model, respectively. Both methods resulted in no significant group difference between schools with and without MOUs at total nor any school level. Thus, we conclude that there is no sufficient evidence that shows a statistically significant effect of having an MOU on arrest rate.

Table 68. Results from Independent-Samples t-Test with Bootstrap Standard Error (Arrest Rate)

	Mean Difference	Bias	*SE*	*p*	95% Confidence Interval	
Arrest Rate						
Total	0.05	-0.003	0.24	0.827	-0.41	0.53
Elementary	0.04	0.001	0.05	0.517	-0.05	0.15
Middle	-0.25	0.008	0.65	0.705	-1.45	1.11
High	-0.14	-0.010	0.73	0.844	-1.54	1.33
Combined	-2.95	-0.010	2.38	0.374	-8.37	0.24

Table 69. Results from Linear Mixed Effects Model (Arrest Rate)

	Estimate	*SE*	*df*	*t*	*p*	95% Confidence Interval	
Arrest Rate							
Total	-0.07	0.35	223.50	-0.197	0.844	-0.77	0.63
Elementary	0.03	0.05	139.74	0.522	0.602	-0.07	0.12
Middle	-0.47	0.79	164.97	-0.595	0.552	-2.03	1.09
High	-0.22	0.84	180.06	-0.267	0.790	-1.89	1.44
Combined	-2.95	3.77	64.00	-0.782	0.437	-10.49	4.59

Interview Data

Research Question 7 involves comparing data from school districts that have MOUs to data from school districts without MOUs. This question cannot be answered with the interview data as all interviewees were from SDs and LEAs with MOUs. Interviewees were, however, asked about the MOU associated with their SRO program and the relevant findings are presented next.

All but one interviewee was aware of the MOU and most talked about how they refer to it when needed and value it for its clear outline of roles and responsibilities. Interviewees and focus group participants indicated that the MOU can help create a strong foundation for a good

relationship between the SRO and school administration by making sure everyone understands

each person's role.

> *That's the guideline. That's like working within a policy or an SOP. It's just by another name. That tells us what my responsibility is versus what the school's responsibility. It tells me what some of my limitations are and what some of their obligations are towards us. So that's very important. That stays in the top drawer of my office all the time. (Daniel, SRO, Region 1)*

> *My administration at my school are great. We have an awesome, really, working relationship. So again, that ties into that memorandum of understanding. The memorandum of understanding is that you know, I'm here to do this. But, you know, if you have that relationship, you know, I help with other duties as well. That I don't necessarily have to, but that's how I build those relationships with the students. And so, the memorandum of understanding is just a document that says hey, the SRO is responsible for this. And we'll do this. And you know, we compile that. But it's much more than that. You know, again, these are my sons and daughters in my schools. So I take that very seriously. (Spencer, SRO, Region 3)*

> *All of our SMs get the MOU handed to them every year whether or not they have it. We also share it with their administrators every year, to make sure they have it, again outlining that kind of guideline, that, mainly that the schools are not supposed to be, the SROs are not there to be doing school discipline. But they're in the law enforcement role, and again a mentoring role. (Luke, SRO Supervisor, Region 3)*

Limitations

Although this study used a rigorous research design there are some limitations to the

generalizability of these research findings. Most notably, because the research took place only in

Virginia, there is some reason for caution. Virginia has a well-established school resource officer

program which is directly overseen by the Virginia Criminal Justice Services. As a result, there

are common areas of understanding, as evidenced by the School Law Enforcement Partnership

documentation and a recently developed model MOU which is offered as a template to localities

in Virginia. It would not be surprising if other states found much more variability in the

understanding of SRO roles and functions if they do not have standardized guiding documents.

The response rate for SRO supervisors and School Liaisons was respectable, but still represented a small number of participants. Similarly, the response rates among SSOs was low (18%) and the response among SSO supervisors was too low to allow for any meaningful analysis. For our purposes here, better understanding the training, roles, and functions of SROs and SSOs in Virginia schools, the responses were sufficient, but future research should endeavor to include greater participation from some of these under-represented participant categories. Finally, although this is not a limitation *per se*, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings of qualitative research. The participants in our research were nominated (by our Advisory Committee and DCJS) as representatives of exemplar programs in Virginia, and yet their experiences and perspectives may not be representative of SROs in general. Nevertheless, their insight in instructive and worthy of consideration.

Conclusion

This study undertook a fairly comprehensive exploration of how School Resource and School Security programs are staffed, trained, and supported. The top-level findings include insight into the education and training of SSOs, including areas they identify as needing more training; insight into how SROs spend their time and the kind of support that they offer to the school community; the processes relating to the law enforcement activities and the supervision provided to SROs in the school, and in-depth conversation about the role of SROs and SSOs with a variety of stakeholders.

SROs are well educated and well trained. And both SROs and related stakeholder agree that more training is needed. With regard to educational background, the majority of SROs held an Associate's Degree or higher, SROs reported that 56% of their training applied to all settings,

that only 22% of their training is unique to school settings, and exactly the same amount is not applicable to the schools at all. Although there is SRO specific training provided, SROs indicated that their highest need areas for training included working with students with special needs, mental health issues in childhood and adolescence, dangerous and threatening students, bullying, and establishing effective working relationships with parents. Again, one especially interesting finding with regard to training emerged when we asked SROs, their law enforcement supervisors, and their school liaisons about areas in which SROs would benefit from more training. Most of the suggested training topics tracked together across the three respondent types, with the notable exception of "working with dangerous and threatening students". School liaisons believed that SROs did not need as much training in that area, but both SROs and their law-enforcement supervisors believed they could benefit from more training in working with dangerous and threatening students.

It is notable that both SROs and the School Liaisons recognized that more than a third of the SRO's time is spent in the "role model or mentor" role. This may not be surprising, and yet is a not an area that is likely to be documented, the way SRO law enforcement activities are. As such, these informal supports for the school community may not be well recognized outside of the school community.

One area that is clearly in need of further research as to do with the benefit of having an MOU between local law enforcement and the school division, which delineates the roles and responsibilities of the SRO and each supporting organization. The data required to analyze whether there was increased turnover due to a lack of an MOU (and by extension less clarity in roles) was lacking. There was insufficient specificity in the SRO listing provided to the

Department of Criminal Justice Services to enable us to track where turnover had ort had not occurred.

Our exploration of whether the existence of an MOU may influence disciplinary infractions or arrest rates produced some interesting results. We found that schools without MOUs had more disciplinary infractions than those with MOUs. By the same token, schools with MOUs used long-term suspension more frequently than those without MOUs. We have some hypotheses about these findings. It may be that the very process of establishing an MOU, and the discussion that goes into developing agreed upon roles and responsibilities clarifies how discipline will be handled in the schools. As a result, division without guidance from the MOU sanction students more frequently. The higher level of long-term suspensions in divisions with an MOU may seem counter-intuitive in that sense. However, if they long term suspension is because the MOU delineates disciplinary alternatives to law enforcement involvement, this may be a positive finding. Curiously, there is no evidence that shows a statistically significant effect (positive or negative) of having an MOU on arrest rate. Clearly this is an area that requires further investigation.

These findings have the potential to help shape policy and practice with regard to the selection, training, and support of SROs and SSOs. Participants feel as if these roles need to be better understood in the schools, and among external stakeholders. The training that SROs receive is typically more applicable to their overall role than to the school specific roles they perform. Interestingly, SROs (and their law enforcement supervisors) reported needing more training in working with dangerous and threatening students, although that was an area that the school liaisons felt that SRO was well prepared for. This could be an area for greater exploration and discussion within the schools, to ensure SROs are receiving the support that they need.

Finally, we explored the SSOs response to issues in the school, and found that they are frequently being asked to be present in a preventive role or to help keep issues from escalating. Despite these prevention efforts, 23.8% of SSOs report being asked to intervene in physical altercations weekly or more frequently.

The MOUs that we studied showed a great deal of variety and, frankly, helpfulness with regard to clarity around the SRO role in the schools. It should be noted that, since our research was undertaken, the Commonwealth of Virginia has published a Model MOU for school divisions and law enforcement agencies to use as a template for structuring MOUs. Similarly, Virginia has undertaken to collect more information about the school related law enforcement activities, including when any arrests occur on school property or at school related events.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey Recruitment Documents
Appendix 2: SRO, SRO Supervisor, SRO Liaison, and SSO Survey
Appendix 3: MOU Request Document
Appendix 4: MOU Findings Report
Appendix 5: Interview Recruitment Documents
Appendix 6: Interview Informed Consent
Appendix 7: Interview Guides
Appendix 8: Interview Findings Report
Appendix 9: Focus Group Informed Consent
Appendix 10: Focus Group Guides
Appendix 11: School-Level Descriptive Statistics of DCV and DJJ Data
Appendix 12: District-Level Descriptive Statistics of DCV and DJJ Data

APPENDICES
Table of Contents

Appendix 1: Survey Recruitment Documents

Introductory Email for SROs

With the support of The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Tech is conducting a research study of school safety and security programs in Virginia. This survey is designed to better understand training, roles, and procedures related to SROs and to identify successful program strategies so we can better support school safety and security personnel. We will also survey school administrators, SSOs and law enforcement supervisors. The results of the survey will be published in aggregate so no individuals, localities, or schools will be identifiable. Last week we reached out to chiefs and sheriffs to notify them about this invitation so they know your participation is voluntary and confidential. The survey requires no advance preparation and should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Please click below to provide your important ideas on this crucial topic.

INSERT LINK

Thank you,

Gerard Lawson, Ph.D.	Laura Welfare, Ph.D.	Kami Patrizio, Ed.D.
Principal Investigator	Co-Principal Investigator	Co-Principal Investigator
School of Education	School of Education	School of Education
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glawson@vt.edu	welfare@vt.edu	Kpatrizi@vt.edu
540-231-9703	540-231-8194	703-538-8477

Introductory Email for SRO Supervisors

With the support of The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Tech is conducting a research study of school safety and security programs in Virginia. This survey is designed to better understand training, roles, and procedures related to SROs and to identify successful program strategies so we can better support school safety and security personnel. We will also survey SROs, school administrators, and SSOs. The results of the survey will be published in aggregate so no individuals, localities, or schools will be identifiable. Last week we reached out to chiefs and sheriffs to notify them about this invitation so they know your participation is voluntary and confidential. The survey requires no advance preparation and should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Please click below to provide your important ideas on this crucial topic.

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Thank you,

Gerard Lawson, Ph.D.	Laura Welfare, Ph.D.	Kami Patrizio, Ed.D.
Principal Investigator	Co-Principal Investigator	Co-Principal Investigator
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Introductory Email for SRO Liaisons

With the support of The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Tech is conducting a research study of school safety and security programs in Virginia. This survey is designed to better understand training, roles, and procedures related to SROs and to identify successful program strategies so we can better support school safety and security personnel. We will also survey SROs, SSOs, and law enforcement supervisors. The results of the survey will be published in aggregate so no individuals or schools will be identifiable. Last week we reached out to school superintendents and principals to notify them about this invitation so they know your participation is voluntary and confidential. The survey requires no advance preparation and should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Please click below to provide your important ideas on this crucial topic.

Thank you,

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Introductory Email for SSOs

With the support of The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Tech is conducting a research study of school safety and security programs in Virginia. This survey is designed to better understand training, roles, and procedures related to SSOs and to identify successful program strategies so we can better support school safety and security personnel. We will also survey school administrators, SROs and law enforcement supervisors. The results of the survey will be published in aggregate so no individuals or schools will be identifiable. Last week we reached out to school superintendents and principals to notify them about this invitation so they know your participation is voluntary and confidential. The survey requires no advance preparation and should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Please click below to provide your important ideas on this crucial topic.

Thank you,

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Introductory Email for SSO Supervisors

With the support of The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Tech is conducting a research study of school safety and security programs in Virginia. This survey is designed to better understand training, roles, and procedures related to SSOs and to identify successful program strategies so we can better support school safety and security personnel. We will also survey SSOs, SROs, and law enforcement supervisors. The results of the survey will be published in aggregate so no individuals or schools will be identifiable. Last week we reached out to school superintendents and principals to notify them about this invitation so they know your participation is voluntary and confidential. The survey requires no advance preparation and should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Please click below to provide your important ideas on this crucial topic.

INSERT LINK

Thank you,

Gerard Lawson, Ph.D.	Laura Welfare, Ph.D.	Kami Patrizio, Ed.D.
Principal Investigator	Co-Principal Investigator	Co-Principal Investigator
School of Education	School of Education	School of Education
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Appendix 2: SRO, SRO Supervisor, SRO Liaison, SSO, and SSO Supervisor Survey

See attached pdf file entitled "Combined SRO and SSO Surveys."

Appendix 3: MOU Request Document

With the support of The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Tech is conducting a research study of school safety and security programs in Virginia. Dr. Gerard Lawson and Dr. Laura Welfare are leading the study and I am their research assistant. The study includes a review of the contracts or MOUs that guide the work School Resources Officers do in your division. The review will identify trends overall and will not identify any specific division. Could you please help me access the MOU for your division? Is it online or could it be emailed/faxed to me?

Thank you,

Gerard Lawson, Ph.D.   Laura Welfare, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator   Co-Principal Investigator
School of Education   School of Education
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Appendix 4: MOU Findings Report

See attached pdf file entitled "MOU Findings Report."

Appendix 5: Interview Recruitment Document

Sample Interview Recruitment Email

Dear Colleague,

My name is Alison Bowers and I am a doctoral student at Virginia Tech in the School of Education. I am working with Drs. Lawson and Welfare on a study about the SRO and SSO programs in Virginia. This study is being conducted in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Education, Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Department of Criminal Justice Services.

We are interested in speaking with you at greater lengths about the topic and would like to set up a time to interview you in the near future. The confidential interviews will be 60 – 90 minutes long and will be conducted at a time and location of your choice.

If you are interested in participating, please contact me by replying to this email (alison14@vt.edu).

Thank you so much,
Alison Bowers
Doctoral candidate, Virginia Tech, School of Education
Email: alison14@vt.edu

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Gerard Lawson, the Principal Investigator or Dr. Laura Welfare, Co-Principal Investigator at:

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welfare@vt.edu

Appendix 6: Interview Informed Consent

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants
in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: *An Investigation of School Resource and Safety Programs*
Policy and Practice in Virginia

Investigator(s):   **Dr. Laura E. Welfare, Ph.D. (PI)**   welfare@vt.edu
540-231-8194

                          Dr. Gerard L. Lawson, Ph.D. (PI)   glawson@vt.edu
540-231-9703

I. Purpose of this Research Project

We are conducting a research study about School Resource Officers (SROs) and SRO Programs in Virginia. The study is funded by the National Institute for Justice (NIJ). As part of this research*,* we are interviewing 12 individuals from different educational organizations and law enforcement agencies around Virginia about the training, supervision, roles, responsibilities, and policies that inform SROs and SRO Programs. You are being invited to participate because of the role that you play in an SRO Program in Virginia. The study results will be used to inform professional development and training, policy, and for publication in scholarly and practitioner forums.

II. Procedures

This research involves interviews with participants from schools that we have identified based on their participation in focus groups and/or the results of a separate SRO survey, and/or based on analysis of statewide data sets related to discipline, school climate, and threat assessment. Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to be part of a 60-90 minute, audio-recorded interview based on a protocol of questions with a member of our research team. We may ask to contact you for follow up on the interview. Interviews will be conducted at a time and place that is convenient for you. They may also be conducted by phone, if you choose. We may also ask you for publicly available documents related to SROs and SRO Programs.

III. Risks

This research has minimal emotional, physical, social, legal, economic, or dignity related risks for participants. It is possible that participants may experience some emotional discomfort recollecting specific incidents related to student behaviors or incidents. If at any point during the research process, you experience distress, you should seek counseling or medical treatment through the Employee Assistance

resources available through your employer. Virginia Tech, the research project, and research team members will not be responsible for any expenses accrued for seeking or receiving treatment.

IV. Benefits

This research may provide some benefit to participants by virtue of the reflective nature of the interview process.
The research has the potential to directly benefit professional development and training programs as well as policy in the Commonwealth of Virginia. It also has the potential to impact both policy and practice in the fields of counseling, criminal justice, education, and health and human services.
No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Should you choose to participate, we will assign you a pseudonym at the beginning of the interview. We will use this pseudonym to refer to you throughout the interview. Any identifiers that surface during the interview, including names of people, places to the level of county, and organizations will be de-identified with pseudonyms during the transcription process. All of these de-identified transcripts will be stored on password-protected computers. Digital recordings of interviews will be stored on an encrypted flash drive in a safe. Additionally, we will redact any identifying information, including names of people, places to the level of county, and organizations from any publicly available documents that we receive from you. Digital copies of redacted documents will be stored on a password-protected computer. Only members of our research team will have access to identifiable project data. At no time will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent.

The NIJ process requires that the final dataset for this research be archived with the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD). Those datasets will be completely sanitized of any directly or indirectly identifiable information. They will receive copies of de-identified transcripts, redacted documents from document review, and rosters of school, participant, and document related pseudonyms.

The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

VI. Compensation

You will not be compensated for your participation in this research.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty.

Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject.

Federal law does not allow federally-funded researchers to use any research information for purposes other than research. Therefore, we must have your written consent before we can make such a report. Furthermore, it is your right to refuse to consent, and if you do so, there will be no negative consequences.

VIII. Questions or Concerns

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the research investigators whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research participant, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board at irb@vt.edu or (540) 231-3732.

IX. Subject's Consent

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

_____ Date_____
Subject signature

_____

Subject printed name

_____ (check here) The subject gave verbal consent by phone

Signature of researcher obtaining verbal consent:
_____

Appendix 7: Interview Guides

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE
SROs

1. Tell me how you came to be an SRO.
    Describe your work experience prior to being an SRO.
    What was the selection/hiring process like?
    Describe your motivation for becoming an SRO.
2. Describe a time when you had a positive impact on a student.
3. What does an average work day look like for you?
    What conflict(s) are you most likely to address from day to day?
    What challenges do you face?
4. How do you document your work in the school?
    How is your job performance evaluated?
5. What is your understanding of your roles and responsibilities as an SRO?
    How does this compare with how others perceive your roles and responsibilities?
    What is the role of your Division's SRO-LEA MOU in your school's SRO program?
6. Who do you turn to most frequently for support in your work as an SRO?
    When do you seek them out?
7. How do you approach working with school leaders?
    How do you approach working with school staff?
    How do you approach working with students?
    How do you approach working with parents?
8. What training opportunities do you get that extend beyond standard law enforcement training (e.g., childhood development, school bullying)?
    What kind of support for training do you receive?
    What barriers do you face in obtaining SRO training?
9. Please describe a time when you had to deal with a school disciplinary issue.
    What was the issue and who was involved?
    How did they become involved?
    What factors influenced your decision making during the issue?
10. What makes your school's SRO program successful?
    What one thing would make the SRO program more effective?
11. Is there anything that we didn't discuss that you think is important for us to know about the SRO program in your school?

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE
SRO Supervisors

1. Tell me about your involvement with SRO programs. What is your role?
2. Describe a positive experience involving an SRO in one of the schools in your area.
3. How are SROs assigned to specific schools?
4. Can you talk about the training that SROs receive? (prompt: school specific training)
5. What qualifications and experiences make for an effective SRO?
6. Does your department have a Memorandum of Understanding (an MOU) with the school division describing the SRO program? (To what extent is it a living document?)
7. Can you tell me about how SROs are evaluated? What strategies work well with SRO evaluation?
8. What are the major roles and responsibilities of an SRO?
9. Is there a gap between the roles and responsibilities of SROs and others expectations of them? What is it?
10. What are the most important things that SRO Supervisors have to know to support SROs?
11. What is one thing that you would change about the SRO Program? Why?
12. What makes an SRO program successful?
13. Is there anything that we didn't discuss that you think is important for us to know about the SRO program in your school system?

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE
SSOs

1. Tell me what your position is and what are your major roles and responsibilities.
2. Tell me how you came to be a SSO.
    Describe your work experience prior to being a SSO.
    What was the selection/hiring process like?
    Describe your motivation for becoming a SSO.
3. What does an average work day look like for you?
    What conflict(s) are you most likely to address from day to day?
    What challenges do you face?
4. How do you document your work in the school?
5. How is your job performance evaluated?
6. How does this compare with how others perceive your roles and responsibilities?
7. Describe a time when you had a positive impact on a student.
8. Who do you turn to most frequently for support in your work as an SSO?
    When do you seek them out?
9. How do you approach working with school leaders?
10. Describe the training you receive to be an SSO.
    Describe any ongoing training you get beyond the initial SSO training.
    What barriers do you face in obtaining SSO training?
11. Please describe a time when you had to deal with a school disciplinary issue.
    What was the issue and who was involved?
    How did they become involved?
    What factors influenced your decision making during the issue?
12. What makes your school's SSO program successful?
    What one thing would make the SSO program more effective?
13. Is there anything that we didn't discuss that you think is important for us to know about the SSO program in your school?

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE
SSOs Supervisors

1. Tell me about your involvement with SSO programs. What is your role?
2. Describe a positive experience involving an SSO in one of the schools in your area.
3. How are SSOs selected and assigned to specific schools?
4. What are the major roles and responsibilities of an SSO?
5. Can you talk about the training that SSOs receive?
6. What qualifications and experiences make for an effective SRO?
7. Can you tell me about how SSOs are evaluated? What strategies work well with SSO evaluation?
8. Is there a gap between the roles and responsibilities of SSOs and others expectations of them? What is it?
9. What are the most important things that SSO Supervisors have to know to support SSOs?
10. What is one thing that you would change about the SSO Program? Why?
11. What makes an SSO program successful?
12. Is there anything that we didn't discuss that you think is important for us to know about the SSO program in your school system?

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW GUIDE
SCHOOL LEADERS

1. Tell me about your experience with SROs.
   > How long have you worked with your SROs?
   > How long have you worked with your school's current SRO(s)?
   > In what aspects are you involved with the SRO program, such as hiring, evaluation, training?
2. Describe a positive experience involving an SRO in your school.
3. What are the responsibilities of the SRO?
   > Does your school have an SRO-LEA MOU?
   > If so, what is the role of your Division's SRO-LEA MOU in your school's SRO program?
4. How do you support SROs as they integrate into your school community?
5. Describe your relationship with the SRO in your school.
6. What influences your decision to involve a SRO when addressing a situation?
   > What do you see as the role of the SRO in school discipline?
   > Please describe a time when you worked with an SRO to address a school disciplinary issue.
7. What contributes to the success of a SRO program?
8. What challenges do you encounter with the SRO program?

SSO Questions
9. Do you have SSOs in your school? (If yes, proceed to next section.)

We would like to shift focus a bit now and talk about SSOs.
10. Tell me your history with SSOs in your school. Prompts: How long have you worked with SSOs? In what capacity are you involved in the SSO program (supervision, hiring, evaluating)?
11. What are the responsibilities of the SSOs? Prompts: Describe a positive experience involving an SSO in your school. What is your perception of the SSO's role in the school community?
12. How do you support SSOs as they integrate into your school community?
13. Describe a time when you worked directly with the SSO to resolve an issue in the school.
14. What do you see as the role of the SSO in school discipline?
15. What challenges do you encounter with the SSO program?
16. Is there anything that we didn't discuss that you think is important for us to know about the SRO or SSO program in your school?

Appendix 8: Interview Findings Report

See attached pdf file entitled "Interview Findings Report."

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants
in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: *An Investigation of School Resource and Safety Programs*
Policy and Practice in Virginia

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I. Purpose of this Research Project

We are conducting a research study about School Resource Officers (SROs) and SRO Programs in Virginia. The study is funded by the National Institute for Justice (NIJ). As part of this research, we are conducting 4 focus groups with SROs and 4 focus groups with educational leaders involved with SRO Programs from around the Commonwealth. You will be participating in a focus group that corresponds with your role as either an SRO or an educational leader involved in an SRO Program. The focus group will ask questions about the training, supervision, roles, responsibilities, and policies that inform SROs and SRO Programs. You are being invited to participate because of the role that you play in an SRO Program in Virginia. The study results will be used to inform professional development and training, policy, and for publication in scholarly and practitioner forums.

II. Procedures

This research involves interviews with participants from schools that we have identified based on their participation in focus groups and/or the results of a separate SRO survey, and/or based on analysis of statewide data sets related to discipline, school climate, and threat assessment. Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to be part of a 60-90 minute, audio-recorded focus group based on a protocol of questions with a member of our research team. We may invite you to participate in a separate follow up interview after the completion of the focus group, which may be scheduled for a later day, time, and location. The focus group will be held in a previously scheduled location that will be assigned based on the Region of the Commonwealth in which you work. We may also ask you for publicly available documents related to SROs and SRO Programs.

III. Risks

This research has minimal emotional, physical, social, legal, economic, or dignity

related risks for participants. It is possible that participants may experience some emotional discomfort recollecting specific incidents related to student behaviors or incidents. If at any point during the research process, you experience distress, you should seek counseling or medical treatment through the Employee Assistance resources available through your employer. Virginia Tech, the research project, and research team members will not be responsible for any expenses accrued for seeking or receiving treatment.

IV. Benefits

This research may provide some benefit to participants by virtue of the reflective nature of the interview process.
The research has the potential to directly benefit professional development and training programs as well as policy in the Commonwealth of Virginia. It also has the potential to impact both policy and practice in the fields of counseling, criminal justice, education, and health and human services.
No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Should you choose to participate, you will pick a pseudonym at the beginning of the interview. You will also be asked to provide demographic information about the role that you play in a school, the number of years you have been in that role, gender, and race. Everyone will use this pseudonym for your name throughout the interview. Any identifiers that surface during the interview, including names of people, places to the level of county, and organizations will be de-identified with pseudonyms during the transcription process. All of these de-identified transcripts will be stored on password-protected computers. Digital recordings of interviews will be stored on an encrypted flash drive in a safe. Additionally, we will redact any identifying information, including names of people, places to the level of county, and organizations from any publicly available documents that we receive from you. Digital copies of redacted documents will be stored on a password-protected computer. Only members of our research team will have access to identifiable project data. At no time will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent.

The NIJ process requires that the final dataset for this research be archived with the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD). Those datasets will be completely sanitized of any directly or indirectly identifiable information. They will receive copies of de-identified transcripts, redacted documents from document review, and rosters of school, participant, and document related pseudonyms.

The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human

subjects involved in research.

VI. Compensation

You will not be compensated for your participation in this research.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty.

Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject.

Federal law does not allow federally-funded researchers to use any research information for purposes other than research. Therefore, we must have your written consent before we can make such a report. Furthermore, it is your right to refuse to consent, and if you do so, there will be no negative consequences.

VIII. Questions or Concerns

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the research investigators whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research participant, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board at irb@vt.edu or (540) 231-3732.

IX. Subject's Consent

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

_____ Date_____
Subject signature

_____
Subject printed name

Appendix 10: Focus Group Guides

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE
School Leaders

1. How long have you been working as a school leader and at what level?
2. What do you see as the roles and responsibilities of the SRO?
3. How do you support the SRO's integration into your school culture? (prompt: routines, symbolic roles, examples)
4. What additional training do SROs need?
5. What factors influence your decision to involve SROs in school discipline? (prompt: others perceptions, consequences, legal, values, emotion)
6. What role does your division's MOU for the SRO Program play in the for day-to-day operations of your school? (prompt: training in, supervisions, use of time, roles and responsibilities, teacher understanding of program)
7. If you had complete autonomy to assign the SROs daily schedule and routines, what would they be doing?
8. What strategies do you use to develop a relationship with your SRO?
9. What makes your school's SRO program successful?
10. Is there anything that we didn't discuss that you think is important for us to know about the SRO program in your school?

If time, ask if any of them have SSOs in their schools. If yes, ask:
11. What do you see as the roles and responsibilities of SSOs?
12. How do you support the SSOs integration into your school culture? (prompt: routines, symbolic roles, examples)
13. What additional training do SSOs need?
14. What strategies do you use to develop a relationship with your SSOs?
15. What makes your school's SSO program successful?

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE
SSOs

1. Please give me a brief history of your experience as a SSO (Prompts: How long have you been an SSO? What levels (ES, MS, HS) have you worked at? Is anyone a SSO supervisor?)
2. What are the roles and responsibilities of a SSO?
3. What is the best training for SSOs? Why?
4. What topics or areas would you like additional training in?
5. How have you been successful in addressing the challenges that you face as a SSO?
6. How do you go about developing relationships with the administration in your school? (Prompt: How do you go about developing relationships with the teachers in your school?)
7. How do you know that you are being supported by your supervisor?
8. How is your performance as a SSO evaluated?
9. What is the biggest misconception that people have about SSOs? Why do you think so?
10. How would you describe the beliefs about discipline in your schools? What is your involvement in school discipline?
11. What makes your school's SSO program successful?
12. Is there anything that we didn't discuss that you think is important for us to know about the SSO program in your school?

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE
SROs

1. Please give me a brief history of your experience as a SRO (Prompts: How long have you been an SRO? What levels (ES, MS, HS) have you worked at? Is anyone a SRO supervisor?)
2. What are the roles and responsibilities of a SRO?
3. What is the best training for SROs? Why?
4. What topics or areas would you like additional training in?
5. How have you been successful in addressing the challenges that you face as a SRO?
6. How do you go about developing relationships with the administration in your school? (Prompt: How do you go about developing relationships with the teachers in your school?)
7. How do you know that you are being supported by your supervisor?
8. How is your performance as a SRO evaluated?
9. What is the biggest misconception that people have about SROs? Why do you think so?
10. How would you describe the beliefs about discipline in your schools? What is your involvement in school discipline?
11. What is the day-to-day role of the MOU between your LEA and school? (Prompts: roles and responsibilities, expectations and actual duties)
12. What makes your school's SRO program successful?
13. Is there anything that we didn't discuss that you think is important for us to know about the SRO program in your school?

Appendix 11: School-Level Descriptive Statistics of DCV and DJJ Data

School-Level Descriptive Statistics of Variables Used in RQ7b and RQ7c

		MOU	Overall Infraction	Against People	Drug and Alcohol	Weapon	Shor-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Arrest Rate
Total	M	0.85	118.32	38.51	1.86	1.77	108.59	2.06	1.62
(*N* =1807)	SD	0.36	175.71	54.33	4.61	2.75	166.13	8.78	4.41
	Min	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Max	1.00	3479.34	706.61	66.37	21.24	3111.57	285.12	107.44
Elementary	M	0.86	59.34	22.20	0.11	1.35	53.21	0.34	0.06
(*N* = 1100)	SD	0.35	86.48	34.21	0.78	2.51	82.06	1.41	0.42
	Min	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Max	1.00	882.24	284.40	18.78	21.24	861.00	17.38	6.45
Middle	M	0.84	237.15	85.90	2.99	2.72	220.83	4.28	3.36
(*N* = 336)	SD	0.37	228.55	78.64	4.01	3.08	221.13	9.32	4.69
	Min	0.00	2.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.28	0.00	0.00
	Max	1.00	1682.68	649.81	27.30	16.27	1620.73	102.88	35.18
High	M	0.82	192.33	41.85	6.67	2.15	179.76	4.83	5.09
(*N* = 307)	SD	0.38	159.53	31.32	6.68	2.45	155.47	7.83	5.17
	Min	0.00	4.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.40	0.00	0.00
	Max	1.00	1205.13	181.42	65.93	16.68	1128.21	59.67	32.97
Combined	M	0.72	153.29	53.89	3.04	2.32	129.71	6.77	2.71
(*N* = 64)	SD	0.45	435.03	98.20	11.01	4.24	387.88	35.76	13.75
	Min	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Max	1.00	3479.34	706.61	66.37	20.66	3111.57	285.12	107.44

Appendix 12: District-Level Descriptive Statistics of DCV and DJJ

District-Level Descriptive Statistics of Variables Used in RQ7b and RQ7c

		MOU	Overall Infraction	Against People	Drug and Alcohol	Weapon	Shor-Term Suspension	Long-Term Suspension	Arrest Rate
Total	*M*	0.71	180.24	54.36	3.28	2.55	168.62	2.77	2.88
(*N* = 406)	*SD*	0.45	180.12	52.71	4.47	2.67	172.45	8.40	4.52
	Min	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Max	1.00	1802.34	394.75	28.93	16.68	1618.46	142.56	53.72
Elementary	*M*	0.70	71.24	26.76	0.09	1.76	65.15	0.24	0.05
(*N* = 125)	*SD*	0.46	75.89	30.91	0.24	2.06	71.40	0.74	0.20
	Min	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Max	1.00	370.60	169.59	1.71	10.00	353.75	4.71	1.61
Middle	*M*	0.73	255.81	87.98	3.39	3.28	241.54	3.00	3.39
(*N* = 121)	*SD*	0.45	200.19	64.51	4.22	2.96	195.14	5.65	3.59
	Min	0.00	2.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.28	0.00	0.00
	Max	1.00	1145.32	394.75	27.30	13.65	1112.75	40.04	20.74
High	*M*	0.71	221.49	49.08	6.54	2.66	209.87	4.09	5.31
(*N* = 128)	*SD*	0.46	132.23	28.81	4.12	2.58	131.94	5.34	4.08
	Min	0.00	7.72	0.90	0.00	0.00	6.69	0.00	0.00
	Max	1.00	640.29	151.69	20.27	16.68	629.50	29.13	21.78
Combined	*M*	0.66	155.22	56.20	2.23	2.38	132.05	6.52	2.27
(*N* = 32)	*SD*	0.48	310.13	73.22	5.97	3.23	277.68	25.12	9.51
	Min	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Max	1.00	1802.34	367.23	28.93	13.66	1618.46	142.56	53.72

Appendix 13: Demographic Information of SRO Law Enforcement Supervisors

Demographic ($N = 54$)	Valid N	%
Position		
LEO, currently an SRO	19	35.2%
LEO, formally an SRO	8	14.8%
LEO, no direct SRO experience	18	33.3%
Other	9	16.7%
Gender		
Male	47	87.0%
Female	7	13.0%
Other	0	0.0%

Demographic ($N = 54$)	Valid N	M	SD	Min	Max
Age	53	46.77	6.141	31	58
Race/Ethnicity					
Black/African American	54	0.074	0.262	0	1
White/Caucasian	54	0.870	0.336	0	1
Hispanic or Latina/o	54	0.037	0.189	0	1
American Indian or Alaska Native	54	0.019	0.137	0	1
Asian	54	0.000	0.000	0	1
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	54	0.000	0.000	0	1
Biracial or Multiethnic	54	0.000	0.000	0	1
Other	54	0.019	0.137	0	1

Appendix 14: Demographic Information of SRO School-Based Liaisons

Demographic (*N* = 40)	Valid *N*	%
Gender		
Male	26	65.0%
Female	14	35.0%
Other	0	0.0%

Demographic (N = 40)	Valid *N*	*M*	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*
Age	40	45.82	8.843	31	62
Race					
Black/African American	40	0.175	0.380	0	1
White/Caucasian	40	0.825	0.380	0	1
Hispanic or Latina/o	40	0.000	0.000	0	1
American Indian or Alaska Native	40	0.000	0.000	0	1
Asian	40	0.000	0.000	0	1
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	40	0.000	0.000	0	1
Biracial or Multiethnic	40	0.000	0.000	0	1
Other	40	0.000	0.000	0	1

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and Virginia Tech

With the support of The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Tech is conducting a research study of school safety and security programs in Virginia. We anticipate that the findings will be published, and shared with policy makers with recommendations for improving policy in those areas. We would like your honest opinions. Your participation is voluntary and you can discontinue participation at any time.

Please familiarize yourself with your rights as a research participant by clicking on the link below before entering the survey.

https://tinyurl.com/VT-SRO-SSO-Survey

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. By continuing on to the Survey, I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent.

YES (Enter Survey)   NO (Exit Survey)
○   ○

How many SSOs do you supervise?

[▼]

Which of the following best describes your position?

○ Principal
○ Assistant Principal
○ School Division/Central Office Administrator
○ Other: [   ]

For the most recently hired SSO you supervise, who determined the duties of the job? (Total must sum to 100)

A School Division/Central Office Administrator	0
A Principal or Assistant Principal at the school	0
A School Board Representative	0
Someone else:	0
Total	0

For the most recently hired SSO you supervise, were you part of the selection process?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Other:

On average, how often do you have the following types of contact with the SSO(s) you supervise?

Individual meeting	▼
Staff/Group meeting	▼
Phone/Radio contact	▼

What criteria are used to evaluate the performance of the SSOs you supervise?

How often do you get feedback from other school employees about the performance of the SSOs?

○ Never

○ Once a year

○ Once a month

○ Once a week

- ○ Once a day
- ○ Hourly

Principals/Assistant Principals would benefit from more training about the role of the SSOs.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

Teachers would benefit from more training about the role of the SSOs.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

SSOs would benefit from more training about the role of the SSOs.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

Have the SSOs you supervise completed training in de-escalation techniques such as Mandt or Handle With Care?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I don't know

Think about what SSOs do in a typical week. Would they benefit from more training on the following topics? Click all that apply.

- [ ] Bullying
- [ ] Child Abuse and Neglect
- [ ] Child or Adolescent Development
- [ ] Communicating with Children and Adolescents
- [ ] Counseling/Helping Skills and Techniques
- [ ] Crisis and Emergency Management Planning
- [ ] Cultural Diversity
- [ ] Dangerous/Threatening Students
- [ ] De-escalation Techniques
- [ ] Drugs, Alcohol, and Addictions
- [ ] Establishing Effective Working Relationships with Parents

- [ ] Evaluation of the Safety/Security Programs
- [ ] Implicit Bias
- [ ] Mental Health Issues in Childhood and Adolescence
- [ ] Mentoring Youth
- [ ] Search and Seizure Procedures
- [ ] Trauma-Informed Care
- [ ] Victims' Rights
- [ ] Working with Students with Special Needs (e.g. developmental delays, autism, previous trauma)
- [ ] Youth Gangs
- [ ] Other:
  [   ]

On average for the SSOs you supervise, what percentage of their time do they spend on each of the following tasks? (Total must sum to 100)

Assisting with disciplinary incidents	0
Investigating violations of school board policies	0
Detaining students who are violating the law or school board policies	0
Other	0
Total	0

On average, how often do school employees request SSO assistance with school disciplinary incidents?

- ( ) Never
- ( ) Once a year
- ( ) Once a month
- ( ) Once a week

○ Once a day

○ Hourly

On average, how often are SSOs requested to intervene in physical altercations between students?

○ Never

○ Once a year

○ Once a month

○ Once a week

○ Once a day

○ Hourly

Please indicate your gender:

○ Male

○ Female

○ Other

Please indicate your age:

[▾]

Please indicate your race/ethnicity: Check all that apply.

☐ Black/African American

☐ White/Caucasian

☐ Hispanic or Latina/o

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

☐ Biracial or Multiethnic

☐ Other

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Please familiarize yourself with your rights as a research participant by clicking on the link below before entering the survey.

https://tinyurl.com/VT-SRO-SSO-Survey

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. By continuing on to the Survey, I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent.

YES (Enter Survey)	NO (Exit Survey)
O	O

Which of the following best describes your assignment?

- O Full time employee assigned to one school
- O Full time employee split across two or more schools
- O Part time employee assigned to one school
- O Part time employee split across two or more schools
- O I am no longer serving as a SSO
- O Other: _____

Please describe the nature of your separation from your most recent SSO position:

○ I requested reassignment to a different type of position.

○ I was reassigned per someone else's request or decision.

○ I was promoted to a different type of position.

○ I retired.

○ I resigned.

○ I was dismissed.

○ My position was eliminated due to limited funds or a change in funding.

Please name the school that you consider your primary assignment. For the remainder of the items, consider your work at this school.

[ ]

How long have you been at this assignment?

○ Less than a year

○ 1 - 2 years

○ 2 - 5 years

○ 5 - 10 years

○ >10 years

What percentage of your time do you spend on each of the following tasks? (Total must sum to 100)

Patrolling school areas in order to prevent crime and ensure safety	0
Detaining students who are violating the law or school board policies	0
Investigating violations of school board policies	0
Assisting with disciplinary incidents	0
Other	0
Total	0

How well does your description of how you spend your time match your job description?

○ Very Much

○ Somewhat

○ Not Much

○ Not at All

○ I am not familiar with my official job description.

In a typical case, how do you become involved in a school disciplinary matter?

○ I am present in the area where an incident begins and I respond when needed.

○ A school employee requests help after an incident has begun.

○ A school employee requests my presence in advance of a meeting or event that is likely to escalate.

○ I do not become involved in these incidents

○ Other: [   ]

On average, how often are you requested to intervene in physical altercations between students?

○ Never

○ Once a year

○ Once a month

○ Once a week

○ Once a day

○ Hourly

In a typical case, describe your actions during a school disciplinary matter:

[   ]

Principals and Assistant Principals would benefit from more training about the role of the SSOs.

○ Strong Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

Teachers would benefit from more training about the role of the SSOs.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

SSOs would benefit from more training about the role of the SSOs.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

Think about what you do in your job in a typical week. Would SSOs benefit from more training on the following topics? Click all that apply.

☐ Bullying

☐ Child Abuse and Neglect

☐ Child or Adolescent Development

☐ Communicating with Children and Adolescents

☐ Counseling/Helping Skills and Techniques

☐ Crisis and Emergency Management Planning

☐ Cultural Diversity

☐ Dangerous/Threatening Students

☐ Evaluation of the Safety/Security Programs

☐ Implicit Bias

☐ Mental Health Issues in Childhood and Adolescence

☐ Mentoring Youth

☐ Search and Seizure Procedures

☐ Trauma-Informed Care

☐ Victims' Rights

☐ Working with Students with Special Needs (e.g. developmental delays, autism, previous

trauma)

- [ ] De-escalation Techniques
- [ ] Drugs, Alcohol, and Addictions

- [ ] Youth Gangs
- [ ] Other:

  [   ]

- [ ] Establishing Effective Working Relationships with Parents

I feel my work is valued by the school communities that I serve.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

I feel adequately supervised in my work.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

I don't have opportunities for advancement in my work.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

I am committed to helping students.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

I don't feel comfortable letting school staff know when they ask me to do something outside of my job duties.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

On a typical day, which of the following do you wear/carry at work? Check all that apply.

☐ Polo shirt with school identification

☐ Formal uniform

☐ Bullet proof vest

☐ Helmet

☐ SWAT/Riot gear

☐ Radio

☐ Video or audio recording device

☐ Gun

☐ Restraints/Handcuffs

☐ Baton

☐ Taser

☐ Pepper spray

Please identify the person you consider your primary supervisor:

Full Name:

Email:

Job Title:

How often do you have the following types of contact with your supervisor(s)?

Individual meeting

Staff/Group meeting

Phone/Radio contact

Have you completed training in de-escalation techniques such as Mandt or Handle With Care?

○ Yes

○ No

Please indicate your gender:

○ Male

○ Female

○ Other

Please indicate your age:

[▾]

Please indicate your race/ethnicity: Check all that apply.

☐ Black/African American

☐ White/Caucasian

☐ Hispanic or Latina/o

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

☐ Biracial or Multiethnic

☐ Other

Do you have previous experience as a law enforcement officer (ex. Sheriff or Police)?

○ Yes

○ No

Which of the following best describes your highest educational experience?

○ Completed Some High School

- ○ Earned GED or Equivalent
- ○ Earned a High School Diploma
- ○ Completed Some College
- ○ Earned an Associate's Degree
- ○ Earned a Bachelor's Degree
- ○ Completed some Graduate School
- ○ Earned a Master's Degree
- ○ Earned a Doctoral Degree

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I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. By continuing on to the Survey, I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent.

YES (Enter Survey)   NO (Exit Survey)
○   ○

For the most recently assigned SRO at your school, who determined the duties of the job? (Total must sum to 100)

The Law Enforcement Agency	0
A School Division/Central Office Administrator	0
A Principal or Assistant Principal at the School	0
A School Board Representative	0
Someone Else _____	0
Total	0

For the most recently assigned SRO at your school, were you or any other school based administrator at your school a part of the selection process?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Other: [_____]

On average, how often do you have the following types of contact with the SRO(s) at your school?

Individual meeting	[▼]
Staff/Group meeting	[▼]
Phone/Radio contact	[▼]

What criteria does the Law Enforcement Agency use to evaluate the performance of the SROs at your school?

[_____]

How often do you give feedback to the Law Enforcement Agency about the performance of SROs at your school?

○ Never

○ Once a year

○ Once a month

○ Once a week

○ Once a day

○ Hourly

Principals/Assistant Principals would benefit from more training about the role of the SROs.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

Teachers would benefit from more training about the role of the SROs.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

SROs would benefit from more training about the role of the SROs.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

Think about what SROs do in a typical week. Would they benefit from more training on the following topics? Click all that apply.

☐ Bullying

☐ Child Abuse and Neglect

☐ Child or Adolescent Development

☐ Communicating with Children and Adolescents

☐ Counseling/Helping Skills and Techniques

☐ Crisis and Emergency Management Planning

☐ Cultural Diversity

☐ Dangerous/Threatening Students

☐ Evaluation of the Safety/Security Programs

☐ Implicit Bias

☐ Mental Health Issues in Childhood and Adolescence

☐ Mentoring Youth

☐ Search and Seizure Procedures

☐ Trauma-Informed Care

☐ Victims' Rights

☐ Working with Students with Special Needs (e.g. developmental delays, autism, previous trauma)

- ☐ De-escalation Techniques
- ☐ Drugs, Alcohol, and Addictions
- ☐ Youth Gangs
- ☐ Other:

  [   ]

- ☐ Establishing Effective Working Relationships with Parents

On average for the SRO at your school, what percentage of their time do they spend on each of the following tasks? (Total must sum to 100)

Law Enforcement Officer (ex. Respond to criminal activity and public safety threats)	0
Community Liaison (ex. Building relationships and identify resources)	0
Law-Related Educator (ex. Give presentations for students, parents, and school staff)	0
Role Model or Mentor (ex. Be professional, approachable, and compassionate)	0
Other: Please provide an example [ ]	0
Total	0

On average, how often do school employees request SRO assistance with school disciplinary incidents that do not involve criminal activity or threaten public safety?

- ○ Never
- ○ Once a year
- ○ Once a month
- ○ Once a week
- ○ Once a day
- ○ Hourly

On average, how often do school employees request SRO assistance related to bullying, including social media or technology-related bullying?

- ○ Never
- ○ Once a year
- ○ Once a month
- ○ Once a week

○ Once a day

○ Hourly

Please indicate your gender:

○ Male

○ Female

○ Other

Please indicate your age:

[▾]

Please indicate your race/ethnicity: Check all that apply.

☐ Black/African American

☐ White/Caucasian

☐ Hispanic or Latina/o

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

☐ Biracial or Multiethnic

☐ Other

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and Virginia Tech

With the support of The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Tech is conducting a research study of school safety and security programs in Virginia. We anticipate that the findings will be published, and shared with policy makers with recommendations for improving policy in those areas. We would like your honest opinions. Your participation is voluntary and you can discontinue participation at any time.

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YES (Enter Survey)   NO (Exit Survey)
○   ○

How many SROs do you supervise?

[▼]

Which of the following best describes your position?

○ Law enforcement officer, currently an SRO
○ Law enforcement officer, formally an SRO
○ Law enforcement officer, no direct SRO experience
○ Other: [   ]

For the most recently assigned SRO you supervise, who determined the duties of the job? (Total must sum to 100)

The Law Enforcement Agency	0
A School Division Administrator	0
A Principal or Assistant Principal at the school	0
A School Board Representative	0
Someone else:	0
Total	0

For the individual most recently selected/hired to be a SRO, were you a part of the selection process?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Other:

On average, how often do you have the following types of contact with the SRO(s) you supervise?

Individual meeting	▾
Staff/Group meeting	▾
Phone/Radio contact	▾

What criteria are used to evaluate the performance of the SROs you supervise?

How often do you get feedback from school officials about the performance of the SROs?

○ Never

○ Once a year

○ Once a month

○ Once a week

○ Once a day

○ Hourly

○ Only when there is an issue: Please provide an example [   ]

Principals/Assistant Principals would benefit from more training about the role of the SROs.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

Teachers would benefit from more training about the role of the SROs.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

SROs would benefit from more training about the role of the SROs.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

Think about what SROs do in a typical week. Would they benefit from more training on the following topics? Click all that apply.

- ☐ Bullying
- ☐ Child Abuse and Neglect
- ☐ Child or Adolescent Development
- ☐ Communicating with Children and Adolescents
- ☐ Counseling/Helping Skills and Techniques
- ☐ Crisis and Emergency Management Planning
- ☐ Cultural Diversity
- ☐ Dangerous/Threatening Students
- ☐ De-escalation Techniques
- ☐ Drugs, Alcohol, and Addictions
- ☐ Establishing Effective Working Relationships with Parents

- ☐ Evaluation of the Safety/Security Programs
- ☐ Implicit Bias
- ☐ Mental Health Issues in Childhood and Adolescence
- ☐ Mentoring Youth
- ☐ Search and Seizure Procedures
- ☐ Trauma-Informed Care
- ☐ Victims' RIghts
- ☐ Working with Students with Special Needs (e.g. developmental delays, autism, previous trauma)
- ☐ Youth Gangs
- ☐ Other: [_____]

On average for the SROs you supervise, what percentage of their time do they spend on each of the following tasks? (Total must sum to 100)

Law Enforcement Officer (ex. Respond to criminal activity and public safety threats)	0
Community Liaison (ex. Build relationships and identify resources)	0
Law-Related Educator (ex. Give presentations for students, parents, and school staff)	0
Role Model or Mentor (ex. Be professional, approachable, and compassionate)	0
Other: (Please provide an example) [___]	0
Total	0

On average, how often do school staff request SRO assistance with school disciplinary incidents that do not involve criminal activity or threaten public safety?

- ○ Never
- ○ Once a year
- ○ Once a month
- ○ Once a week

○ Once a day

○ Hourly

Please indicate your gender:

○ Male

○ Female

○ Other

Please indicate your age:

[▼]

Please indicate your race/ethnicity: Check all that apply.

☐ Black/African American

☐ White/Caucasian

☐ Hispanic or Latina/o

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

☐ Biracial or Multiethnic

☐ Other

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○ YES (Enter Survey)
○ NO (Exit Survey)

Which of the following best describes your assignment?

○ Full time employee assigned to one school
○ Full time employee split across two schools
○ Full time employee assigned to more than two schools
○ Full time employee with school-based and other assignments (e.g., a beat or administrative duties)
○ I am no longer serving as an SRO.
○ Other [   ]

Please describe the nature of your separation from your most recent SRO position:

○ I requested reassignment to a different type of position.

○ I was reassigned per someone else's request or decision.

○ I had to leave due to an agency term limit.

○ I was promoted to a different type of position.

○ I retired from the law enforcement agency

○ I resigned from the law enforcement agency.

○ I was dismissed from the law enforcement agency.

○ My position was eliminated due to limited funds or a change in funding.

Please name the school that you consider your primary assignment. For the remainder of the items, consider your work at this school.

[   ]

How long have you been at this assignment?

○ Less than a year

○ 1 - 2 years

○ 2 - 5 years

○ 5 - 10 years

○ >10 years

Does your law enforcement agency set a term limit for your assignment as an SRO?

○ No

○ Yes (ex. Up to 3 years)

○ Other: [   ]

What percentage of your time do you spend on each of the followings tasks? (Total must sum to 100)

Law Enforcement Officer (ex. Respond to criminal activity and public safety threats)   [0]

Community Liaison (ex. Build relationships and identify resources)	0
Law-Related Educator (ex. Give presentations for students, parents, and school staff)	0
Role Model or Mentor (ex. Be professional, approachable, and compassionate)	0
Other	0
Total	0

Think of the formal training you have received about law enforcement work (ex. Basic training, annual mandatory training). What percentage of it was general training that applies to all settings, what percentage was about a school setting specifically, and what percentage does not usually apply to a school setting? (Total must sum to 100)

Training that applies to all settings	0
Training that applies to the school setting specifically	0
Training that usually does not apply to a school setting	0
Total	0

Think about what you do in your job in a typical week. Would SROs benefit from more training on any of the following topics? Click all that apply.

☐ Bullying

☐ Child Abuse and Neglect

☐ Child or Adolescent Development

☐ Communicating with Children and Adolescents

☐ Counseling/Helping Skills and Techniques

☐ Crisis and Emergency Management Planning

☐ Cultural Diversity

☐ Dangerous/Threatening Students

☐ De-escalation Techniques

☐ Drugs, Alcohol, and Addictions

☐ Evaluation of the Safety/Security Programs

☐ Implicit Bias

☐ Mental Health Issues in Childhood and Adolescence

☐ Mentoring Youth

☐ Search and Seizure Procedures

☐ Trauma-Informed Care

☐ Victims' Rights

☐ Working with Students with Special Needs (e.g. developmental delays, autism, previous trauma)

☐ Youth Gangs

☐ Other:

☐ Establishing Effective Working Relationships
with Parents

Principals/Assistant Principals would benefit from more training about the role of the SROs.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

Teachers would benefit from more training about the role of the SROs.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

SROs would benefit from more training about the role of the SROs.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

Do you document your activities when performing the following duties of the job?

Law Enforcement Officer (ex. Respond to criminal activity and public safety threats)	▾
Community Liaison (ex. Build relationships and identify resources)	▾
Law-Related Educator (ex. Give presentations for students, parents, and school staff)	▾
Role Model or Mentor (ex. Be professional, approachable, and compassionate)	▾

I feel my work is valued by the school communities that I serve.

O Strongly Agree

O Agree

O Neutral

O Disagree

O Strongly Disagree

I feel my work is valued by my law enforcement agency.

O Strongly Agree

O Agree

O Neutral

O Disagree

O Strongly Disagree

I feel adequately supervised in my work.

O Strongly Agree

O Agree

O Neutral

O Disagree

O Strongly Disagree

I don't have opportunities for advancement in my work.

O Strongly Agree

O Agree

O Neutral

O Disagree

O Strongly Disagree

I am committed to helping students.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

I don't feel comfortable letting school staff know when they ask me something outside of my job duties.

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

On a typical day, which of the following do you wear/carry at work? Check all that apply.

☐ Polo shirt with a police shield or other identification

☐ Formal uniform

☐ Bullet proof vest

☐ Helmet

☐ SWAT/Riot gear

☐ Radio

☐ Video or audio recording device

☐ Gun

☐ Restraints/Handcuffs

☐ Baton

☐ Taser

☐ Pepper spray

Please identify the person you consider your primary supervisor:

Full Name: _____

Email: _____

Job Title: _____

Please identify the person you consider your primary liaison at the school:

Full Name: _____

Email: _____

Job Title:

How often do you have the following types of contact?

Phone/radio contact with a ranking law enforcement officer	▾
Face-to-face individual meeting with a ranking law enforcement officer	▾
Group meetings with a ranking law enforcement officer	▾
Phone/radio/intercom contact with your primary liaison at the school (e.g., Principal or Assistant Principal)	▾
Face-to-face individual meeting with your primary liaison at the school (e.g., Principal or Assistant Principal)	▾
Group meetings with your primary liaison at the school (e.g., Principal or Assistant Principal)	▾

How often does your law enforcement agency supervisor solicit feedback from school officials about your performance as a SRO?

○ Never
○ Once a year
○ Once a month
○ Once a week
○ Once a day
○ Hourly

On average, how often do school employees request your assistance related to bullying, including social media or technology-related bullying?

○ Never
○ Once a year
○ Once a month
○ Once a week
○ Once a day
○ Hourly

How do you respond to requests for assistance with school disciplinary incidents that do not rise to the level of criminal activity or threaten public safety?

[   ]

Please indicate your gender:

○ Male

○ Female

○ Other

Please indicate your age:

[▼]

Please indicate your race/ethnicity: Check all that apply.

☐ Black/African American

☐ White/Caucasian

☐ Hispanic or Latina/o

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

☐ Biracial or Multiethnic

☐ Other

Which of the following best describes your highest educational experience?

○ Completed Some High School

○ Earned GED or Equivalent

○ Earned a High School Diploma

○ Completed Some College

○ Earned an Associate's Degree

- ○ Earned a Bachelor's Degree
- ○ Completed some Graduate School
- ○ Earned a Master's Degree
- ○ Earned a Doctoral Degree