**Research Regarding SROs, School Safety, Arrests, and Exclusionary Discipline**

Compiled by Jeff Welty, November 2020[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Peer-Reviewed Journals**

Denise C. Gottfredson et al., Effects of School Resource Officers on School Crime and Responses to School Crime, Criminology & Public Policy (2020) (reviewing studies, conducting its own data analysis and finding that “increased SROs increased the number of drug- and weapon-related offenses and exclusionary disciplinary actions for treatment schools relative to comparison schools”)[[2]](#footnote-2)

Emily G. Owens, Testing the School‐to‐Prison Pipeline, J. Pol. Anal. & Mgmt. 11 (2017) (from the abstract, finding “evidence that law enforcement agencies learn about more crimes in schools upon receipt of a grant [to fund SROs], and are more likely to make arrests for those crimes,” and also finding “evidence that SROs increase school safety, and help law enforcement agencies make arrests for drug crimes occurring on and off school grounds”)[[3]](#footnote-3)

Benjamin W. Fisher & Emily A. Hennessy, School Resource Officers and Exclusionary Discipline in U.S. High Schools: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis, Adolescent Research Review 217 (2016) (identifying seven methodologically rigorous studies of the effect of SROs on exclusionary discipline, including suspension, expulsion, and arrest; conducting a meta-analysis using pre-post SRO and “comparison school” models; finding that “the pattern of results across the separate random effects meta-analyses provides evidence that—consistent with theories of criminalization—the presence of SROs in high schools is associated with higher levels of exclusionary discipline”; but urging that the results be interpreted cautiously because of the small sample size and because one of two models did not achieve results that rose to the level of statistical significance)[[4]](#footnote-4)

Matthew T. Theriot, School Resource Ofﬁcers and the Criminalization of Student Behavior, Journal of Criminal Justice 37 (2009) (from the abstract: “this study evaluated the impact of SROs on school-based arrest rates by comparing arrests at thirteen schools with an SRO to ﬁfteen schools without an SRO in the same district. Poisson and negative binomial regression models showed that having an SRO did not predict more total arrests, but did predict more arrests for disorderly conduct. Conversely, having an SRO decreased the arrest rate for assault and weapons charges.”)[[5]](#footnote-5)

**Other References**

F. Chris Curran, et al., Understanding School Safety and the Use of School Resource Officers in Understudied Settings (National Criminal Justice Reference Service 2020) (studying SROs in elementary schools in non-urban areas and finding that SROs focused on building security; were seen as improving safety; and “did not increase students’ likelihood of experiencing a disciplinary infraction, likely because SROs were forbidden from engaging in formal discipline by policy”)[[6]](#footnote-6)

USDOJ Community Oriented Policing Services, School Resource Officers: Violence Averted Special Report (2020) (federally-funded report featuring 10 case studies of school shootings or other violence prevented or terminated by SROs)[[7]](#footnote-7)

Jonathan Butcher, Every Child Should Be Safe at School: K–12 Policing Needs Reform, Not Elimination, Heritage Foundation Backgrounder (2020) (noting survey evidence indicating that SROs are seen as valuable at many schools, arguing that SROs serve an important security function, and recommending SRO-specific training to ameliorate potential negative effects of SROs) [[8]](#footnote-8)

Kenneth Alonzo Anderson, Does More Policing Make Middle Schools Safer?, Brown Center Chalkboard (2018) (examining North Carolina data and finding “no relationship[] between additional dollars received [by school districts for funding SROs] and reductions in the 16 disciplinary acts that must be reported to the state [such as] assault, homicide, bomb threats, possession and use of alcohol and drugs, possession of weapons, and more”) [[9]](#footnote-9)

Gary Zhang & Douglas H. Spence, An Evaluation of the Prevention Resource Officer Program in West Virginia Middle and High Schools, West Virginia Office of Research and Strategic Planning (2018) (finding “that the presence of [S]ROs increases the number of reported incidents related to drug crime as well as the number of out-of-school suspensions for drug crime, but decreases violent crime and disorder when multiple years are considered” and arguing that “[t]he results suggest that the placement of [S]ROs in schools . . . can be beneficial by increasing the detection and deterrence of certain forms of problem outcomes”) [[10]](#footnote-10)

Benjamin W. Fisher, School Resource Officers, Exclusionary Discipline, and the Role of Context (National Criminal Justice Reference Service 2016) (doctoral dissertation conducting statistical analysis of SROs finds that “SRO implementation was associated with a decrease in the overall suspension rate” and was associated with a narrowing of the racial disparity in suspensions) [[11]](#footnote-11)

Peter Finn & Jack McDevitt, National Assessment of School Resource Officer Programs Final Project Report, (National Criminal Justice Reference Service 2005) (large federally-funded survey and review of SRO programs; notes vast differences across programs, but generally finds that schools were satisfied with their programs and believed that the programs increased trust in the police and increased the perception of safety)[[12]](#footnote-12)

1. Many people helpfully suggested items for inclusion, including Jacqui Greene, Billy Lassiter, John Letteney, and Kerwin Pittman. I selected the items that seemed most reliable and relevant to the activities of Working Group 2 of the NC Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice. Any errors of inclusion or exclusion are my own. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1745-9133.12512> (abstract only available for free). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/pam.21954> (abstract only available for free). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40894-015-0006-8>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222199181_School_Resource_Officers_and_the_Criminalization_of_Student_Behavior>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/254621.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-w0903-pub.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/BG3508.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/11/08/does-more-policing-make-middle-schools-safer/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://www.jrsa.org/awards/winners/18-research-wv.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/250423.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/209273.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)