But I am here to help: How School Climate Factors and Interactions Define School Resource Officer Roles

by

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ABSTRACT

The presence of police officers is not an assurance of safety for everyone. Yet, modern concerns for school safety suggest there is a need for more police officers in schools. Over the last 70 years of School Resource Officer (SRO) programs, the variations of SRO program implementation and the expectation of roles and responsibilities has produced conflicting research on benefits or harms of police in the school environment. The purpose of police in schools has shuffled from relationship-building ambassadors for the community, to educators on crime prevention and drug use, to law enforcement officers for punitive juvenile sanctions, to counselors and role models for legal socialization, and other roles for emergency management and crisis response. Plans to place more officers in schools for purposes of "school safety" requires an examination of the SROs' roles within the school, their interactions with students, and how these roles and interactions contribute to safety. This study explores the roles of SROs to understand the variations of roles within a program and understand factors influencing the roles of SROs (e.g., school climate, initiation by others). To evaluate these roles and potential influences, cluster analysis and multinomial regression models were developed from one year of SRO-student interaction data (n=12, 466) collected daily from the Richland County (SC) Sheriff's Department SRO Division located in South Carolina. These interactions were defined by the framework of counseling, educating, and law enforcing roles. Results indicate the variations of roles performed are largely influenced by the school type (e.g., elementary), SRO perceptions (e.g., counselor), and the engagement of SROs by school officials for specific roles.

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I have always believed things are bigger than myself because we are all here for a short time, yet our actions can have influence over others for much longer. So, this dissertation is for youth who weren't sure they had a support network, who were unsure where to go for help with their family, their school, their peers. In perhaps the most unusual and least expected ways, there is someone in your community that is there to help you. This is also for the police officers that define their work as a mentor, a counselor, and other positive roles for their community. Your dedication to adding value in your community and firmly believing you are part of the process to help the next generation which does not require a punitive response should be written about more often. I was one of you, I have met hundreds more of you, and I hope there are more people that write about you as we think about the future of police, youth development, and juvenile justice.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

We need more police officers in schools. Over the last decade, this has become a common sentiment among some communities, news media, educators, and politicians. These individuals and groups have presented several reasons that more officers in schools would be beneficial: to shorten the time police would take to respond to an emergency (Wootton-Greener, 2018); to respond to unlawful student behaviors and actions (e.g., sexual assaults, drug use, aggressive behaviors) (Hoey, 2019); and to prevent mass shootings and violent assaults through the presence of the officer, as well as other security measures (e.g., monitoring metal detectors, conducting searches, armed response) (Green, 1999; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Thomas, Towvim, Rosiak, & Anderson, 2013). Yet, there is no direct evidence that the presence of officers in schools makes schools safer. The decline of criminal incidents within schools since the 1990s mirrors national crime trends and is unlikely to be tied to the increase of presence of officers since the latter part of the decade (Zhang, Musu-Gillette, & Oudekerk, 2016). The use of metal detectors, cameras, and access-control strategies used to "target harden" the school campus are also not directly tied to school safety (Bachman, Randolph, & Brown, 2011; Warnick, Johnson, & Rocha, 2018). Regardless, there is still a call for more police officers in schools to ensure safety and security.

The ability of an officer to positively impact the safety and security of the school is a difficult one to measure. The placement of officers in schools, and their role in using metal detectors and cameras, have led to varying perceptions of safety, fear, and stress among students who interpret the presence of officers and the use of other surveillance devices. Some find them reassuring, others as disruptive to the learning environment (Bachman et al., 2011; Perumean-Chaney & Sutton, 2013). These perceptions highlight

concerns of police legitimacy, especially among non-white students and students within urban environments (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Gau & Brunson, 2010; La Vigne, Fontaine, & Dwivedi, 2017). The concerns of legitimacy are highlighted in the abuse of power and excessive force used by officers to address student behavior, such as the assault of three youth by a school police officer in Vanguard Collegiate Middle School (Baltimore, MD) in 2015 (Khan, 2015). Furthermore, the occurrence or threats of school shootings and other violent assaults even within schools that employ security or police officers (e.g., the Parkland (FL) High School shooting in February 2018, and the Cedar Ridge [IN] High School threats in May 2019) have only called attention to the fear of events within schools, not a true understanding of contributing factors and effective responses.

This fear – or concern – is driving legislation and budgeting for local and state governments to make schools safe. Between January 4, 2017 and April 25, 2019, the National Conference of State Legislatures reported over 409 bills or resolutions in 43 states addressing school safety in grades K through 12. Of these bills, 236 specifically address the use of police as a security measure within the schools (National Conference for State Legislatures Education Program, 2019). While political parties, advocacy groups, and other policy advisors attempt to develop and guide the path forward on school security, there are gaps that need to be addressed in the role of police within schools.

The purpose of police in schools and their role in youth development is not well defined. In the 1920s, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) developed the Police Athletic League (PAL), a nonprofit organization that partners with community-based organizations and the NYPD to support playgrounds, skills-building programs, and other prosocial events (e.g., field trips to museums). As PAL has evolved over time

and within the communities, it has been involved in youth development through after-school programs, summer camps, teen centers, college readiness programs, educational advancement programs (e.g., science and technology), and juvenile justice programs (e.g., probation completion and re-entry) ("History: Police Athletic League, Inc.," 2015). The benefits and impacts reported by PAL over the decades have been the basis for several other police-youth development programs, particularly post-World War II.

The first school resource officer (SRO) programs were developed in the 1950s and 1960s. There is limited information about the initial purpose and structure of these early programs – mainly attributed to the Flint (MI) and Fresno (CA) police departments seeking to build positive relationships with urban youth (Canady, James, & Nease, 2015). How these programs and officers were to build relationships, or why this mattered for the agencies, is difficult to assess today without detailed information. However, it is suggested in the literature that the purpose of police during this period was to provide mentorship and positive role models for youth in need of prosocial guidance and behavioral development. The famous Norman Rockwell painting "The Runaway," presented on the 1958 cover of The Saturday Evening Post, has often been used to depict the mentoring role officers were expected to provide to wayward youth.

Information on SROs during the 1960s and 1970s is scarce. While officers may have been assigned to schools, these assignments may have been attributed to the rising violence in urban cities and violent clashes among police and citizens during this period. Literature on policing at that point highlighted the need to shift policing measures to a more community-friendly approach (Katzenbach, 1967; Kerner, 1968; Yarmolinsky, 1969). Heading into the 1980s, SROs were one of many ways police agencies defined their community-policing strategies, leveraging these officers to develop relationships with youth. One method to do this was through Drug Abuse Resistance Education – or

DARE – as much of criminal and disorderly behaviors observed in society were blamed on drug use (Cox, Zhang, Johnson, & Bender, 2007; Donnermeyer & Davis, 1998; Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993). Although the training was proven ineffective on drug use/abuse rates among youth, there was some evidence suggesting that the interactions between police and students proved beneficial for perceptions and trust (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Lucas, 2008; Mowen & Freng, 2019; Zullig, Ghani, Collins, & Matthews-Ewald, 2017). The use of SROs in this manner introduced a new purpose of police in schools – the educator.

Legislative measures and federal funding sources focused on school-based policing efforts heading into the next decade. Two key entities developed to support this effort. First, the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), a nonprofit organization developed in 1991, provided guidance for SRO programs and training on school-based policing strategies. NASRO defines the roles of the officers as the Counselor, the Educator, and the Law Enforcement Officer. These three roles and their framework – the Triad Model – attempted to shape the implementation of school-based policing programs. Second, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, building on the 1968 Omnibus Act, provided federal funding to create the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office). The COPS Office further supported the development of SRO programs through federal funding and grants.

As the SRO programs were funded and implemented across the nation in the 1990s, economic, political, and social factors influenced what activities and actions officers were responsible for within the schools. Economically, the continued flight of middle-class families from cities to suburbs shifted the tax base away from cities—and thereby the funding for school police—and changed urban schools' demographic composition (Harrington, 1997). Confidence in public schools had been declining,

highlighted by the 1983 report *The Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, which detailed the inability of schools to provide adequate education, but failed to address the issues of poverty and inequity in the educational system (Gardner & Larsen, 1983). Some city police departments, as in Baltimore, Maryland, developed public-private partnerships to implement, support, and facilitate youth programs for prosocial activities. These activities filled gaps in educational funding for urban youth through after-school programming, leveraging games and sports for positive socialization, and as methods to prevent youth delinquency (Bustad & Andrews, 2017). While these efforts attempted to fill a void of social services and activities within urban environments – discussed further in Chapter 2 – political agendas changed both police and schools.

Politically, police and schools were influenced by legislation, programs to address social issues, and funding. SRO programs expanded very quickly with federal funding and support: up to an estimated 6,500 officers nationwide between 1997 and 2008 (Canady et al., 2015; Statistics, 2007). While this expansion of officers is perhaps a testament to the public's desire to have police within schools, the economic changes within urban cities during this time generated, and potentially exacerbated, issues (e.g., poverty, broken homes, substance use) that challenged the school environment. The political pressure to implement school-based policing introduced a deviation from the early purpose of mentoring. The programmatic support provided through federal funding paralleled the 'get-tough policies' that were visible across the country, particularly focusing on drug intervention and gang crimes among youth (C.A. Christle, Nelson, & Jolivette, 2003; Christine A Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2013; James & McCallion, 2013). Juvenile justice programming in the early 1990s (e.g., the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's [OJJDP], *Comprehensive Strategy for*

Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders) attempted to balance the prevention of crimes among at-risk youth with intervention in crimes by delinquent youth, while other programs (e.g., the Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program) focused on punishments for violent, habitual offenders. Prevention efforts focused on supporting social institutions and families to provide prosocial activities, job opportunities, and skills training to support development (Krisberg & Hawkins, 1995). For youth already involved in delinquent or violent behavior, intervention efforts focused on graduated sanctions to interrupt behavior, divert activities to prosocial training and programming, and provide family and community support (Krisberg & Hawkins, 1995). However, the punitive and retributive nature of the programs and approaches used to address juvenile crimes, primarily funded by the Department of Justice (DOJ) during this time (e.g., boot camps, adjudicating juveniles as adults), deviated from the previously promoted roles of mentor or educator. The message to provide positive role models while mentoring at-risk youth were mixed with directives to arrest, punish, and incarcerate youth. This created confusion on what and how an SRO should be in the school environment, resulting in role conflict between traditional law enforcement actions and efforts to prevent and intervene in youth delinquency (Brown, 2006; Jackson, 2002; I. M. Johnson, 1999; Theriot, 2009).

Social factors also strongly influenced the implementation of SRO programs in the 1990s. Several cities and communities had experienced violent conflicts with police between the late 1960s and 1990. These conflicts stemmed from historical biased policing, inequitable treatment by police, and the prevalence of poverty and drugs within communities. These conflicts and inner-city violence called for policing reforms to enhance the professionalism of police and their ability to implement community policing. While federal commissions suggested a more community-based approach to

addressing crime in the inner city (e.g., 1967 Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice), police agencies were still being funded and directed to investigate and arrest, particularly for offenses prevalent in the inner city (e.g., drugs, gangs, assaults). The dichotomy of police roles persisted, with street officers continuing to police in urban areas and inner cities where poverty, employment, and other social issues were already a challenge, while SROs attempted to mentor and enforce laws in the school environment. For youth, this meant behaviors were being policed both in and out of school.

Another social factor that exacerbated police role conflict was the implementation of mandatory minimum sentencing for specific offenses (e.g., sale of drugs) and sentencing enhancements (e.g., additional five years for use of firearm). SROs attempting to have positive relationships among inner-city communities were often met with resistance and disdain, as their counterparts on the street were responsible for incarcerating loved ones, some for a long period of time. Specific to the school environment, SROs that arrested youth for crimes were setting the trajectory – albeit not the direct intention at the time – of the youth toward disenfranchisement for decades to come. These actions by SROs directly conflicted with educator approaches to juvenile development and growth, placing the SROs in conflict with school administrative staff and resulting in further tensions in the school environment (Owens, 2016; Sweeten, 2006; Wolf & Kupchik, 2017).

Changes to school practices on discipline and management of students also contributed to conflicts with SROs' roles. Zero tolerance policies within education during the 1980s and 1990s allowed for schools to immediately suspend and/or expel students for offenses involving violence, drugs, or weapons. Even if educators disagreed with this approach, their school's very existence was threatened as federal financial support for

public schools was tied to enforcement of zero tolerance policies on violence and drugs (Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, 1994). The need for funding, in addition to the expansion of SRO programs, created a force multiplier on policing in schools and the conflicts of police roles.

Other factors shifted the school environment as well. Since the 1980s, the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of students in public schools have changed drastically. The evolution of cities' economic security in employment, industries, and productivity, either in increasing or declining in population, has shifted the number of families in urban, rural, or suburban areas (Addy, Engelhart, & Skinner, 2013; Mayer & Leone, 1999; McFarland & Hussar, 2019; National Center for Education Statistics, Department of Education, 2014; Sherman et al., 1998; Taylor, 1995). While the number of youths changed in these areas, the attraction of public charter schools incentivized families to relocate children to these schools and caused an exodus of middle- and upper-middle class children from urban public schools. From 2000 to 2016, the number of charter schools increased from 2,000 to 6,900 (Finnigan et al., 2004).

The migration of middle and upper-middle class families to the suburbs disrupted the tax base that supported urban schools (Barshay, 2014; Dadayan & Boyd, 2017; Harrington, 1997; Kozol, 1991, 2006; Lippman, Burns, & McArthur, 1996; South & Crowder, 1999). Although states and localities have adjusted other tax rates (e.g., sales tax, cigarette tax) to create equitable funding, the poverty of the children in public schools, specifically in the South, has increased since the 1980s. An average of nineteen percent of children in school in 1990 lived in poverty, up two percent from a decade before. In 2006, the total number of school-aged children living in poverty rose to 13.1 million, with another 28.5 million living in low-income households (Addy et al., 2013). By 2011, 16.12 million children were living in poverty and another 32.4 million in low

income households (Addy et al., 2013; National Center for Education Statistics, Department of Education, 2014). As of 2013, over 51 percent of the United States public school population lived in poverty or low-income households (Barshay, 2014; National Center for Education Statistics, Department of Education, 2014; National Center for Education Statistics, Hussar, & Bailey, 2016). Higher rates of poverty are more prevalent in Southern states (approximately 53%) and among African American (40%) and Hispanic (33%) youth nationwide (National Center for Education Statistics, Department of Education, 2014). Examinations of income inequality confirms that non-white families have not been able to achieve more financial security over time as the gap between the wealthy and the poor has increased drastically since the 1980s (Fahle & Reardon, 2009; Reardon, 2011, 2017).

The shift of public-school populations during the 21st century has highlighted prior concerns in policing impoverished communities. For some states and individual school districts, this population can reach up to 60 percent of youth (National Center for Education Statistics et al., 2016). Poverty directly impacts a juvenile's developmental ability, resulting in lower academic achievement, higher rates of behavioral disorders, and aggression (Budge, 2016; Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993; Garbarino, Dubrow, Kostelny, & Pardo, 1992; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1998; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1998). The rate of administrative discipline among poor students continues to be addressed among educators and is a challenge for SROs (Loveless, 2017). The use of SROs in school disciplinary practices in the 1990s and early 2000s generated the 'school-to-prison pipeline' phenomenon, mirroring the country's mass incarceration trend in general.

Today, as we attempt to revive rehabilitative approaches in juvenile justice, we are also pushing for more police in schools. While neither local police agencies nor educators have accepted complete responsibility for the 'school-to-prison pipeline,'

partnerships among social institutions (e.g., education, public health) to reimagine the roles of SROs, diversion programs, and services have focused on families and individuals. These reform efforts are similar to historical juvenile-justice reforms focused on prevention and intervention, and are also challenged by similar economic, political, and social factors (e.g., poverty, drug abuse, broken families). Economically, more non-white students are living in poverty today than at any other time (McFarland & Hussar, 2019). Politically, we have seen more legislation passed to fund school-violence prevention (e.g., federal grants in FY2018 and FY2019 with the Bureau of Justice Assistance) and legislative bills have focused on funding more officers in schools, as mentioned previously. Socially, while violent events are at the lowest point of history in quantity, we are faced with more highly lethal events than in the past, involving teenage shooters plagued by mental health issues (e.g., mass shooting in Parkland High School, FL) and violent clashes between teachers and students (e.g., April 2019 assault of teacher by middle school student in Des Moines, IA), and officers and students (e.g., August 2018 officer assault by high school student at Banning High School, CA).

As legislation seeks to place more officers in schools, there are two considerations that are important to ensuring equity and responsible implementation of school-based policing programs. First, we need to define the modern purpose and roles of police officers. Decades of de-funding school counselors, teacher training, and/or physical infrastructure of schools cannot be repaired with the presence of one or two officers in a school. Decreasing budgets to provide basic school supplies and necessities for today's students will not be fixed by the presence of one or two officers in a school. Now that we have decades of implemented programs and an evolving base of research literature on SRO programs, it is important to describe the interactions involving students and police. Describing these interactions, and the factors that contribute to and/or manage them,

can assist school-based programs in developing needed training and education for officers, as well as other local partners to support the next generation of youth.

Second, there is a need to establish measures to evaluate school-based policing programs. As demonstrated in this study, the variations of roles performed by officers is influenced by several school, student, and personnel characteristics. These variations may not be controlled within these programs; however, police bear some responsibility for ensuring that practices are not creating inequity, disproportionate treatment, or abuse of power. The negative, life-long impacts of criminal justice contact during adolescence can be avoided with smart programmatic decisions on how to manage the modern challenges created by our society.

Current Focus

This dissertation proceeds to contribute to SRO programs in the following four chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on key topics that contribute to the complexities of defining SRO roles and influential factors over the last 70 years of programming. Specifically, this literature review is divided into four sections. The first section addresses the economic, political, and social influences that have impacted police roles specific to juvenile justice and school-based policing. National policies and funding and individual cities' needs have dictated how to manage youth both in the community and the schools. These influences shaped the development and roles of SRO programs from the 1950sto the 2000s.

The second section focuses on the emergence of SRO and/or school-based policing research in the early 2000s and into the 2010s. Research evaluating the SRO and school-based programs in general is divided into two areas. The first is outcome-based research focusing solely on how law enforcement actions fail to account for the plethora of activities performed by SROs that support crime prevention and intervention

efforts. Second, perception-focused research is contradictory, and otherwise falls short, of acknowledging how positive or negative perceptions impact crime and disorder in schools. As the roles of SROs have not been well defined or measured – either in performance or in outcomes – this literature review will highlight the barriers to accomplishing this to date.

The third section discusses school security strategies and school environment factors and how they may influence the behaviors of students, school administrators, and police. Given the changes to public school youth demographics and characteristics in the last 20 years (e.g., increased poverty, prevalence of community trauma, mental health concerns), literature from the criminal justice, education, and public health fields that highlight how school performance measures, school climate, and policing activities impact youth development will be reviewed. This literature review will also present how the behaviors of police and school administrators impact the legal socialization of youth and the legitimacy of either's roles within the schools. For example, students living in poverty may have challenges in the learning environment. Instability in their living situation can result in disruption of sleep and lack of access to food. These factors disrupt their ability to pay attention during class or cause them to exhibit anger and frustration (Garbarino et al., 1992). This school climate factor may influence an SRO's role selection. Inversely, it is suggested that schools with higher academic achievement may not have disruptive behaviors or issues that SROs encounter. Therefore, evaluating the distribution of roles in consideration of these factors will identify influences and seek to explain priorities for both the officer and the school administrators. Furthermore, as the distribution of roles differs in schools, this may assist SRO programs in developing training sessions that are specific to roles performed (e.g., adolescent brain development

information for elementary school officers, new driver training courses for high school students).

The fourth section draws together the complexities of schools, police, and the economic, political, and social factors of today and refocuses on the current role of police in modern schools. This leads to the presentation of three formal research questions that structure this study's exploratory analysis to define the roles of SROs and the mediating factors that influence these roles.

Chapter 3 presents the details on the study location of Richland County, South Carolina; the data collection process; and the methodological approaches used to support this current research. The data within the study presents a new view about SRO interactions that has not been available before: the manner in which interactions occur and under what circumstances. Testing this data with variables from school performance and school climate from the South Carolina Department of Education provides context based on past research, as well as suggestions for the field.

Chapter 4 presents the results of a cluster analysis and multinomial regression used to evaluate SRO-student interaction data to explain the variations of roles and to estimate influence based on school-level (e.g., school climate) and individual-level (e.g., person initiating interaction) factors.

Chapter 5 discusses the implications of these findings as we consider further expansion of SRO programs and their role within school safety, youth development, and managing youth delinquency. The prior evaluations of SRO programs solely within a law enforcement context may not be applicable to modern-day programs where officers are positioning themselves more as counselors, mentors, and educators. The national support for more SROs should require more oversight of program management and performance of roles to further research and develop an understanding of the SRO roles

across programs. In addition, the field may see the value of collaborative partnerships among police officers and social services within the school to decrease the potential for role conflict and to address concerns among today's youth.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In general, the role of police in the United States has been difficult to define. Activities that police perform have been the basis of general definitions or descriptions of what police do for society (e.g., order maintenance), how they perform their duties (e.g., as street-corner politicians), how they are structured (e.g., via social organizations) or how they are perceived by the public (e.g., the asshole) (Bittner, 1980; Kelling & Wilson, 1982; Langworthy, 1986; Manning, 2009; Muir, 1977; Reuss-Ianni, 1983; Thacher, 2004; Van Maanen, 1978). The manner in which police carry out activities, individual agency organizational structure, and the variety of activities police perform in over 18,000 police departments of America affirm the complexity of the profession. As the evolution of policing in America has included specialty divisions or roles, such as School Resource Officer (SRO) programs, the complexity of performing various roles and tasks is no different. Furthermore, there are unique aspects to policing juveniles (e.g., legal age for responsibility) within the schools that further manifest complexities of policing.

Specifically, the role of police in managing juveniles has alternated from mentoring and rehabilitative approaches to punitive and suppressive measures, and, most recently, back to rehabilitative approaches. These various approaches have often occurred at the same time in policing – only distinguished by an officer's assignment to either the street or to the school. For street officers, the interactions with juveniles during the mid-20th century included aggressive stop-and-frisk techniques believed to be the means to interrupt drug crimes, gang activities, and other violent or delinquent behaviors among youth (Hinton, 2016; Maguire, 2003; Walker & Katz, 2013). During the same time, officers, termed School Resource Officers (SROs), were assigned to schools and charged with developing mentoring relationships with juveniles to prevent

delinquent behaviors (James & McCallion, 2013; Kim & Geronimo, 2009). These conflicting roles were highlighted in the 1967 Kerner Commission, an investigation into the roles of police, their use of force, and relationships in communities, stemming from violent riots in major cities of America (Hinton, 2016; Kerner, 1968). This Commission called for police to improve the profession through the training and education of officers; the specialization of roles to further their efforts to prevent, intervene, and respond to crimes; and the building of community relationships (Kerner, 1968). An SRO program is an example of a law enforcement service provided by a local agency to support an educational institutions' objectives to have a safe learning environment. While enforcing laws on school campuses may seem straightforward, the actual role and purpose of law enforcement agencies in the school environment has experienced considerable variation.

This chapter further explores these complexities through the economic, political, and social factors that have influenced SRO programs, and policing in general, to manage youth delinquency and/or contribute to youth development. The support of SRO programs and the roles SROs are expected to fulfill shift from punitive sanctions intended to deter and punish youth to more therapeutic roles providing counseling or referral to services for rehabilitation and restoration. The placement of SROs in schools also impacts the physical environment of the school, either by mere presence (e.g., leading to perceptions of fear or safety), or their role in using surveillance and monitoring equipment (e.g., metal detectors) and techniques (e.g., personal searches) for safety measures. In addition, this chapter presents the literature on the role of SROs and how these roles have developed through practice and implementation of programs leading to conflicting impacts and perceptions on the school environment. A review of the perception and organizational research evaluating SRO programs will showcase the current state of knowledge about SRO programs and identify gaps for modern-day roles

of SROs. This chapter will conclude with the revival of SRO research for modern-day programs, leading to the contributions of this research on role variations and influences on SRO roles.

The Development of SRO Programs

In the 1950s and 1960s, police agencies of Flint, Michigan, and Fresno, California placed officers in elementary and middle schools to build relationships with juveniles (Canady et al., 2015). These early adopters of school-based policing stemmed from local police leaders seeking to understand juvenile issues in the urban environment (e.g., poverty, broken family circumstances, crime) and creating a means to connect with juveniles for mentoring and positive role models. The development of SROs in these cities included a nontraditional approach to policing (e.g., minimizing command presence, implementing prosocial youth activity leagues). More casual uniforms consisting of polo shirts and less police equipment (e.g., the police Sam Browne Belt with enforcement equipment) were allowed for school-based police in elementary and middle schools, so as not to intimidate small children and to potentially foster positive relationships between police and juveniles (Sanchez, Yoxsimer, & Hill, 2012). Although the removal of prominent police symbology has not been evaluated within a communication framework, there is evidence that police uniforms intimidate juveniles, specifically those in urban environments, where unintended consequences to the learning environment are more likely to occur (Paul & Birzer, 2004; Thomas et al., 2013).[1]

Social and political events shifted the use of the SRO during the 1960s and 1970s as urban cities faced riots and violent crime. As violence increased in the late 1960s and

[1] The shift to standard police uniforms, marked cruisers, and other prominent police symbology within the school environment came in the 1990s and is discussed in further sections of this literature review.

schools encountered shootings and violent assaults, several cities responded with increasing police and security personnel within the schools. For most urban cities, the response included target-hardening and surveillance measures. For example, violent events at Crenshaw High School in South Central Los Angeles triggered the implementation of four police patrol units within the school, in addition to hourly helicopter surveillance (Hinton, 2016). Federal grants funded the purchase of metal detectors, surveillance cameras, and audio monitoring devices for schools (Hinton, 2016).

The 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act further confused the role of the SRO. The Act allowed police agencies to expand their presence inside schools in major urban cities across America (e.g., Chicago, Philadelphia), suggesting more police could solve violence problems. However, the 1967 Kerner Commission highlighted that the over-policing of urban, minority neighborhoods contributed to the violent riots in several American cities. The Act approached the solution to this potential conflict by focusing on community-oriented policing techniques by building partnerships with communities, faith-based institutions, and schools to address juvenile crime (Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, 1968). However, the manner in which SROs were to address juvenile crime was not well defined and was left to individual agency interpretations and methods on establishing school-based policing models. Some cities implemented SROs only in high school, where teenage juveniles were seen to be more susceptible to delinquent and criminal behaviors. Other cities continued to place SROs in early-education schools, signaling a proclivity to prevention and mentoring. This sporadic implementation of SRO programs continued for the next two decades, further complicated by national politics on crime, drugs, and violence.

These school-based target-hardening and suppression activities introduced role conflicts. SROs were intended to be a means to restore community relations; however, rising tensions between police and urban residents across the nation made communication and restorative practices difficult at best. The incarcerated juvenile population skyrocketed, particularly among Black and Latino youth (Butts & Travis, 2002; Haney, 2012; Hinton, 2016). Legislation, such as the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) of 1974 and the New York Juvenile Offender Act of 1978, created harsh punishments for youth, allowing offenders as young as 16 to be tried as adults and receive lengthy sentences (Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, 1974).

The punitive and suppressive approach to policing during this time was reinforced by the actions of school administrators. These administrators began adopting their own zero-tolerance policies for discipline (e.g., expulsions for weapons, drugs, and fights) (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Pollock, 2017; Hinton, 2016; R. Skiba, 2000). Both the rate of incarcerated juveniles and expelled and suspended students increased during the 1970s, as efforts to keep communities safe from violent youth focused on incapacitation and not rehabilitation. This became the basis for the 'school-to-prison pipeline' – disengaging youth from the school, criminalizing youth behaviors, and long incarceration terms. These patterns of both police and school policies and practices carried into the next decade.

Toward the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, statistical reports indicated that juveniles arrested for serious crimes (e.g., murder, rape, robbery) increased by 46 percent (Fox, 1996). The development of the juvenile 'super-predator' ideology stemming from media coverage and politicians resulted in rising concerns about violent crimes among juveniles (Butts & Travis, 2002; Kelly, 2016; Pizarro, Chermak, & Gruenewald,

2007). The placement of officers within schools to reach juveniles prior to delinquency was essential to preventing their becoming 'super-predators,' but there was also a need to disrupt juveniles already involved in delinquency or criminal behavior.

Although the national rhetoric was to incarcerate and punish, several cities and organizations felt that rehabilitation and prevention measures were necessary to truly change the violent trend. Community programs focused on collaborative approaches to address poverty, youth delinquency, and other social issues contributing to crime. To address prevention, two programs gained national attention. First, the development of Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) was first developed in 1983 by the Los Angeles Police Department and Unified School District to support the placement of officers within elementary and middle schools. This program sought to disrupt the 'gateway to gangs and violence' through educating youth on the harms of drugs (Hansen, & McNeal, 1997). Second, Gang Resistance Education and Training, or G.R.E.A.T., was developed in the early 1990s in Phoenix, Arizona, to address juvenile gang involvement while fostering a relationship between police and community members (Esbensen & Osgood, 1999). Similar to D.A.R.E., the delivery of this program by law enforcement instructors created opportunities for interaction and communication around relevant juvenile challenges.

By the 1990s, school-based policing had covered three common roles – counselor, educator, and law enforcement officer - albeit not all performed together nor in similar manners. The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), founded in 1991, further defined these roles, known as the Triad Model, to support a comprehensive framework for school-based policing (Canady et al., 2015). The model was based on current and known practices performed by SROs, as well as federal recognition of roles (e.g., DARE education was supported by federal "Say No to Drugs"

campaigns and funding). However, as the SRO was an emerging role in policing with varied resources at the local level, the implementation of these roles within each SRO program, and how roles were performed across the nation, continued to present challenges in managing juvenile crime. As policing became more focused on community-oriented approaches, the roles of SRO programs became more commonplace and sought to re-establish roles focused on community outreach, crime prevention, and problem-solving initiatives.

The Expansion of SRO Programs in the 1990s and 2000s

As crime during the 1990s remained a political and social concern, the roles of police once again were shaped by legislation. The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, building on the 1968 Omnibus Act, provided federal funding to create the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office). The COPS Office, charged with advancing practices of community policing and collaborative community approaches to crime, supported the further development of SRO programs. The COPS Office provided $150 million in federal funding to support agencies in hiring and placing over 6,500 SROs in schools to address juvenile crime prevention measures (Canady et al., 2015; James & McCallion, 2013; McDevitt & Panniello, 2005). Additional funding from the Office, as well as other national directives, supported youth programs such as Police Athletic Leagues.

The development and influence of NASRO during this period were important for school-based policing programs. As a nonprofit organization, the association focused on training officers to balance the three roles of the Triad Model – the Counselor or Mentor, the Educator, and the Law Enforcement Officer. In the absence of other clear definitions of roles or purpose of school-based policing programs from other entities, this framework gave police agencies a foundation for what activities SROs should be

performing. Although this model hasn't been tested for efficacy or implementation, it was adopted by the COPS Office, and therefore by many police agencies, during this period.[2]

The COPS Office and its funding for more officers was timely as public trust in the government's ability to control crime was low. The focus on enhancing community policing in general, and with SROs specifically, was a challenge as the concepts of community policing were still unclear. The COPS Office attempted to clarify this by focusing on five characteristics: 1) solving problems that led to disorder and crime, 2) deemphasizing patrol and rapid response as crimefighting techniques, 3) inclusion and partnership with the community, 4) preventing crime through socialization of youth, and 5) changing organizations to support other goals (Roth et al., 2000). SROs were a key piece for partnering with the community and socializing youth. Educational programs on drug use (e.g., DARE), after-school programs, and police-sponsored events for youth were activities commonly used to assist in building relationships.

During the same period, other legislation continued to penalize juvenile actions within the school environment. The Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 mandated expulsion for students possessing a firearm on school grounds, with later revisions expanding to the possession of any object that could be used as a weapon (R. Skiba, 2000; R. J. Skiba & Peterson, 2000). During this time, schools used their 'zero-tolerance' disciplinary policies to address weapons, drugs, and violence within the schools (R. Skiba, 2000). This intertwined SROs in school discipline procedures as officers were expected to make arrests for weapons, drugs, and other violence to keep the schools safe. This involvement

[2] The COPS Office continues to promote the Triad Model in the 2016 SRO Safety Toolkit developed after the Virginia Tech School Shooting, in addition to expanding roles based on more modern policing practices.

led to the 'school-to-prison pipeline' as the rate of juveniles incarcerated increased during the 1990s.

From 1997 to 2003, the number of SROs increased nearly 50 percent (James & McCallion, 2013). Combined with the increased presence of officers within schools, the criminalization of juvenile behaviors within the schools increased, resulting in the highest rate of arrest among juveniles in 1996.[3] Although rates of school-based violent incidents were declining consistently by the end of the 1990s, according to education surveys, perceptions of school safety were influenced more by the tragic mass shooting event at Columbine High School (Aurora, CO) in 1998. The combination of these circumstances – federal funding, a mass-shooting event, and more SROs – generated complexities as the nation and individual agencies figured out the best approach to address juvenile crime, develop prevention programs, and define the role of police in these efforts. Moreover, the sometimes-conflicting approaches of prevention and enforcement in handling school-based violence continued to perpetuate the 'school-to-prison pipeline' and initiated questions about the efficacy of SRO programs.

The Emergence of SRO Research

Prior research on SROs can be categorized in two areas. One area is perception research. Several studies focus on youth perceptions of SROs, often as a means of explaining police-citizen relationships or legitimacy (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Hinds, 2009; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Sanchez et al., 2012). Other studies have focused on the perceptions of parents, school officials, or officers themselves (Eliot, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2010; Jackson, 2002; Perumean-Chaney & Sutton, 2013; Robinson, 2006; Zullig et al., 2017). The other area of research has been national evaluations of SRO programs.

[3] The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Statistical Briefing Book defines juveniles as ages 10-17. Arrest rates were calculated per 100,000 based on the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting and National Center for Juvenile Justice data records.

These studies have attempted to define effective SRO programs, measure performance, and identify critical organizational characteristics (Finn, McDevitt, Lassiter, Shively, & Rich, 2005; I. M. Johnson, 1999; Mayer & Leone, 1999). These studies have described the unique characteristics of SRO programs (e.g., assignment of officers, priority roles, engagement with students and community) and the challenges of evaluating programs without clearly identified purposes (e.g., to mentor youth, to punish youth for criminal behaviors).

With the influx of SROs in the late 1990s and early 2000s, researchers sought to evaluate the impact of SROs in two areas. The first focus area of research was to assess the impact of SROs on crime and disorder in the schools. In Steffgen et al.'s (2013) meta-analysis of school climate and violence research, environmental factors were found to have the most impact on violent behaviors in schools. In individual studies, scholars have pointed out the shortcomings of these variables and measures. Structural measures (e.g., metal detectors, restricted ingress/egress of school campus and buildings) implemented to deter or prevent weapons from entering the school property were found to be effective in some schools (Green, 1999; I. M. Johnson, 1999; Steffgen, Recchia, & Viechtbauer, 2013) and ineffective in others (Mayer & Leone, 1999). Evaluations of these security efforts included both measurements of incidents (e.g., higher with the use of metal detectors) and measurements on perceptions (e.g., feeling safer because the metal detector is finding weapons). Perhaps more consistently evident across studies on school violence and school safety was the concern, perception, or reality that placement of officers in schools would further disrupt, agitate, and criminalize students' behaviors, and actually increase the numbers of incidents and arrests (Na & Gottfredson, 2013; Theriot, 2009).

The mixed results of this research highlighted the challenges to assessing SRO programs. Defining "school safety" or "school violence" varied by the priorities of the schools and communities, in addition to regional contexts. For example, some states only count assaults in which there was significant injury, while others count all assault types. Even today, some states require reporting only for certain types of crimes and/or severity of a crime, which hinders national comparisons. While national data sets, such as the School Survey on Crime and Safety and the National Center for Education Statistics Crime and Safety Surveys, are helpful for noting overall trends of incidents within and around the schools, they fall short of explaining interactions that contribute to the increase and/or decrease of juvenile crime and delinquent activities within the school (D. Gottfredson, McNeil, & Gottfredson, 1991; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Na & Gottfredson, 2013).

The second focus area of research was to identify how SROs impacted perceptions of police. This aligns with legal socialization and/or legitimacy concepts within policing. Schools are an essential environment for the socialization of youth (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). The school's role in informal social control introduces fairness and legitimacy of rules, engaging youth to comply and maneuver in social settings (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; D. Gottfredson et al., 1991; Na & Gottfredson, 2013). The presence of officers within the school environment furthers legal socialization among youth, influencing their opinions of police and legal authorities (Fagan & Tyler, 2005, 2004; Piquero, 2016; Piquero, Fagan, Mulvey, Steinberg, & Odgers, 2005).

Building on broader concepts of legitimacy, Fagan & Tyler (2005) demonstrated that youths' perceptions of police are shaped through contacts with police officers – direct and vicarious – during the developmental stage. This concept was evident in the initial development of SRO programs of Flint (MI) and Fresno (CA) which focused on

(positive) experiences to build connections and collective efforts within the community between officers and juvenile (Mayer & Leone, 1999; Nelson, Amio, Prilleltensky, & Nickels, 2000), as mutually held positive perceptions by both of each other are critical to their interactions (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Langworthy, 1986; J. Q. Wilson, 1970). Yet the sporadic implementation of SRO programs, combined with the shifting political rhetoric and shifting policing responses to violence over the prior decades, challenged researchers' ability to measure if SROs shifted youth's perceptions. It was clear that schools that implemented more "get tough" and punitive approaches to handle juvenile delinquency led to negative perceptions (e.g., Crenshaw High School surveillance measures). But the question remained whether youth would have more positive perceptions of police given the placement and potential interactions with SROs during their school day.

Jackson's evaluation of 271 students from four schools in the southeast region of Missouri (2002) found no effect on perceptions. Students failed to report a better perception of police, nor that the SRO affected their decision-making regarding committing offenses (Jackson, 2002). Criticisms of this study's findings focus on the bias of the sample, primarily white students who are more likely to have fewer contacts and/or more positive experiences overall. These experiences by white students are significantly different for minority students, particularly in urban environments (Brunson, 2007; Gau & Brunson, 2010; Jackson, 2002).

An evaluation of students' perceptions of SROs in a national study indicated students' perceptions of SROs did not influence feelings of safety, but rather that their perception of safety within the neighborhood was correlated with their feelings of safety in school (McDevitt & Panniello, 2005). Broader research on juvenile perceptions of police mirror this disparity in results, suggesting perceptions of juveniles reflect attitudes

toward legal institutions in general and are influenced by both vicarious and direct experiences, which are not bound to just the school environment (Brunson, 2007; Giordano, 1976; Griffiths & Winfree, 1982; Leiber, Nalla, & Farnworth, 1998). Furthermore, assessments of youth perceptions varied based on grade level and interactions, particularly when centered around educational programs. A 2009 United Kingdom study found that youth had positive perceptions of police teaching drug-education programs, while older youth held more negative perceptions and cynicism toward officers due to more exposure to officers outside of school (O'Connor, 2009). Research in the United States echoes these positive sentiments and perceptions among youth participating in DARE programs (Donnermeyer & Davis, 1998; Lucas, 2008).

This prior research reveals conflicting evidence of SROs impact on crime and improving perceptions. The examination of the organizational structures or system-influences for an SRO program could explain some of these variations. The manner in which SROs perform their tasks and activities can be influenced by competing demands by their agency, the community, and school administrators. Their assignments, as well as expected activities, are defined by contracts and/or memoranda of understanding between the law enforcement agency and the school district. These documents define the expectations of how many officers are available, for what schools, and what tasks they are expected to perform. Without national guidance or a framework for these contracts, each city and school district may have different expectations. For example, one agency can provide SROs to elementary schools only, while another can assign officers only to high schools. This assignment can change the role expectations as making arrests in each school is likely to be different (e.g., age of student, potential for crimes).

These organizational variations were examined in Finn et al.'s (2005) case studies of 19 new and established SRO programs.[4] This research explored the relationship between the school and the school system and the program's history and budget for operations, and defined the activities of each program in terms of law enforcement, education, and mentoring roles. Each program approached these roles differently, with some limiting the amount of time an SRO could be used for certain requests from school administrators (Finn et al., 2005, p. 17). These cases also exemplified the importance of relationship building between the officer and school staff – either to provide services (e.g., experience in teaching courses), be available for services (e.g., lunchtime 'chat sessions'), or to ensure security needs were met (e.g., emergency event response) (Finn et al., 2005; McDevitt & Panniello, 2005).

While crime rates have declined since the 1990s, events and national media sources have revived concerns about school safety in the 21st century. Some of these concerns are centered around the isolated events of active shooters, while other concerns focus on bullying, the presence of weapons and drugs in schools, and the support and adolescent development challenges of trauma-impacted juveniles (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005; Ford & Kerig, 2012). These incidents present a challenge in establishing school safety measures, as the methods of response vary from the perspectives of school administrators, students, communities, and police. The development of school-based policies to address student behavior, delinquent or criminal acts, and other academic-related issues (e.g., truancy) requires a collaborative effort among education, social services, and the criminal justice systems. Yet the tensions

[4] Agency size determined in this study complied with the Bureau of Justice Statistics definition of a large agency having more than 100 officers and a small agency with less than. This definition did not align with the number of SRO officers. Furthermore, the researchers defined established programs as those that existed at least as of 1995 and "new" programs as those awarded the 1999 COPS in School grant.

and conflicts among school administrators, students, communities, and police have been documented in research and policy discussions in examining how to address school-related issues without either further harming the environment or the student (Christine A Christle et al., 2013; G. D. Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, & Gottfredson, 2005; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Owens, 2016; Sweeten, 2006; Wolf & Kupchik, 2017). Causes of these conflicts and tensions stem from organizational deficiencies (e.g., process redundancies, staffing resources) and will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Since police are viewed as the primary social institution to establish and maintain safety and security, their role in school security is essential to school practices and procedures. However, it has been debated in research and practice how, if at all, the role of SROs contributes to school security (Finn et al., 2005; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Ryan, Katsiyannis, Counts, & Shelnut, 2018). Due to criticisms of historical 'school-to-prison pipelines' and criminalizing 'usual' youth behaviors, and current concerns about violence within schools (e.g., active shooters), it is timely to review the evolution of school-based policing, the roles and role conflict of SROs, and interactions among school administration, teachers, and other staff.

School Security Strategies and School Climate Factors

SRO programs have expected officers to fulfill several roles for youth and the school environment. Environmental characteristics of schools have also influenced the manner in which SROs provide safety and security measures to schools. Stemming from emergency management and physical security frameworks, school security strategies have been described across three broad areas – physical strategies, legal strategies, and intervention strategies.

First, physical prevention methods have included structural design or additions to the school, such as metal detectors, controlled gate systems, or floor-plan changes

(Bennett-Johnson, 2004; Kenney & Watson, 1999; Steffgen et al., 2013). The efforts follow situational crime prevention techniques which are proven to be effective in addressing crimes through "target hardening" (Clarke, 1983; Sherman et al., 1998).

Second, legal restrictions or exceptions assist in prevention strategies. The criminal sentencing enhancements of specific behavior in or near school (e.g., longer sentences for selling drugs near a school) are intended to deter activities and create a buffer around schools. School administrators have a warrantless exception to the warrant requirement in order to search student property in order to ensure school safety.[5] This legal framework may assist in school safety; however, national data shows these methods do not deter all offenders from committing crimes in or near schools (Apel, Pogarsky, & Bates, 2009). These strategies give both school administrators and police authority to criminalize juvenile activities and behaviors that may not otherwise be severely punished. Legislation previously mentioned focused on punishment and enhancements to criminal sentences for juveniles demonstrating patterns of delinquency.

Last, interactionist strategies require communication and active involvement by school actors (e.g., teachers, counselors) and community members (e.g., parents) to prevent violence in the schools (Kenney & Watson, 1999; Loeber & Farrington, 1999). These strategies combine theoretical constructs from several fields – psychology (e.g., Maslow's needs), sociology (e.g., engagement among neighbors), and public health and development (e.g., trauma-informed care) – to shape prevention techniques with school actors and school environments (D. C. Gottfredson, 1994; Jessor, 1991; Mayer & Leone,

[5] The New Jersey v. T.L.O. (1985) Supreme Court case establishes reasonable expectation of privacy and that when "special needs" are evident, this expectation can be breached without a warrant. This has been used in schools in order to ensure safe environments.

1999; SAMHSA, 2014; Sampson & Laub, 2005; Wikström & Loeber, 2000). Interactionist strategies include structured curriculum programs to provide platforms for conversation around risky behaviors and attempt to prevent or intervene. Although these programs have conflicting findings for deterring youth from risky behaviors, the combination of community, and medical and social services are more likely to be effective (Gilman, Hill, Hawkins, Howell, & Kosterman, 2014; J. C. Howell, 2005; J. Howell & Lipsey, 2004).

The role of the SRO is intertwined with each of these. SROs often manage the physical security measures (e.g., contributing to safety plans, monitoring scanners or metal detectors), and are expected to apply the legal restrictions or apply the Law Enforcement Officer role, (e.g., arrests for violations of drug laws on school campus) dictated for their local jurisdiction. In addition, interaction strategies suggest the other Triad Model roles – Counselor and Educator – are important for prevention (Clark, 2011; Coon & Travis, 2012; McDevitt & Panniello, 2005).

The implementation of these strategies have often been dictated by quality and characteristics of a school – or school climate. School climate is based on the reflection of norms, values, goals, relationships, and expectations of parents, students, and school personnel ("What is School Climate?," 2007). School climate primarily describes a positive organizational construct of the school that impacts safety, promotes a safe teaching and learning environment, and contributes to youth development through relationships and healthy socialization. This organizational context has been measured by researchers based on variations of school performance data for risk (e.g., discipline rates, drop out rates) or protective factors (e.g., test scores or achievements, graduation rates) for the school environment (G. D. Gottfredson et al., 2005; O'Connell, Boat, & Warner, 2009; Steffgen et al., 2013).

There are dependencies in the relationship between school climate and school safety strategies. When school climate is positive (e.g., high test scores and graduation rates), the perception and/or need for security measures may be a lower priority. This was observed in early grant funding for security measures requiring an explanation of increased risk factors (e.g., crime, discipline) to justify the purchase of metal detectors or other physical strategies. For schools that could demonstrate incidents of weapons found and/or used during assaults, concerns about drugs in schools, and other illegal activities, the implementation of target-hardening measures was supported. The target-hardening efforts were mutally beneficial to the school personnel and the students under the initial beliefs and perceptions that the presence of these measures would deter individuals from bringing weapons or illegal substances to schools, thereby generating a safer environment.

As violent events have occurred in high-performing schools (e.g., mass shootings, high rates of suicide among youth) and with low-performing schools reporting low rates of criminal incidents, these initial presumptions about dependency may be unconnected. Evaluations of more-restrictive structural techniques (e.g., locked doors, metal detectors) or physical surveillance of students in the school environment revealed more disorder or negative interactions (Mayer & Leone, 1999; Theriot, 2009). While some of these findings are intuitive (e.g., metal detectors will identify more metal weapons being brought into the school), some of these methods produced unintended consequences of social control such as student backlash and higher perceptions of fear because of locked doors and monitoring (Hinds, 2009; O'Neill & McGloin, 2007; Sweeten, 2006).

Perception research indicates these target-hardening efforts result in students and school officials feeling less safe or more frustrated due to constant surveillance and perceptions of being in a jail, particularly by non-white students (Bracy, 2011;

Perumean-Chaney & Sutton, 2013). The presence of protective factors in school-performance measures (e.g., testing) and of these physical strategies have not shown to be related (Hankin, Hertz, & Simon, 2011; Tanner-Smith & Fisher, 2016). Furthermore, the placement of police in schools, in addition to physical strategies, echoed social control and suppression activities within communities, as SROs were responsible for monitoring the ingress and egress of buildings, stopping students for searches, and effecting arrests when applicable. Today, while physical security measures remain in schools, educational and public safety stakeholders have relied on less-invasive security measures such as anonymous texting to report weapons or concerns.

This is not enough to discount security strategies within schools, however. Student socio-economic factors have been demonstrated to make significant contribution to school safety, such as teacher victimization rates (G. D. Gottfredson et al., 2005). These factors – racial composition, density of population, poverty – are not specific to crime within the schools, as they are indicators of social disorganization and developmental challenges that have tried to explain the causation of crime (Ciocanel, Power, Eriksen, & Gillings, 2016; Hagan, 1993; Jang & Agnew, 2015; Mayer & Leone, 1999; Merton, 1938). The decision to assign police in schools to address school crime suggests that police have the ability to impact behaviors and/or criminal occurrences through either deterrence or intervention. However, research does not indicate SROs have a direct impact on school crime (Na & Gottfredson, 2013; Turanovic, Pratt, Kulig, & Cullen, 2018). As SRO programs continue to expand, understanding SRO roles and their ability to positively impact school crime is necessary.

Determining the Role of the SRO in Modern Schools

Today, it is estimated that two-thirds of high schools nationwide have SROs assigned in some capacity (e.g., full time, part time) (Lindsay, Lee, & Lloyd, 2018). The

number of officers in primary schools (e.g., elementary and middle) is unknown without national efforts to report this data. The volume of legislation (over 400 bills as mentioned previously) suggests that the number of these officers will not decrease in the near future, and that the potential for even more police in more schools is high (National Conference for State Legislatures Education Program, 2019). If it cannot be established conclusively whether and how SROs contribute to school safety, how should their role and purpose be defined for the future?

Emerging research on school-based policing describes the roles of SROs and suggests a restriction of roles to address conflicts and ambiguity. A qualitative study of Texas officers suggests that roles of police vary significantly and that not all officers agree with the roles (McKenna, Martinez-Prather, & Bowman, 2016). The 26 officers in this study largely described their role as a *law enforcer*, described as conducting activities of issuing citations and making arrests, in addition to emergency-management planning. Roles of a *mentor* and *educator* were also described, suggested by officers that this would help build relationships, change youths' perceptions of police, and educate teachers and students on bullying, drug abuse, and violence prevention (McKenna et al., 2016). This mirrors traditional Triad Model roles in general; however, information gleaned from these interviews still suggested inconsistencies in role performance and/or the lack of direction on how to perform roles (McKenna et al., 2016).

Mckenna et. al. (2018) further explores the ambiguity of roles and how the breakdown of organizational roles can cause negative organizational consequences. This evaluation suggests the overload of role expectations among SROs causes officers to want to restrict their roles, returning to more conservative historical roles as solely a law enforcers (Mckenna & White, 2018). For this study group, which identified most predominately as law enforcement, there is an indication that traditional activities (e.g.,

citation, arrest) will occur more frequently. This suggests that as officers identify their role differently (e.g., as a counselor rather than law enforcement), different activities would result (e.g., mentoring versus arrests).

These findings draw attention to the historical, and once again present, concerns regarding criminalization of student behaviors. Ryan et al. revisits the role of police in disciplinary processes and the concerns of the 'school-to-prison pipeline' (Ryan et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2016). The involvement of police in school disciplinary processes or the use of police in roles other than law enforcement suggest an expansion of the mission of police to ensure safety. This mission creep is blamed on the lack of policy implementation, role descriptions and training, and the conflicting tasks over decades (previously mentioned within this literature review) (Ryan et al., 2018). This article raises important points on the (still) existing gaps in school-based policing; however, it fails to provide additional evidence or research on how to move forward.

A recent revision and release of the SRO Safety Toolkit by the COPS Office (2016) has attempted to provide some framework for modern agencies. The Toolkit acknowledges the Triad Model roles but adds in more-modern policing strategies and efforts, such as problem-solving, and the SRO's role in mental health, emergency management, and crisis planning, and the need for collaborative partnerships. The Toolkit also addresses key SRO governance areas and SRO selection and training, important characteristics for the monitoring of SRO activities to ensure equitable processes (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, US Department of Justice, 2016). While this federal guidance is supportive of more-modern issues and can be leveraged by agencies, it too demonstrates an overload of roles and role conflicts, and the complexity of police in school environments.

The most comprehensive evaluation of literature on school violence suggests the presence of officers have no impact (Turanovic et al., 2018). Supported by the National Institute of Justice, a meta-analysis of 693 studies demonstrated officers (n=6) and security devices (e.g., metal detectors; n=13) were rarely mentioned in school violence research (Turanovic et al., 2018). This analysis found no significant relationship between officers in school (a school-level predictor) and the outcomes of school violence (e.g., bullying, violent victimization). Furthermore, the presence of security devices was also unrelated to school violence or victimization. This analysis did highlight the importance of individual-level data to determine antisocial attitudes and behaviors, school performance, and other socialization factors that are associated with school violence.

And so, our modern efforts to determine the role of SROs demonstrate the usual concerns about reform and change. Historical behaviors are difficult to leave behind, and the development of new behaviors are difficult to implement against current perceptions. As the country continues to push forward with legislation on school safety and police in schools, it is the hope of new research to inform these policies and provide guidance on the balance of SRO roles. Most importantly, it is the effort of this research to push for policing agencies and community partners to focus on addressing problems, rather than solely applying punitive responses to student misconduct.

In entertaining modern issues on SROs, there are three characteristics of the school and SROs to consider. First, the student and school environment in today's public schools are significantly different compared to the past. Poverty levels among public schools has increased. From 2000 to 2010, high poverty schools increased from 12 percent to 20 percent of all public schools (McFarland & Hussar, 2019).[6] As of May 2018,

[6] The National Center for Education Statistics used the rate of free or reduced lunches as a proxy for students in poverty. Low, medium, and high poverty schools are defined based on the percentage of students with free or reduced lunches. Details on these categories can be found

the overall percentage of poverty among students was similar; however, there is a higher percentage of African American and Hispanic students attending high-poverty schools (McFarland & Hussar, 2019). Poverty or low-income youth are more likely to experience lower scholastic achievement gaps, traumatic experiences, and other negative social and individual factors (e.g., substance abuse, neglect, homelessness) (Harding, 2009; O. Johnson, 2013; Krivo & Peterson, 1996; Reardon, 2011).[7] These experiences are due to the insecurity of basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, safety). Without these needs, or due to the variation of need during developmental phases, youth are more likely to display negative psycho-social behaviors, developmental disorders, and delinquent acts, particularly within the school environment (Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993; Garbarino et al., 1992; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1998). The school – a place well-positioned to supervise youth – plays an important role in identifying and counteracting negative behaviors and disorders, while also developing youth intellectual knowledge, skills, and abilities to transition into society as a productive individual (e.g., employment) (DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999). As an anchor social institution for a community, it can be a leader in bringing social services resources (e.g., family assistance, counseling, faith-based support) together to address individual and community needs (DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999).

These efforts are challenged by poverty and low-income students for several reasons such as safety in the home or community or quality food access to support

within the annual report The Condition of Education, section "Concentration of Public School Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch," online at www.nces.edu.gov/programs/coe.

[7] Poverty is defined as having an inefficient amount of funding for the basics. In the United States, the poverty level is calculated based on pre-tax cash based on the cost of a minimum food diet. In 2017 poverty line was estimated between $13,860 for a single individual and $28,290 for a family of four. Low-income is calculated as 200% of the federal poverty level. For 2017, a family of four living between $28,290 (poverty level) and $56,580 is considered to be low-income.

development. The role of the school, and actors within the school, can counteract the results of economic insecurity experienced by youth in the household and community. One method to counteract these effects is providing basic needs. Schools provide meals, most commonly breakfast and lunch, for youth. Many schools offer take-home backpack programs for children to ensure they have food over the weekend.[8] Another method is the investment in community partnerships and networks to provide resources for the community. The school also invests in professional development of staff to understand the community and challenges facing youth. The use of trauma-informed care programs within annual training seminars for educators and school administrators provides staff with the needed tools to accurately identify and assist trauma-experienced youth (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Ford & Kerig, 2012; Mayer & Leone, 1999).

This leads to the second important factor for modern SRO programs: their role in the legal socialization of youth. Legal socialization is defined as the processes which develops an individual's attitude and beliefs about legal authorities and legal institutions (Piquero et al., 2005; Tyler & Trinkner, 2018). The interactions and experiences between individuals and representatives from social institutions define the perceptions and legitimacy of the organization (e.g., interactions with one officer may impact overall perceptions of the department). For police, this has been measured through several types of interactions such as traffic stops, arrests, and community surveys. The perceptions of individuals are not shaped by one interaction, but by a series of interactions – either direct or vicarious – which formulate opinions, feelings, and perceptions highly impacted by an individual's culture or race (Brunson, 2007; Fagan & Tyler, 2004; Gau & Brunson, 2010; Karakus, 2015; La Vigne et al., 2017; Tankebe, Reisig, & Wang, 2016;

[8] National organizations like Feeding America, or other local food-bank centers participate with schools to ensure youth have food sources.

Tyler, 2014; Worden & McLean, 2017). For youth, perceptions of police resonate differently than they do for adults due to limited and/or unsupervised exposure to police during formative development years. Evaluations of youth perceptions have indicated promising results for youth building a positive image of police and other social institutions (Hinds, 2009; Hurst & Frank, 2000). This research supports the concept that direct, positive, and mentoring interactions for youth by SROs would benefit the police for the future. Historically, SRO programs have been commonly associated with enforcement and social control techniques within the school environment (e.g., metal detectors, armed patrols); however, this may not be the intent or structure of modern SROs. While SRO programs have been influenced by political, social, and economic events during their development and implementation, the mainstay of school-based policing suggests a less enforcement-driven approach and a shift to a therapeutic or treatment approach for youth development.

Lastly, law enforcement agencies charged with the responsibility of SRO programs must factor in non-law enforcement training programs to appropriately equip today's officers for today's issues. More public students are living in poverty or low-income situations today than any other point in time in history (National Center for Education Statistics et al., 2016). This fact, in addition to the widening of the inequality gap within educational achievements, creates long-term risks for juveniles with little or no means for change. Although SROs, or police in general, cannot be the responsible entity to change these economic and social issues, they may be a critical piece in the socialization of youth and contributors to youths' development.

Contributions of this Research

This study deviates from prior research approaches to evaluate perceptions or measure efficacy of school-based policing. Instead this research focuses on exploratory

analysis of self-reported SRO interactions to describe the distribution of SRO roles and interactions with youth. To this end, this study examines how these roles and interactions are impacted by both youth and school characteristics (e.g., school test scores, youth reporting living in poverty) and by other school actors (e.g., teachers, school administrator). This dissertation presents the multifaceted roles of SROs and demonstrates how the SROs' self-perception of roles differs from the roles requested by school actors. These different perspectives of roles indicate potentials for role conflict and further questions the intentions of police in schools.

As emerging research reiterates concerns about the role of the *law enforcer* in schools, this study seeks to evaluate the roles within an SRO program. This study uses one year of self-reporting data from SROs among three school districts located in South Carolina. These data identify the frequency and details of the four roles of the program – Counselor, Educator, Law Enforcement-Investigations, and Law Enforcement-Arrests. The frequency and distribution of, and the influences over, these roles are explored within the context of school level (e.g., elementary, high), school climate (e.g., racial composition, graduation rates), school performance (e.g., testing scores), and who initiates roles (e.g., SRO, school administrator, student). These evaluations build upon each other through the following questions:

RQ1: What is the distribution of roles across officers within a program?

RQ2: How does school climate and school performance factors affect an SRO's role?

RQ3: How does the initiation of an interaction impact the SRO's role and how does this vary across schools by risk level?

Collectively, these research questions add to the modern literature on school resource officers in three key areas. First, the distribution and variation of roles by officers highlight the complexity of school-based policing and also call for more diverse

training. Second, the insignificant impact of school climate factors suggests either the potential desensitization of risk factors when dealing with poverty or the lack of awareness among officers of student situations. Third, the initiation of roles strongly influences the SROs role, demonstrating probable role conflict as officers are fulfilling the gaps of school counselors while also providing enforcement services.

The development of this study also demonstrates the value of researcher-practitioner partnerships for policing. Engagement with this agency during its development of program measures allowed for the inclusion of interaction details and other environmental details that impact officers' roles, the focus of this study. These performance measures and partnership developed after the agency was scrutinized by national news and federal agencies for a violent interaction between an SRO and a youth. While this is not the easiest time to measure performances and gain the trust of an agency that is under federal and media pressures, this information has provided the agency with a more comprehensive view of what their officers do – or not do. It is also the intent that this information and approach will support other agencies that are seeking to enhance their school-based policing programs to more appropriately address concerns among youth and their community.

CHAPTER 3

DATA & METHODS

This chapter includes three sections to support the analytical approach for this study. First, the study location, data collection process, and data are described. The second section defines the variables used for this exploratory analysis and evaluation of interaction data. This section will include the operationalization of variables to accommodate the analytical approach. The final section of this chapter will describe and justify the analytical approach for this study. The results of this analysis will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

Location of Study

Richland County is centrally located in the state of South Carolina, housing the state capital—Columbia. The county population is approximately 410,000 individuals across 756 square miles. The main economic sectors are military, health services, and education. The racial demographics of the county are divided primarily among Caucasian (46.7%) and African American (47.7%) races (American Community Survey, 2016). There are 171,098 housing units in the county, with 59% owner occupied (American Community Survey, 2016). The median income for the county is $52,082 and 16.2% of the population lives in poverty (American Community Survey, 2016). In addition to the state capital, the county includes the city of Forest Acres, and the towns of Arcadia Lakes, Eastover, and Blythewood.

Schools of Richland County. The county consists of three public school districts – Richland County 01, Richland County 02, and Lexington 05 – of varying sizes, academic achievement levels, and demographics (see Table 1). Lexington 05, also referred to as School District of Lexington & Richland Counties, overlaps district

boundaries with Richland and Lexington counties.[9] Annual student performance and demographic data from schools and districts are captured and reported annually by the South Carolina Department of Education. Based on the 2018 South Carolina School Report Card data, between 41 and 75 percent of students in these districts are in poverty/low-income households.

Table 1
Richland County School District Comparison, 2018 South Carolina School Report Card

	Districts		
	Richland 01	Richland 02	Lexington 05
School Measures			
State District Ranking (of 82 districts)	60	18	7
Total Schools	48	33	22
N of Students	23,976	28,053	17,191
% Met & Exceeding Math	32.5	45.3	55.7
% Met & Exceeding Reading & Writing	34	43.3	54.1
Graduation Rate	78.1	87.2	90.6
Annual Dropout Rate (High schools only)	1.9	0.6	0.3
% of Students in Poverty	75.5	52.7	41.5

Law Enforcement of Richland County. There are three law enforcement agencies providing policing services within the county. The Cities of Columbia and Arcadia Lakes have their own police departments, which provide basic policing services and emergency response to their communities. The Richland County (SC) Sheriff Department (RCSD) is the primary law enforcement agency for the county. The agency, led by Sheriff Leon Lott since 1996, has over 700 uniformed officers and 140 civilian positions. The RCSD is responsible for providing law enforcement to unincorporated

[9] RCSD provides SRO services for fourteen (14) of the 22 schools located within Richland County jurisdiction.

areas of the county as well as contract law enforcement services with the Towns of Arcadia Lakes and Blythewood.

As the primary law enforcement agency for the county, the RCSD provides the county's school districts with police officers and SRO services.[10] These services are defined by an established memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the school districts, providing guidance on the roles and duties for the SROs. This MOA was revised by RCSD during the study period, further clarifying the SRO role based on the NASRO Triad Model and the mandate to report interactions based on these roles, and guidance on making arrests. Other revisions to this MOA and the development of an SRO Manual included guidance on not using arrest powers for minor criminal offenses until three or more offenses are documented, not using handcuffs on the student unless necessary, and minimizing arrests overall.

This study location was selected due to an existing relationship between the researcher and RCSD that provided access. In August 2016, the RCSD entered into a formal Voluntary Settlement Agreement with the Department of Justice Office for Civil Rights (OCR).[11] At the request of the Department of Justice, and based on prior work within developing data processes for public safety, this researcher was asked to support the data development and analysis for the RCSD's SRO program to determine if there was disproportionate contact between officers and students based on age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, color, age, political affiliation, ethnicity,

[10] The cities of Columbia and Forest Acres are located in Richland County and have their own policing services. While they may respond to incidents in schools within their municipality, they do not provide SRO services. The towns of Arcadia Lakes and Blythewood rely on the Richland County Sheriff Department for policing services. The town of Eastover established its police department in 2010, but still relies on the Sheriff Department for SRO services and/or additional emergency response.

[11] Complete information about OCR investigation and the Voluntary Settlement Agreement can be found on the Department of Justice website here: https://www.justice.gov/usao-sc/pr/office-justice-programs-office-civil-rights-enters-agreement-richland-county-sheriff-s.

religion, and/or disability. The RCSD SRO program was able to report on arrests through official reports; however, this did not capture all interactions SROs had with students, school administrators, or other staff. To fill this gap in reporting, the SRO leadership implemented an SRO Interaction Form in the 2016-2017 school year. The implementation of this form immediately posed several issues for evaluation and sustainability. Additional planning with RCSD occurred to transition this form into a new format and collection process for the 2017-2018 school year. The results of this data planning and development is leveraged for this study to support the department in developing and maintaining evaluation of performance metrics and activities for school safety efforts.

Data Collection

The data collected via the Interaction Form for the 2017-2018 school year evolved from the input of several persons and processes. First, the acknowledgement by the SRO leadership that existing reporting processes (e.g., reporting when only an arrest took place) were insufficient for understanding all SRO activities. As OCR sought to understand what was leading to interactions within the school, the RCSD could offer individual stories and situations, rather than an overall description of their program. To answer to OCR reporting requirements and their own desires to improve internal data practices, the RCSD embarked upon several processes to develop a sustainable, verifiable process to capture and evaluate SRO interactions.

Data Collection - Interaction Form 2016-2017. In August 2016, RCSD implemented the first Interaction Form. This form sought to understand the type of situations SROs were encountering, information about the students, and outcomes (e.g., application of handcuffs, arrests, referrals to services). The form was constructed within Microsoft Word and stored on a shared drive which officers could access to enter

information. For each report written, the officer would have to save the report under a different file name, then save to a shared drive and/or email to SRO leadership for review. The SRO leadership would review these forms one-by-one and then save them in a final location on the department drive.

This process posed several process and sustainability challenges. First, the repetitive practice of retrieving this form, writing the incident, and saving then sending quickly exhausted officers. The practice of saving over a prior report indicated some errors in data entry and/or mis-match for events. For example, a report from an officer could have been marked as an arrest; however, the narrative was for a prior counseling session identified from a prior submission. This indicated officers were having trouble with saving correct versions. Other minor discrepancies (e.g., explaining an arrest but not indicating it in a check box on the form, entry of race information as full text or abbreviation) created many data quality issues.

Second, the volume of reports (approximately 700-800 per week) flooded the email box of leadership. The ability for leadership to review these forms and address other pertinent emails became difficult to sustain overall. Furthermore, there was an abundance of reports recounting casual encounters with students (e.g., saying hello, telling a student to have a good day), which were not the desired input needed by the leadership. The fact that officers were using this reporting process to demonstrate their engagement led to future developments of the form which will be covered in future sections. It is also likely the SROs reported these interactions at such volume as a response to being monitored by the Office for Civil Right Voluntary Settlement Agreement to demonstrate they performed other roles than arrest youth. Regardless, the volume of what officers took the time to report overwhelmed leadership duties.

Third, the individual forms from officers did not allow for the RCSD SRO leadership to aggregate statistics on reports in a timely manner. Additional spreadsheets were made to attempt to capture details within the reports, but this very quickly proved to be a challenge. The research team became involved with the RCSD at the start of this process and assisted in entering information into a database, but this was also time dependent, requiring significant labor hours that could not be sustained going forward. Technical processes were initiated to extract information automatically; however, this revealed another issue.

Minor adjustments made to the form during the first few months of implementation were meant to improve details on interactions. Clarification of specific events (e.g., investigation v. arrest) and outcomes of interactions (e.g., referrals) were of interest to the RCSD SRO leadership and to the schools. However, these minor changes inadvertently created multiple versions of the Interaction Form, as officers accessed and saved the form in different locations. In the process to extract this information automatically into a database for analysis, these discrepancies necessitated the research team to conduct manual reviews and audits of the forms to consolidate information. Furthermore, the differences within multiple versions of the form complicated training of staff, as well as external communications with school administrators.

Another observation in the 2016-2017 school year reporting process was particular reporting patterns of individual officers. For example, some officers reported the same number of interactions every day. Some of these also included interactions that were equally distributed by the gender and race of these student. While not impossible, the equal distribution of these interactions was unlikely. These patterns were likely due to the individual officers' concerns about interpretations of the data within the Voluntary Settlement (e.g., officer's race v. student races), as well as concerns for their own

employment/position. Since this process was part of the Voluntary Settlement, RCSD leadership informed all SROs as a direct order that they were to complete the forms. Therefore, if officers did not complete forms, or if they were not completing them based on expectations, they may have faced a reprimand, reassignment, or firing. These concerns among officers were mitigated by focusing on the interactions overall, and not establishing quotas or other individual performance metrics for officers. While internal discussions with the agency occurred to mitigate any data reporting manipulation, these metrics were not used to further SRO reprimands and/or question their performances.

It was the intention of the RCSD SRO leadership and the research team in the 2016-2017 school year to avoid development of individual reporting metrics and monitoring during the implementation of the Interaction Form. The focus on successful outcomes (e.g., balance of SRO roles, championing of successful mentoring or intervening techniques) allowed for SROs to develop a trust of the reporting process as a means to tell their stories, not further scrutinize their work. This implementation strategy was extremely important for the adoption of the reporting process overall, as well as establishing mutually beneficial honest reporting.

The research team quickly focused on means to remedy these challenges and develop a sustainable process for the RCSD. The research team worked with RCSD SRO leadership to extract form information into a database that allowed for qualitative and quantitative review. In addition to this analysis, the research team conducted a series of site visits, interviews, and data analysis during the 2016-2017 school year.[12] Information learned from these reports supported additional interviews and focus group meetings

[12] The research team investigated RCSD calls for service and reported crime data to identify common trends of youth, and interpersonal and family-related crimes and offenses. In addition, spatial analysis of youth offender and victim crimes was performed to understand the types of trauma and criminal events occurring within the neighborhood.

with SROs and leadership, leading to the development of the data expansion measures, and development of the workflow and the electronic-based process detailed within this study. This planning and development of digital processes occurred between January 2017 and August 2017.

Data Collection – Interaction Form 2017-2018. The Interaction Form for this school year was digitally created within Qualtrics, a research collection platform used in academia and private industry. The transition to an electronic form imposed several data quality standards and processes onto the SROs, alleviating the burden of entry, collection, and the eventual analysis. First, the standardization of data inputs allowed for more accurate and quicker data entry. Prepopulated fields for school level data (e.g., district, school name), individual level data (e.g., gender, race, grade), and role characteristics (e.g., types of criminal offenses, counseling meeting types) allowed for more accurate data entry. Next, the logic of the Interaction Form based on the SRO role (reference Figure 1), allowed officers to focus on data entry for only applicable fields and information, and eliminated guessing or erroneous entry for variables that did not apply. Another data standard imposed was the storage of the data in a structured database allowing for quick access, review, and evaluation.

While this electronic process eliminated or minimized some of the data entry errors and improved data evaluation, the RCSD SRO leadership wanted to ensure reported interactions were meaningful to the program's objectives. The 2017-2018 form redefined the definitions of counseling to be specific to individual meetings and/or mentoring conversations, not just casual greetings. Training for SROs on these roles and the Interaction Form entry included these agency-specific examples during the SRO training for this school year. Although this change anticipated a potential decline in reporting of interactions, the use of the electronic form and additional SRO training on

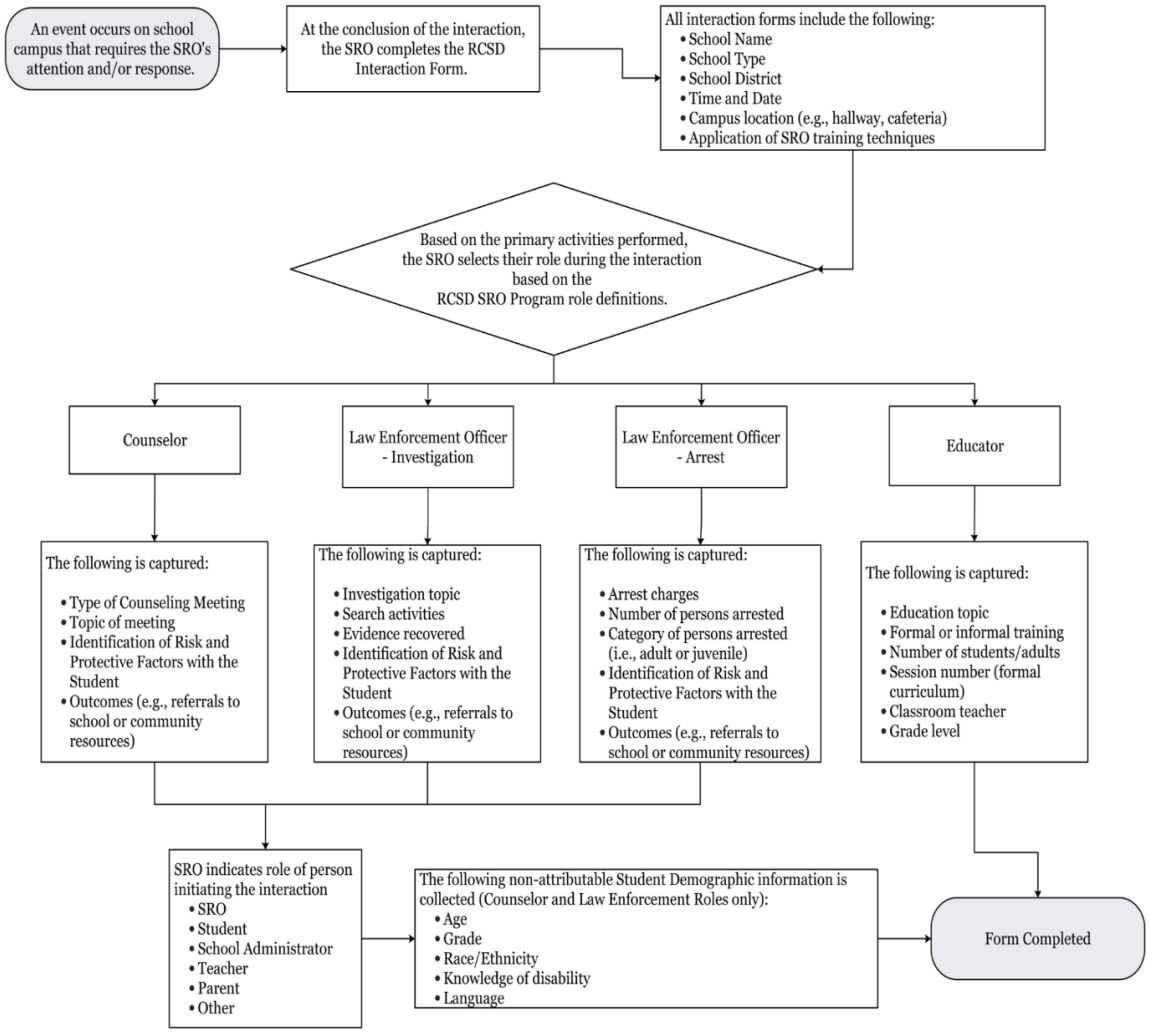
mediation and mentoring led to an increase. In the first 18 weeks of reporting for 2016-2017 school year, SROs submitted approximately 5,482 forms, resulting in a 16.67% increase in the first 18 weeks of this school year (n=6,396).

The 2017-2018 Interaction Form included 109 questions or reporting areas regarding information on the SRO, the school, student demographics, the role of the SRO in the interaction, the context of interaction (e.g., topic of meeting), risk factors (e.g., behavioral issues, self-harm), protective factors (e.g., parental support, scholastic achievements), and outcomes (e.g., referrals to services, arrests). The role of the SRO is defined by the Triad Model, the school-based policing model established by National Association of School Based Resource Officers (NASRO) and adopted by the RCSD SRO program. Figure 1 demonstrates the Interaction Form process and a sample of the data variables based on SRO roles.

RCSD SROs were trained on the new Interaction Form during their mandatory annual training in August 2017. For every interaction occurring during the 2017-2018 school year which met the definitions of these roles, the SROs entered data directly into a database developed with Qualtrics.[13] The primary research data used for this study was collected through this RCSD SRO Interaction Form between August 2017 and June 2018 (n=12,466). Variables used within this study, as well as secondary data from South Carolina's Department of Education combined with this primary data set, are explained below.

[13] These entries were made daily by SROs. Each month, the researcher audited the entered data for quality and clarity of interactions with SRO leadership. These auditing processes supported the agency's goals of improving data quality and awareness among their staff, in addition to meeting objectives for activity-related performance per agreements with the school board.

Figure 1
RCSD Interaction Form Process and Variables



Data & Measures

These data sources for this study provide multivariate measures for SROs, school level variables, and interaction variables. These data sources and their variables are used to describe the distribution of roles within an SRO program, and how school and interaction level data impacts these roles.

Dependent Variable. The dependent variable for this study is the frequency of the categorical variable, *role* of the SRO. For the study year, RCSD SROs reported 12,466

interactions with students across all three roles.[14] The *role* definition is based on the Triad Model of school-based policing established by NASRO and adapted by the RCSD SRO program. The RCSD SRO leadership bifurcated the Law Enforcement Officer role to support analysis needs and note the differences in investigations and arrests at the school level. This partitioning also allowed for the RCSD SRO leadership to understand where common complaints and/or suspicions of activity was developing within schools to be proactive in addressing issues. Table 2 defines these roles for the RCSD SRO Program.

Table 2
RCSD SRO Program Roles Defined

NASRO Triad Model	Definition
Counselor	Refers students to social services, legal-aid, community services and public health; Maintains "open-door" policies to engage in conversation and informal mentoring related to school performance, sports, family, life and other areas of interest
Educator	Educates students and school administrators on safety concerns (e.g., drugs, bullying); Leads crisis training and Emergency event responses; Fosters interagency partnerships to address safety incidents
Law Enforcement-Investigations (LE-Investigations)	Searches for illicit or illegal property and substances; Investigates threats to persons or property related to the school; Assists in coordination with other community resources (e.g., juvenile justice departments) for incidents
Law Enforcement-Arrests (LE- Arrests)	Effectuates arrests of juveniles and/or adults on school campus when violation of criminal offense(s) is presented with probable cause

[14] These interactions are not representative of the number of students. Personal and identifiable information (PII) was not collected during this period in order to isolate unique v. repeat interactions with students. All frequency numbers for this role depict the number of reports produced, which may have multiple students and/or officials involved.

While an officer may fulfill more than one role within an interaction, the SROs were asked to select the primary role for the interaction to complete the form. The distribution of these roles varied significantly by districts, schools, and school levels (see Tables 3 and 4). SROs from Richland 01 reported the most interactions (44%, n=5,438) from 43 schools (90% of schools in the district). The Counselor role is most frequently reported by officers across all school levels for this district (57%). The Educator role appears most frequently at elementary and academy schools. Law Enforcement roles are reported more frequently in middle and high schools, consistent with research on youth delinquency behaviors.

SROs from Richland 2 reported 30% of interactions across all schools within the district (n=33). The Counselor role comprises nearly half of these interactions (49%) followed by the Educator role (27%). Counselor roles are more frequent at the elementary, middle, and academy schools. Law Enforcement roles are reported more frequently at high schools overall, although more for investigations (47.28%) than arrests (5.60%).

Officers within Richland County schools for the Lexington 05 district reported 26% of interactions across 14 schools (64% of schools in the district). Similar to the other districts, officers report Counselor roles more frequently among elementary and middle schools. The Educator role is more frequent in elementary schools (42%). Law Enforcement roles occur most frequently at the high schools and academies.

Table 3
Number of Interactions by School District and SRO Role

District	Richland 01	Richland 02	Lexington 05
Counselor	3,106 (57.12%)	1,862 (49.22%)	1,811 (55.81%)
Educator	1,626 (29.90%)	1,042 (27.54%)	1,197 (36.89%)
LE-Investigation	560 (10.30 %)	784 (20.72%)	223 (6.87%)
LE-Arrest	146 (2.68%)	95 (2.51%)	14 (0.43%)
Total	5,438	3,783	3,245

Table 4
Distribution of SRO Interactions by District, School Type and SRO Role (n=12,466)

	Richland 01 Interactions: N=5,438, 43.62%				Richland 02 Interactions: N=3,783, 30.35%				Lexington 05 Interactions: N=3,245, 26.03%			
School Type	*E*	*M*	*H*	*A*	*E*	*M*	*H*	*A*	*E*	*M*	*H*	*A*
Number of Schools	27	6	7	3	18	7	5	3	7	2	3	2
% of Interactions	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Counselor	59.19	52.79	48.60	39.58	51.90	44.09	41.52	69.64	56.69	85.71	29.53	38.24
Educator	36.46	4.99	2.06	19.79	43.48	29.26	5.60	23.40	42.22	7.14	15.77	19.12
LEO Investigation	4.33	31.38	34.32	34.38	4.50	21.84	47.28	6.69	1.02	7.14	51.68	38.24
LEO Arrest	0.02	10.85	15.02	6.25	0.12	4.81	5.60	0.28	0.08	0.00	3.02	4.41

E: Elementary; M: Middle; H: High; A: Academy

Independent Variables. The primary independent variables for this study are the school level variables. First, the variable for school type (*schtype*) was created to differentiate school levels based on each school district's categorization. Based on these categories, schools were designated as Elementary, Middle, High, or Academy Schools. Elementary schools include students from kindergarten through fifth grade. Middle schools include students from sixth through eighth grade. High schools are grades nine through twelve. The label "Academy" for school type is used to denote schools that are alternative learning sites for students who have demonstrated behavioral issues within their home schools. These behavioral issues may or may not have involved the juvenile justice system; however, these schools are used to further academic achievement while the student may be receiving additional assistance or support for counseling and/or restorative justice programs. These schools include students from various grades (e.g., middle school and above) and ages. For this study period, there were a total of 90 schools reported for SRO interactions. There are 52 elementary schools, 15 middle schools, 15 high schools and 8 academy schools represented within this sample (see Table 3 for distribution by school districts). Since some Academy schools bridged traditional school levels, these eight were removed from the models analyzing school-level variables.

Control Variables. The research questions for this study posit that socio-economics, school characteristics, and school performance impact SRO role selection. To evaluate potential impacts, data from the South Carolina's Department of Education was combined with RCSD Interaction Form data, and several dummy and latent variables were constructed from both data sources.

School Level Data. Data from the South Carolina Department of Education was collected in order to identify the ranges of academic performance and school-risk issues (e.g., poverty, suspensions) based on state and federal mandates.

School Testing Data. The 2017 South Carolina's Annual State Report Card for each school district was collected and merged into the primary study data (South Carolina Department of Education, 2017). This data is collected by the South Carolina Department of Education, per federal and state mandates, and managed by the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee.[15] School testing data for English and Math were extracted from the data set. Dummy variables combining the percentage of students that do not meet and or approach standards for English (*emeng*) and Math (*emmath*) for Elementary and Middle Schools were created. Tests scores for high schools are based on percentage of students that are college ready. New variables, English (*hengrisk*) and Math (*hmathrisk*), were created by calculating the percentage of students that were *not prepared* for college.[16]

School Climate Data. Additional data from the Annual Report Card were used to further understand the demographics of students (e.g., race, gender), economic factors, and school discipline. Population variables were used to determine overall population of students (*gkto12*) and number (e.g., *nraceaa*) of racial categories. Based on these variables the percentage of each racial category (e.g., *praceaa* for percentage

[15] The Education Accountability Act of 1998 by the South Carolina General Assembly requires all public schools to provide detailed data on students' engagement, performance, and achievements (e.g., testing, attendance, graduation, college placement) in order to ensure state and federal requirements regarding academic curriculum and opportunities.

[16] Testing scores for Elementary and Middle Schools are based on Common Core testing standards. These are reported as the percentage of students within four categories of standardized testing listed as: Above, Meets, Approaches, and Does Not Meet. The higher the percentage of Approaches and Does Not Meet students, the lower performing academically is indicated. For High Schools, scores are reported as a percentage of college-readiness. The lower the percentage of students ready for college, the higher the risks of academic performance.

total African American) was calculated for each school. Student disabilities (*disab*) are reported as the percentage of students that are reporting either learning and/or behavioral disabilities that require educational support and/or alternative learning plans.[17] The p*overty* variable reports the combined percentage of students with economic vouchers for lunch, foster, and/or reporting homelessness for each school. The *out of school suspension (oss)* variable reports is the percentage of out of school suspensions or expulsions for violent and/or criminal offenses.[18] Documentation from the Annual Report Card does not provide further context on the type of criminal offenses that may be included; however, the state report card list reports incidents of homicide, rape/sexual assault, robbery (with and without weapon), and physical attack (with or without weapon) from the school's incident management system.[19] An additional variable is included for high schools. *Dropout* provides the rate of dropouts for the school population. The South Carolina Report Card reports this calculation as the number of dropouts divided by the total number of a graduating class. Combined these demographics, economic, and school discipline characteristics have been used in prior research to measure or estimate school climate and school safety (G. D. Gottfredson et al., 2005). See Table 5 for the range of these school factors.

[17] These students are within 504 and IDEA educational programs that require schools to develop individual educational plans (IEP) to support educational objectives and keep the students in pace with peers through tutors, additional educational assistance (e.g., more time on exams, oral instructions), and other resources (e.g., educational counselor) as needed.
[18] The original variable in the data set is c11. This was recoded for context in this study; however, all data points remained the same.
[19] This incident management system is maintained by the schools and is not shared with or compared with official police reporting. Information reported from the SC School Report Card includes perception surveys, which were not accessible during this study period.

Table 5
Range of School Testing and Climate Factors

School Level Data	Range	Mean	SD
% of students below English standards	14.6-97.3	56.08	22.11
% of students below Math Standards	9.3-93.4	54.18	23.97
*% of students meeting the benchmark – English**	0-61.7	5.66	13.96
*% of students meeting the benchmark – Math**	0-46.2	2.97	8.45
Total enrollment	145-2,088	758.20	397.37
% African American	2.78-97.62	55.57	31.67
% students with disabilities	3.6-23.5	13.30	3.69
% students living in poverty	16.3-98.5	58.72	28.09
%out-of-school suspensions or expulsions	0-11	0.56	1.32
*Rate of dropouts**	0.1-6.8	1.18	0.91

**Note: High school only school level data points*

Interaction Level Data. The manner of interaction among SROs and students involve the initiation of the interaction, the topic of interaction, and outcomes. For this study, the interaction variable of initiation is used to understand how officers engage within the school environment. The Educator role is primarily driven by formal curriculum requests. For this reason, these interactions were removed from the study sample for the third model in this study. The Counselor and Law Enforcement roles (n=8,601) were included for this model as they are both proactive and reactive interactions and allow for further understanding of how the SROs position themselves within the school, and how school actors engage with them. The following explains the construction of this variable for this study.

Initiation of Interaction. The involvement of SROs in matters involving students, school officials, parents, and the environment stem from both proactive and reactive engagement. While some interactions between SROs and students may be organic or happenstance, others are intentionally developed through the SROs' proactive efforts in engaging with students and activities, or the reactive nature of being informed of safety or security concerns by school staff. The RCSD SRO Interaction Report isolated

these initiation characteristics by seven types of initiation (*intini)*. These initiation types were aggregated into five dummy categories to describe the SRO, Student, Administrator, Teacher, and Parent initiated interactions (*intx*). The smaller categories of other school personnel, other law enforcement, and not captured constructed 2.71 percent of the sample and were combined into a single 'other' category. These categories and their distributions are described in Table 6.[20]

Table 6
Distribution of Initiated Interactions by SRO Role

Initiation Type	*Counselor*		*LEO Investigation*		*LEO Arrest*		*Total by Initiation*	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*
SRO	3,314	48.89%	348	22.21%	68	26.67%	3,730	43.37%
Student	2,315	34.15%	308	19.66%	4	1.57%	2,627	30.54%
Administrator	465	6.86%	533	34.01%	156	61.18%	1,154	13.42%
Teacher	418	6.17%	114	7.28%	10	3.92%	542	6.30%
Parent	140	2.07%	163	10.40%	12	4.71%	315	3.66%
Other	127	1.87%	101	6.45%	5	1.96%	233	2.71%
Total by Role	*6,779*		*1,567*		*255*		*8,601*	

Although SROs indicated their own initiation for a majority of interactions (n=3,730, or 43.37%), they also report high engagement from students (n=2,627, 30.54%). For specific roles, SROs and Students report more engagement for Counseling than any other category (n=5,629, 83%). School Administrators were reported to be the initiators for more arrest interactions (n=156, 61%). The differences in initiated interactions are explored further in Chapter 4.

Validity and Accountability of SRO Reporting

The validity and accountability of the data collected for the 2017-2018 school year is primarily reliant on the honesty and integrity of the SROs and their ability to follow

[20] These were captured for SRO-reported interactions for Counselor and Law Enforcement roles only. Education roles did not include interaction variables.

orders. While self-reported data is commonly used in social science research, there is also the risk that each event reported may not be independently verified. Specifically, counseling interactions occur between the SRO and the individual student(s) and are not recorded elsewhere by either the RCSD or the school. While this may question reliability in reporting, other SRO roles can be confirmed (and were) from other sources and processes that were put in place to encourage reporting and evaluate accuracy.

One process that encouraged reporting was the application of RCSD specific information to the Interaction Form and SRO program outcomes. Data from the first year of reporting (2016-2017) developed context for what the officers valued and what was valued by the department. The development of the 2017-2018 Interaction Form took these values into consideration to ensure buy-in for officer reporting. Because both the officer and SRO leadership saw value in reporting, the willingness to report role activity demonstrated buy-in.

Another review process included the review of SRO roles each month and comparisons over time. Each month the RCSD SRO leadership received summary documents and tables for all interactions reported by district, school, SRO role, and priority data categories per role (e.g., Counseling topics for Counselor role, Investigation Topics for LE-Investigation). Educator roles related to formal curriculum (e.g., DARE, GREAT) were able to be verified with curriculum reporting and graduation rates. Evaluation of the Counseling role, as well as subsets of other roles (e.g., Educator role for informal requests), allowed for the RCSD Leadership, and eventually their staff, to identify a baseline for activities overall within specific districts and schools. Since this was a new process and new manner of measuring the performance of officers, it took several months to identify trends, as well as data anomalies. For example, while some officers reported more than others, this could have been attributed to several other

factors (some discussed in the models estimated for this study). Inquiries to those officers that chose not to report any interactions, or were only reporting certain types of interactions, resulted in further relationship building with the school administration or removal of the officer from SRO assignment.[21]

Another review process involved the arrests by SROs. Reports of the occurrence of arrests within the schools are a priority for RCSD and OCR. To ensure these events were for necessary criminal activities and not minor offenses, events reported within the Interaction Form were verified against official arrest records.[22] This quality assurance process supported three key priorities for the department: 1) Ensured timely and accurate reporting of youth arrests for SROs, 2) Ensuring timely evaluation of arrests by SRO leadership, and 3) Confirming arrests for the OCR monitors. If any information was missing, in error, or otherwise needed a correction based on the facts from the official RCSD Arrest Report, the RCSD SRO leadership worked with the officer to make appropriate changes in the Interaction Form.[23] The timeliness of reporting and review also allowed the SRO leadership and appropriate officers to work with school administrators over trends of assaults or other criminal behaviors in a timelier fashion.

The reliability of SROs reporting both Educator and Law Enforcement roles suggests there would be a level of reliability in the reporting of Counselor roles. Based on

[21] Some staff were removed from SRO duty for lack of adoption of the new model for the SRO program. The reasons for this removal and/or the outcomes of employment were not known to the researcher.

[22] The RCSD SRO program does not have an analyst dedicated to support the volume of requests. Although arrest records were available for the agency to review, there were no established processes or meetings for the review of these arrests.

[23] SROs were not allowed to change existing entries. A separate quality assurance log was maintained between the researcher and the SRO leadership to track changes and provide justifications for the change. Minor adjustments (e.g., case number errors) were done by the researcher directly within Qualtrics. For major adjustments (e.g., non-reported arrests, multiple errors in reported arrest), the RCSD SRO leadership instructed the officer to complete a new Interaction Form with corrected information and/or to replace a prior report.

the 2016-2017 school year data evaluated, the frequency of these roles and their identification of risk and protective factors and other concerns among students lends to the reliability of reporting.[24]

Analytic Strategy

The analysis strategy for this study includes three models using two types of statistical analyses. These models are performed consecutively to further the understanding of SRO role distribution within a program and how these roles may be influenced by other factors. First, a cluster analysis model using the Calinski-Harabasz method is used to explore and define the distribution of roles across the SRO program. The volume of interactions across roles and the variation by officer for the study reporting period demonstrates a unique challenge in understanding what proportion of roles an officer performs. A cluster analysis allows for the volume of officer interactions per role to be categorized (Calinski & Harabasz, 1974). This allows for the within-group variance to be minimized and differentiation between groups – in this case, frequency of role performed by officers – can be identified to explain differences in role performance overall and within different school types.

The second statistical test used in this study is a multinomial logistic regression within Stata 14 (Snijders & Bosker, 2012). Multinomial regression enables the researcher to test the unordered categorical dependent variable *role* (Snijders & Bosker, 2012). The first regression seeks to describe how, if any, school level climate and performance factors affect the SRO role (Research Question 2). The second regression evaluates how interactions are initiated and their impact on the role selection within school types and school level factors (e.g., poverty) (Research Question 3). Multinomial regressions have

[24] Based on other research performed with the RCSD, the details within narratives of reports indicate validity of occurrence (e.g., discussion points on risk and protective factors, commonality of events between community crimes and disorder).

been used in education (Lee & Bryk, 1989; Naumann & Bennett, 2000), health (Hedeker, 2003), and social sciences (Goldstein, 1987, 1991; Oberwittler, 2004) to further explain social phenomena and interactions between persons and organizations.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the cluster analysis and multinomial regression models to explore the distribution and impacts to SRO roles. First, the cluster analysis allows for types of SROs to emerge and describes the relative frequency of roles adopted. Since this role selection can be influenced by several environmental and individual factors, data involving students and initiation of the interaction were tested. A multinomial regression explores the influence of school testing and school climate factors on SRO roles. Building on this test, additional estimates of these factors and the initiated party (e.g., teacher, school administrator) were performed. Regression models are evaluated by school type due to variations in school testing data reporting. The summary of findings closes out this chapter.

Cluster Analysis of SRO Roles

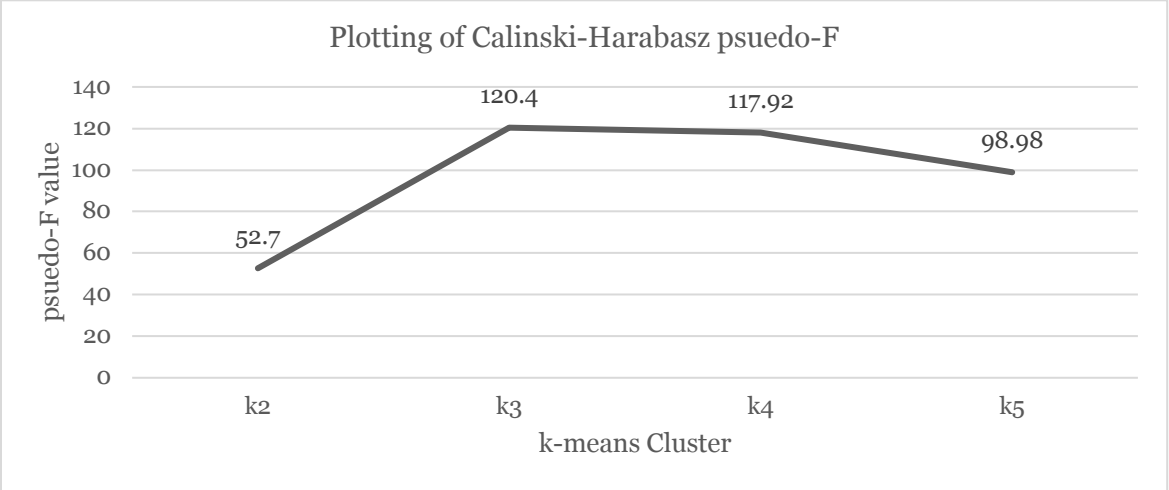
The first research question for this study seeks to explore the distribution of roles across the SRO program. This exploration seeks to further define the types of activities and responsibilities the SRO performs. The self-identification of roles and performance of these roles can be important for two reasons. First, how an officer identifies themselves within the school and during interactions may indicate their interpretation of events and situations within the school. For example, an SRO with more frequent Counselor interactions may perceive the role and the needs of the students to be more appropriately addressed with non-public safety activities. Second, the identification of roles and their variations may inform leadership of officer training needs for specific skills (e.g., mediation) and external communication to stakeholders on expectations of the SRO program.

The numerical range of interactions per officer in this data set is between 1 and 1,330. This range of data required calculating the percentage of each role per officer to categorize the mix of interactions. This standardized the distribution to allow for officer interactions to be more comparable. For example, an officer that only reported one Counselor role and three Educator roles, performs the Counselor role 25% of the time. This is comparable to the officer who performs 25 Counselor roles and 75 Educator roles. To further explore the distribution, a cluster analysis is performed with the percentages of roles per officer (Calinski & Harabasz, 1974; Gordon, 1999). This test allows for groups within the data to be investigated to further understand the distribution of roles. To develop these groups, cluster analysis was calculated to determine the appropriate number of *K*. The data is first scaled based on min-max normalization to ensure the ranges of observations do not skew or dominate the results. The Calinski-Harabasz pseudo-F was calculated for the data set (Calinski & Harabasz, 1974; Milligan & Cooper, 1985). This following equation is used to identify the pseudo-F value:

$$\frac{SS_B}{SS_W} \; x \; \frac{(N-k)}{(k-1)} = SS_T$$

Plotting the average within cluster variance determines the elbow point of the data, or the point where there is less variance. The number of clusters with the most variance for this data set is $k=3$ (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Pseudo-F plots of Calinski-Harabasz Index for k-means Cluster Analysis



Distribution and Description of SRO Program. For the studied program, SROs demonstrated very different role patterns (see Table 7 and Figure 3). Cluster 1 includes 26 SROs with a total of 2,665 interactions (21.38%). These SROs primarily perform Educator roles (with a range of 45.35 to 100 percent) at the Elementary school level (92.80% of interactions). The Educator role is largely driven by formal curriculum and certified instructors for specific topics (e.g., DARE, GREAT); however, other officers can select this role for informal requests about topics (e.g., questions on internet safety) and/or impromptu requests to speak with a class regarding current events (e.g., emergency evacuation for a hurricane). The performance of other roles within this cluster may or may not occur for these officers (i.e., range includes zero) with LE – Arrests occurring the least among this group (0.11%).

Cluster 2 includes 47 SROs with a total of 6,953 reported interactions (72.51%). These interactions are primarily Counselor activities (with a range of 55.83 to 100 percent) that occur at the Elementary school level (85.07% of interactions). These interactions are expected to be most common at this school level based on the

philosophy of SROs providing positive role models and encouragement to youth prior to delinquency age. While these Counseling SROs also perform other roles, the LE-Arrest role, similar to Educators, is the lowest occurring role (0.25%).

Cluster 3 presents a more balanced frequency distribution of the roles. Thirty-two officers comprise this cluster, although not all officers report all roles (ranges include 0). Interactions (n=2,848) are reported mostly from the High School level (68.08%), which may explain the higher occurrences of LE-Investigations (43.00%) and LE-Arrests (8.22%) in comparison to the other clusters. High schools generally report more instances of fights, thefts, and other concerns due to patterns of youth delinquency and age.

These three clusters of officers demonstrate the variations of SRO activities defined by the RCSD program. The volume of interactions at the Counselor and Educator role, as well as the number of officers participating in these roles, indicate officers within this program position themselves more in non-traditional policing roles (see Figure 3). When examining these clusters by school type, one factor that influences these roles is school type. Clusters 1 and 2, representing more Counselor and Educator roles, are more prevalent within elementary and middle schools (see Figure 4). These are non-traditional law enforcement roles yet are specific to the intentions of an SRO program as discussed previously. Cluster 3, which represents more LE-Investigation and LE-Arrests than other clusters, is predominately occurring in the High School level. This variation by school type is explored further in the next analyses.

Table 7
Cluster Analysis of Officers by Role

Cluster	Role	Number of Officers	Number of Interactions	Mean Percentage	Percentage Rage
Cluster 1	Counselor	26	2,665	21.69	0-50
	Educator			75.08	45.35-100
	LE - Investigation			3.14	0-15.38
	LE - Arrest			0.09	0-1.18
Cluster 2	Counselor	47	6,953	81.95	55.83-100
	Educator			14.04	0-41.91
	LE - Investigation			3.42	0-18.78
	LE - Arrest			0.59	0-11.86
Cluster 3	Counselor	32	2,848	34.54	0-58.41
	Educator			10.68	0-33.33
	LE - Investigation			42.15	0-100
	LE - Arrest			12.67	0-100

Figure 3
Cluster Distribution of SRO Roles

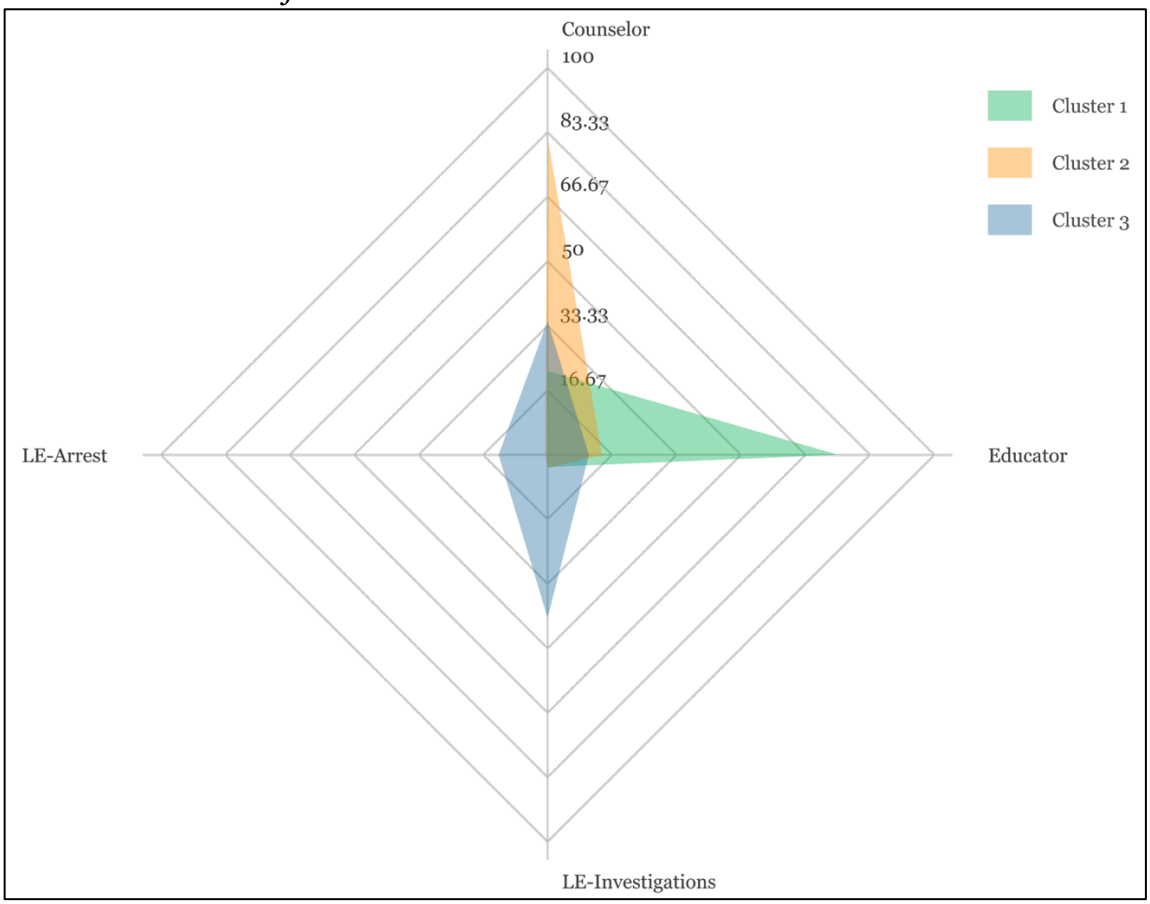
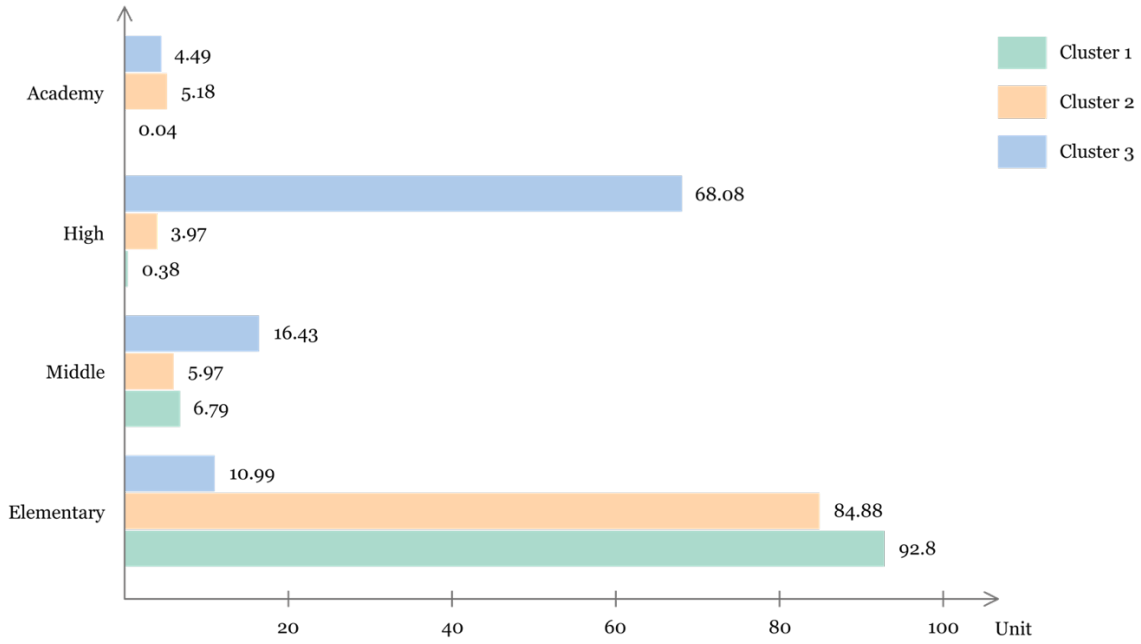


Figure 4
Cluster Distribution by School Type



Multinomial Regression of SRO Roles and School Climate and Testing Factors

As demonstrated in the cluster analysis, an SRO's role is different among school levels. While these variations may be expected (e.g., more law enforcement among teenage youth), there are other school factors to consider. The second research question of this study considers school climate factors (e.g., educational performance) and student risk factors (e.g., poverty) that may influence behaviors in the school environment, and therefore the SRO role. These factors have been evaluated previously to understand youth delinquency (G. D. Gottfredson et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2016), violence in the schools (Steffgen et al., 2013), and postschool employment or college attendance (Fowler & Walberg, 1991). This research has suggested that schools with lower academic performances have higher levels of delinquent behavior and violence, suggesting that SROs would be more involved as the primary law enforcement officer (G. D. Gottfredson et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2016). However, this other research did not consider non-law enforcement roles performed by the SRO.

To address research question 2 – How do school climate and school performance factors affect an SRO's role? – multinomial logistic regressions were performed with school level data (e.g., climate factors and risk factors) and the SRO role.[25] Interactions for Counselor and Law Enforcement roles (n=6,132) were evaluated with bivariate regressions to determine individual influences of data points, then a final model is constructed to demonstrate the impacting factors. Due to differences in school level performance variables (e.g., testing data for elementary and middle is different from high school), analysis is run separately based on school types.

[25] The Education role is largely dictated by formal curriculum (e.g., DARE courses). This role is removed from this analysis.

Examining Elementary and Middle School Factors and SRO Roles.

There are 52 elementary schools and 14 middle schools that report SRO interactions for Counseling (n=5,543) and Law Enforcement (n=589) roles. While counseling interactions occur most frequently (90.39 %), LE-Investigations (8.53%) and LE-Arrests (1.08%) are reported at both school levels. Individual factors of school climate and school testing variables were evaluated (see Table 8). The only school climate factor that indicated significance is percentage of African American race (0.016, $p<.05$). Although this increased likelihood of LE-Investigations based on race is relatively small, this matters most for the schools with larger percentage of African American students. For example, the schools with the average percentage of African Americans (55.57%) are 2.44 times more likely to have SROs interact with students in LE-Investigations roles relative to Counselor roles and all other variables constant. Other school climate factors appeared to have no significant relationship with SRO role selection.

Table 8
Bivariate Analysis of School Climate and Testing Factors on SRO Roles – Combined Elementary and Middle Schools (n=6,132)

	LE-Investigations		LE-Arrests	
Predictor	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)
School Climate				
Poverty	0.009	0.009	-0.002	0.012
Disability	0.045	0.056	0.023	0.072
Out of School Suspensions	0.638	0.375	0.577	0.413
% African American	0.016*	0.008	0.012	0.011
School Testing				
% of English below standards	0.013	0.013	0.014	0.018
% of Math below standards	0.016	0.012	0.025	0.018

*$P < 0.05$

Prior research has demonstrated a relationship between SRO Law Enforcement roles and out-of-school suspensions (Steffgen et al., 2013; Theriot, 2009; Villalobos & Bohannan, 2017). These suspensions may be an outcome of SRO activities; however, the limited definition of this variable by the data source presents interpretation issues. As

defined, this variable suggests only suspensions or expulsions that are for violent or criminal offenses are tracked. This does not indicate that an SRO was involved, nor that offenses were charged by any law enforcement officer. Further, the frequency in which these expulsions occur, in comparison to the number of incidents reported by the SRO Interaction Form, suggest that further investigation is needed on how SROs are involved in criminal incidents. For example, several elementary and middle schools (n=39) reported no out-of-school suspensions for violent or criminal offenses. However, SROs for these schools reported both LE-Investigations and LE-Arrests (combined n=232).

Correlation tests eliminate the use of several variables for this model. Poverty and math testing were correlated at 0.92. Poverty and English testing were correlated at 0.95. Poverty and percentage of African American were correlated at 0.97. Race was also highly correlated with math testing at 0.91, and English testing at 0.94. This is consistent with educational and social science research which indicates that poverty, minority race, and low school achievement tend to be closely related (Hagan, 1993; Madero-Hernandez, Deryol, Murat Ozer, & Engel, 2017; National Center for Education Statistics et al., 2016; Reardon, 2011; W. J. Wilson, 2009). Due to these correlations (see Table 9), the percentage of African Americans is used in the multivariate model in place of school testing factors.

Table 9
Correlation of School Climate and Testing Factors for Elementary and Middle Schools

Predictors	Poverty	Disability	OSS	% AA	% of English below standards	% of Math below standards
% of Poverty	1.00					
% of Disability	0.18	1.00				
% of Out of School Suspensions	0.02	0.12	1.00			
% African American	0.95	0.20	0.08	1.00		
% of English below standards	0.95	0.11	0.02	0.94	1.00	
% of Math below standards	0.92	0.08	0.04	0.91	0.96	1.00

Based on this correlation, the percentage of African American race is used as a predictor for SRO activities along with disability and out-of-school suspensions in a final model. This model indicates these factors have no significant effect on the SRO role selection within the elementary and middle schools (see Table 10).

Table 10
Multivariate Analysis of School Climate Factors on SRO Roles for Elementary and Middle Schools (n=6.132)

	LE-Investigations		LE-Arrests	
Predictor	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)
School Climate				
% African American	0.015	0.008	0.011	0.011
% with Disability	0.003	0.060	-0.013	0.073
% of Out-of-School Suspensions	0.542	0.325	0.484	0.368

Examining High School Factors and SRO Roles. The same analysis was performed for high schools, with an additional variable – *dropout* – which is specific to this school level. Based on the predictors for school climate and testing, bivariate analysis indicates that dropout rates do affect the selection of the LE-Arrest role (see Table 11). This is consistent with research indicating that arrests derail students' paths to graduation and academic achievements (Na & Gottfredson, 2013; Sweeten, 2006).

Table 11
Bivariate Analysis School Climate and Testing Factors on SRO Role for High Schools (n=2,062)

	High Schools			
	LE-Investigations		LE-Arrests	
Predictor	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)
School Climate				
% of Poverty	-0.007	0.010	0.010	0.013
% of Disability	-0.003	0.076	0.122	0.100
% of Out of School Suspensions	-0.272	0.153	-0.225	0.280
% African American	0.000	0.013	0.011	0.012
Dropout Rate	-0.365	0.263	0.483*	0.223
School Testing				
% of English scores below college readiness	-0.007	0.014	0.016	0.020
% of Math scores below college readiness	0.005	0.021	0.026	0.025

*$P < 0.05$

Collinearity tests were performed prior to developing a final multivariate model. Similar to the elementary and middle school model, poverty is largely correlated with other school climate and testing risk factors (see Table 12). Poverty and disability are correlated at .90. Poverty and English and Math testing scores are correlated at .92 and .83, respectively. Racial composition (.84) and dropout rates (.61) are also highly correlated. These correlations support the co-occurrence of low educational attainment, minority races, and poverty (Hagan, 1993; Madero-Hernandez et al., 2017; National Center for Education Statistics et al., 2016; Reardon, 2011; W. J. Wilson, 2009).

The final model uses poverty and dropout rates to evaluate if school climate factors influence the SRO role. Dropout rates indicate significance for the LE-Arrest roles (0.521, p<.05) (See Table 13). This is consistent with prior research indicating disengagement from school after police contact (Anderson, 2014; Kirk & Sampson, 2013; Sweeten, 2006). This suggests that there are other factors about the school environment

that are driving the interactions and roles performed by SROs. One of these factors – the person who initiates an interaction - is explored in the next analysis.

Table 12
Correlation Matrix of School Climate and Testing Factors for High Schools

Predictor	Poverty	Disability	Out of School Suspensions	% AA	Dropout Rate	% of English below standards	% of Math below standards
% of Poverty	1.00						
% of Disability	0.90	1.00					
% Out of School Suspensions	-0.19	0.12	1.00				
% African American	0.84	0.20	0.08	1.00			
Dropout Rate	0.61	0.51	-0.35	0.35	1.00		
% of English below standards	0.92	0.93	-0.01	0.92	0.48	1.00	
% of Math below standards	0.83	0.87	-0.11	0.91	0.41	0.95	1.00

Table 13
Multivariate Analysis School Climate and SRO Roles for High Schools (n=2,062)

	High Schools			
	LE-Investigations		LE-Arrests	
	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)
School Climate				
% of Poverty	0.003	0.013	-0.005	0.013
Dropout Rate	-0.419	0.348	0.521*	0.260

*$P < 0.05$

Multinomial Regression of SRO Roles and Interaction Initiation

Another factor that may influence the SRO's role is the manner in which the SRO engages with students. This engagement may be self-initiated, or initiated by the student or by several other school actors. While there is an overall MOA that governs the expectations of the SRO program and expected roles allowed for the SRO, the ability of the SRO to perform any or all of these roles may be influenced by the preferences of the school administration. For example, during interviews with SROs they explained the dynamics among the school principal and other administration staff and themselves. Some SROs described school principals allowing them to be very active in the school, such as attending classes, walking the hallways, and spending time with students. Other SROs described other principals as only wanting them to maintain traffic control outside of the school, and then otherwise wait to be contacted for any needs. These variations impact the selection of role by the SRO and their ability to perform roles overall. For example, if an SRO is not able to monitor the hallways, they would solely be responding to incidents in the hallway (e.g., a fight) at the request of the school administrators or teachers and would not be able to self-initiate interactions with students. To account for these variations, the Interaction Form asked the SRO to identify who initiated the interaction for Counselor and Law Enforcement roles.

Examining the distribution of these interactions demonstrates a significant difference in how the SRO identifies their role and how each interaction category engages with them (refer to Table 5). Overall, the Counselor role (n=6,779) is predominately driven by the SRO (48.89%) and the Student (35.32%). Thirty four percent of LE-Investigations are initiated by School Administrators, followed by SROs (22.21%), Students (19.66%), Parents (10.40%), Teachers (7.28 %), and Other School Personnel or Law Enforcement Officers (6.45%). LE-Arrests are primarily initiated by School Administrators (61.18%), followed by SROs (26.67%). Teachers and Parents engage SROs in arrest incidents in less than 10 percent of interactions. Students are least likely to engage an SRO in a matter of arrest (1.57%). Although parents have the least exposure to SROs (n=630), they are more likely to engage with them for Law Enforcement Investigations (51.74%), followed by Counseling (44.44%).

The third research question posed in this study explores how the initiation of an interaction may impact the SRO role. To assess this impact, a multinomial regression was estimated (n=8,601) for all schools (Table 14). This model uses the Counselor role as the referent category relative to LE-Investigations and LE-Arrests. SRO-initiated interactions are the reference category compared other interaction initiators. This model indicates that who initiates the interaction greatly affects the SRO role. When School Administrators engage the interaction, SROs were *16 times more likely* to perform LE-Arrest activities (2.794, $p<.01$) and *10 times more likely* to perform LE-Investigation activities (2.390, $p<.01$). Teachers are also more likely to engage SROs in LE-Arrest activities (0.954, $p<.01$), as well as Parents (2.406, $p<.01$). Students are least likely to engage SROs in LE-Arrests (-2.474, $p<.01$).

Table 14
Multinomial Logistic Regression of Initiated Interactions and SRO Roles – All Schools (n=12,466)

	LE-Investigations		LE- Arrests	
Predictor	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)
Initiated By:				
Student	0.237	0.278	-2.474**	0.683
School Administrator	2.390**	0.240	2.794**	0.347
Teacher	0.954**	0.310	0.154	0.384
Parent	2.406**	0.270	1.430**	0.466
Other	2.025**	0.205	0.652	0.504

***P<.01*

Since prior models have demonstrated variations of SRO role by school level, the effects of these interactions by school type were estimated to determine if additional patterns exist.

Examining Initiated Interactions and SRO Roles in Elementary and Middle Schools. Overall, SROs report less Law Enforcement roles interactions in elementary and middle schools. Yet when these interactions are reported, they are more likely to be within schools that have a higher percentage of African Americans (0.015, p<.05) or out of school suspensions (0.443, p<.01), and to be initiated by someone other than the SRO (see Table 15). Since arrests occur the least frequently at this school level, the distribution of occurrence is presented. Of the 66 reported arrest interactions, 70% (n=46) were initiated by School Administrators, followed by SROs (14%, n=9) and Parents (9%, n=6). The remaining seven percent comprised the remaining personnel and other groups. This engagement may be expected as School Administrators are the authority within the school to make determinations about student or adult behaviors (e.g., trespassing, fights, weapons) on school campus.

For LE-Investigations (n=523), school administrators account for 45% of initiated interactions, followed by SROs (16%) and Teachers (14%). The remaining 25%

is initiated by parents, students and other personnel. Since LE-Investigations and LE-Arrests occur more frequently in high schools, evaluating the likelihood of occurring is more appropriate for interpretation. School administrators are 10 times more likely and teachers are six times more likely to engage SROs for LE-Investigations activities. Parents are 18 times more likely to engage an SRO for LE-Investigations. Other school actors (e.g., coaches) or law enforcement officers (e.g., external agencies) follow this trend by engaging with SROs 11 times more likely for LE Investigations.

Table 15
Multivariate Analysis of Initiations and SRO Roles – Elementary and Middle Schools (n=9,752)

	Elementary and Middle Schools			
	LE-Investigation		LE-Arrest	
Predictor	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)
School Climate				
% African American	0.015*	0.007	0.009	0.012
% with Disability	0.002	0.045	0.000	0.066
% of Out-of-School Suspensions	0.443**	0.155	0.366	0.216
Initiated by:				
Student	-0.048	0.295	-1.637	1.106
School Administrator	3.050**	0.289	3.655**	0.422
Teacher	1.831**	0.319	0.450	0.627
Parent	2.920**	0.311	2.905**	0.505
Other	2.438**	0.312	1.842*	0.780

*$P < 0.05$, **$P < 0.01$

Examining Initiated Interactions in High Schools. This same estimation was performed for the high school model (see Table 16). Although school climate and performance factors demonstrated no relationship for this model, the person who initiates interactions does have an impact on the SRO role. For LE-Arrests, school administrators are seven times more likely to engage an SRO over the referent category of Counselor. Students are least likely to engage SROs in LE-Arrests (-3.192, $p<.01$), an activity that may be expected to be avoided among peer groups. School climate factors

had no relationship on the initiation of the SROs. For LE-Investigations, school administrators, parents, and others are five times more likely to engage SROs in LE-Investigation than Counselor activities.

Table 16
Multivariate Analysis of Initiations and SRO Roles - High Schools

	High Schools			
	LE-Investigation		LE-Arrest	
Predictor	Coef.	(SE)	Coef.	(SE)
School Climate				
% Poverty	0.002	0.013	-0.004	0.014
Dropout Rate	-0.429	0.344	0.365	0.242
Initiated by:				
Student	-0.223	0.254	-3.192**	0.778
School Administrator	1.594**	0.381	1.970**	0.366
Teacher	0.838	0.453	0.357	0.504
Parent	1.727**	0.416	0.189	0.567
Other	1.754**	0.485	-0.463	0.733

Summary of Findings

These findings offer descriptions and conclusions about RCSD SRO roles and interactions with youth. First, there is a great variation of roles performed by SROs within a single program. The first cluster analysis demonstrated that a majority of officers identify with Counselor or Educator roles for this program (refer to Figure 3). Examining this by school level demonstrates an SRO assigned to elementary and middle schools performs more counseling interactions and those assigned to high schools perform more law enforcement activities (refer to Figure 4). This variation may be expected as delinquent behavior becomes more evident as a youth ages (e.g., age-crime curve); however, the involvement of youth in the juvenile justice system leads to long-term adverse effects (Kirk, 2009; R. Skiba, 2000; Sweeten, 2006; Villalobos & Bohannan, 2017).

Second, models estimating school climate factors and their impact on SRO roles suggest little influence. This deviates from prior research suggesting that these factors influence and/or involve law enforcement outcomes (G. D. Gottfredson et al., 2005; Steffgen et al., 2013). The lack of influence found on SRO roles for this program may be based on the awareness of the SRO of a student's performance level (e.g., English test scores), disability, or prior school discipline activities or events. For this school program, the SROs do not have access to student records and therefore would only be aware of these factors if the student divulged them during interactions. Another rationale for this lack of influence is that these climate factors may be well known and accepted, creating a desensitization among SROs in selecting roles within specific schools. Combined with the frequency of Counselor and Educator roles within this program, the culture of this SRO program presents as more focused on therapeutic and rehabilitative approaches with the youth, rather than punitive.

Third, the models on initiation of SROs indicate an interesting manner of how SROs are employed in the school environment. In terms of their roles, the selection of Law Enforcement roles is largely driven by school administrators, teachers, and parents. These findings suggest role conflicts. SROs self-initiate more interactions as Counselors, positioning themselves from a place of assistance and support for youth. The performance of law enforcement roles occurs when initiated by School Administrators and Parents. These variations may occur for two reasons. First, the engagement of law enforcement by these actors may be acceptable due to their authority over the place (e.g., administrator of school campus) or student (e.g., parental role). Second, the ability for the SRO to be in the exact place to observe criminal activity varies, often requiring them to be notified of events. Much like a 911 call for a patrol officer, the SRO would be notified by school staff or criminal events or suspicion of them more frequently.

The influence of initiation on SRO roles also indicates there may be less discretion or alternatives of outcomes by the officer. For example, the decision to engage the SRO by school administration may occur when the ability to provide counseling and mentoring is no longer an option. The engagement of SROs *after* a fight with sufficient injury, means an arrest must be made.[26] This may limit the discretion of the SRO in evaluating potential alternatives (e.g., mediation) to understand the cause of the fight and remedy conflicts among students. Other circumstances described by officers indicate that interactions initiated by school administration involving found weapons (e.g., knives, pepper spray) also limit their discretion.

Alternative outcomes to these law enforcement roles rely upon the local jurisdictions' diversionary programs. The RCSD Youth Arbitration Program provides diversionary services for first-time offender youth with nonviolent criminal charges. This poses three immediate issues for SRO arrests and student circumstances. First, in order to receive services, the youth must be charged with a criminal offense. This ensures the youth enters the juvenile justice system, even though this can create further disadvantages for the youth (e.g., disengagement from school, court fees) (Christine A Christle et al., 2013; Kirk, 2009; Sweeten, 2006). Second, the youth charged must be a first-time offender. For youth who have substance abuse issues or other strains causing criminal activity (e.g., poverty causing thefts), this program may limit services. Third, the application of this program for only nonviolent offenses does not match the arrests stemming from schools (e.g., assaults with injury). While RCSD offers a program, the limited scope of the youth it serves may be forcing the SRO to only have the option of arrest for many school-based incidents.

[26] RCSD SRO policy indicates that arrests for assaults with injury will be made unless declined by the victim and/or custodial parent.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

We need fewer police officers in schools, more social workers and counselors. This is the mantra for many other communities, advocacy groups, and educators. The school – a center for youth development and learning for the next generation – has become an environment that amplifies the socioeconomic strains of a community. Social strains to succeed in demanding school programs (e.g., baccalaureate services, magnet schools), pressure to "fit in," economic hardship, and limited access to mental health services have resulted in higher teen suicide rates, from 8.0 in 1999 to 8.7 in 2017 (per 100,000) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, 2018). Local municipalities have shifted policies on taxes (e.g. property, sales), enrollments for schools, and housing over several decades, which impacts funding for public schools and diversity among students. Educators across America have expressed concern over the escalation of verbal assaults and physical violence by students, which has launched legislative focus on school-violence prevention funding for police (National Conference for State Legislatures Education Program, 2019). A child cannot learn effectively in a space in which they, or their teacher, is unsafe.

The idea that the presence of SROs ensures safety questions the purpose of SROs. The lack of a relationship between the presence of officers as a predictor of school violence perhaps suggests SROs may be better suited to identifying individual factors among the student body through counseling roles as a means to contribute to school safety (Turanovic et al., 2018). This would align with the origination of SROs as positive role models and relationship builders with youth as a means to prevent youth delinquency. Current roles still define this need, in addition to many others. Yet, the

operation of SRO programs continues to vary in operations by agency. This includes the types of schools to which officers are assigned (e.g., all schools, only high schools), the presentation of officers (e.g., uniforms or alternative garb), expectations of police roles, and inclusion or exclusion of police in school practices. Today, we are continuing to respond to the issues among our youth population and in school environments with police under the assumption that this will reach the goal of school safety.

Trying to assure safety and address school problems in schools by increasing police presence carries several inherent conflicts. First, the symptoms observed (e.g., suicide rates, presence of drugs, fights) stem from complex individual and social risk factors that affect the student, the community, and the school. The expression of anger by youth (e.g., verbal assaults, fighting) is viewed as a public health concern regarding developmental progress on prosocial behaviors and positive mental health. These youth are more likely to need of mental health and counseling services than a police officer. The handling of these behaviors by school administrators and the intertwining of police in school discipline has exacerbated youths' behaviors, resulting in long-term negative impacts (e.g., arrest, failure to complete school, ongoing criminal behaviors, deterioration of mental health) which do not support the goal of youth development.

Second, these modern problems among youth amplify the role conflict for police within expectations to be a counselor. A commonly held assumption is that a police officer's primary role is preventing, intervening, and suppressing criminal activity. An alternative view is that the primary police role is peacekeeping. To perform their expected tasks, police are trained in a variety of tactics and techniques to respond to crime and disorder events, investigate law violations, identify evidence that amounts to probable cause, and arrest the offender(s). This role is challenged for officers assigned to and/or selected to be in school resource programs. The inclusion of the Counselor and

Educator role increases what is expected of the officers. If there are no efforts to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities on how to deal with youth within these roles, this can have unintended consequences for everyone. For example, if an officer is not trained to identify depression among youth, how will they be able to support youth through the Counselor role? Most importantly, counseling is a professional field which requires specific knowledge, skills, abilities, and certifications in order to provide services and support. Without this knowledge and these skills and abilities being developed in police basic training and professional development, how can officers ensure they are providing the best services? Furthermore, should these officers be providing counseling services? Without schools employing more counselors or social workers to support students' needs, police have responded by adding another role to their responsibilities in the school.

Police have filled this gap in counseling with training focused on responses to persons with mental illnesses and other psychological and behavioral issues. Specific to juveniles, agencies are starting to include topics such as adolescent brain development, trauma-informed care, mental health, and conflict mediation. The inclusion of this training may be the acknowledgement of role expansion among police. For SROs, it is surely a means to minimize role conflict and support officers in the performance of their duties to provide more appropriate responses to youth behaviors and needs in their communities. It has also been a response to the declining budgets and underfunding of other programs (e.g., school counselors, social workers) that should be providing these services through licensed clinicians.

As we move forward with expanding SRO programs once again, a therapeutic or restorative approach should be considered, not a repetition of the historical actions of criminalizing youth behavior and generating more disadvantages for youth. This may

include a re-evaluation of officers' roles vis à vis other social services to contribute to safety in the school environment. The following discussions around the goals of this research indicate that role conflict continues within the evaluated SRO program as officers seek to provide many services. The positioning of officers in their role, and the influences of school climate factors and initiated interactions suggest more clarification is needed for program roles and performance measures. This chapter concludes with the acknowledgement of efforts taken by the study agency to continue providing services to their community and suggests a way forward for the next generation of SRO programs.

Evaluating the Distribution of Roles in an SRO Program

The focus of SROs as only law enforcement officers has driven prior research and discussions on SRO programs (Finn et al., 2005; Jackson, 2002; James & McCallion, 2013; Kirk, 2009; McDevitt & Panniello, 2005; Sweeten, 2006; Theriot, 2009). The examination of Richland County's SRO program provided a different view on the roles of SROs. First, law enforcement interactions were the least frequent for this program (14.62%, n=1,822). Second, the overall frequency of Counselor roles by SROs (54.38% of interactions) for this program suggests a different positioning and self-perception of an officer's role within the school environment. Even within the high schools, where Law Enforcement is more frequent (52%), the Counselor role accounted for 44.71% of interactions overall, with approximately 36% of those being initiated by the SRO. The Educator role (31% of all interactions) was also concentrated at the elementary school level, primarily due to formal curriculum targeting elementary students.

Third, the manner in which roles are distributed within a program is largely driven by school level. The decentralized nature of Richland County's SRO program, as well as the number of schools (n=90), contributed to this variation of roles performed. The observation that Counselor and Educator roles occurred more frequently at

elementary schools and Law Enforcement roles occurred more frequently at high schools perhaps demonstrates expectations based on youth delinquency and the potential severity of actions. For example, the potential injuries incurred from a high school fight may dictate a Law Enforcement versus an elementary school fight may receive a Counseling response. It also suggests that officers will inherently perform different roles based on the environment.

If we are suggesting that SROs contribute to school safety measures, what does this mean in terms of expectations? The variations in role performance suggests that there may be a need for different measures for each school level. The measurement of crime, or absence of it, may not be directly correlated to SRO presence nor actions toward safety, but rather to the nature and behavior of small children versus adolescent teens. If we are suggesting that the SROs placed within schools contribute to the positive development of children through counseling and mentoring, does the volume of counseling mean we are doing more or less relationship building? Do we need more information on counseling sessions and outcome measures (e.g., social affective domains)?[27] The shift of roles over time could also impact counseling efforts. The ability of SROs to completely fulfill the Counselor role for a youth may be interrupted by their need to also fulfill the law enforcement role, which could break the trust in the counseling relationship. This is often where role conflicts occur and may have negative impacts for the youth (e.g., mistrust of police, disengagement from school).

Evaluating the Impact of School Climate Factors on SRO Roles

Police research in general, and SRO research more specifically, has indicated a difference of police behaviors in different types of environments and with different

[27] Measurements of effective counseling among youth often include bio-social assessments administered by licensed clinicians in behavior health fields to diagnose and develop treatment plans.

persons (Bachman et al., 2011; Brunson, 2007; Fagan & Tyler, 2005, 2004; G. D. Gottfredson et al., 2005). The examination of school climate factors for this study did not indicate a large influence over SRO role selection (refer to Tables 9 and 12). This may be due to the homogeneity of school climate factors for the sample of schools. This is likely known among officers within the schools and community, suggesting an understanding of the challenges among the youth population. The normalization of these risk factors by officers and among the community may suggest these risk factors are not considered for SRO role selection. Conversely, this may also explain the higher frequency of Counselor roles selected by SROs as a means to connect with the youth and provide additional support. It also implies that there are other factors influencing the selection of roles.

Evaluating the Initiation of Interactions on SRO Roles

Prior research has noted that the inclusion of interaction data would be beneficial in understanding how and why some schools report more negative interactions among police and students (e.g., arrests, officers as extension of school discipline practices) (Gottfredson et al., 2005; Na & Gottfredson, 2013). The major findings of this study fulfill this knowledge gap by providing the data of the initiation of interactions within the school environment. This effort perhaps explains the root of SRO role conflict and furthers the discussion on the purpose of SROs. Although the studied program acknowledges three distinct SRO roles by both the RCSD and the school districts, the engagement of SROs for specific roles implies school administrators, teachers, and parents may not acknowledge these roles equally.

The Law Enforcement role is more likely to be played when initiated by school administrators, teachers, and parents. One factor that contributes to this is the authority of these persons over the school and the students. School administrators and teachers are the authority within the school environment; therefore, there is an expectation of

their role to notify police of criminal activity or other security issues. The parent is the authority over the student as an individual and therefore their notification of criminal activity or other security concerns is also expected. Another factor that contributes to this are internal processes for notifications. While SROs are expected to respond to observations of criminal activity, they cannot be everywhere at once. Absent of a parallel 911 system for the SRO and the school, this SRO program uses hand-held radios among school administrators and SROs to request assistance. As school administrators and teachers are the primary entity dealing with youth in the school, it is expected that they would be the primary entity to notice security incidents. This concentration of interactions initiated by school administrators and teachers may also be indicative of the clarification in the MOA between RCSD SROs and school districts regarding involvement of SROs in the classroom. While this information was not captured prior to the involvement of OCR, SRO leadership suggested this may be the result of this policy change.

However, this also raises the point of role conflict. *Does the demand to enforce laws conflict with youth development?* Based on the historical trends observed of the 'school-to-prison pipeline' and research demonstrating cumulative disadvantages among those in contact with the criminal justice system, most would say yes (Anderson, 2014; Bowen & Bowen, 1999, 1999; Christine A Christle et al., 2013; G. D. Gottfredson et al., 2005; Kenney & Watson, 1999; Owens, 2016; Sweeten, 2006). *Does the demand to enforce laws conflict with the demand for mental health services and social supports?* Again, we have seen the criminalization of drug use, mental health, and other minor crimes as (unintended) consequences of decreases in funding and access to physical and behavioral health care (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2017; Hinton, 2016; National Center

for Education Statistics et al., 2016). Therapeutic approaches have demonstrated more success in rehabilitating individuals, particularly youth (Ciocanel et al., 2016). Furthermore, there is evidence that there is more support for a balanced juvenile justice approach as cities seek reform in probation, courts, and diversionary policing practices (Ciocanel et al., 2016; Ford & Kerig, 2012; Mears, Pickett, & Mancini, 2015).

Role conflict does not occur because an officer has more than one role, but because there are incompatible demands placed upon the officer in the context of these multiple roles. School administrators, teachers, and parents very rarely engage SROs in the counselor role (15.10% of Counselor interactions), while Students engage SROs quite frequently in the counselor role (34.15%), and SROs lead with engaging in this role (48.89%). As SROs in this program elect to engage in counselor interactions to support student development, solve conflicts, and provide positive outlets during mentoring, external partners rely on SROs for law enforcement.

While it may not be the fulfillment of both roles that produce conflict, there can be situations that cause conflict for the SRO in performing both roles with the same student. For example, if an SRO is providing counseling for a youth because of depression and parental separation, and the youth is then caught with marijuana in the school, can the SRO perform Law Enforcement functions without conflict? Some may suggest the knowledge of the youth's circumstances provides the SRO with the ability to see the act as something other than criminal behavior, such as a need for services to treat depression and/or other issues related to the parental separation. This may allow for diversion activities and/or positive educational programs to alleviate substance use. However, others may suggest this creates a conflict if the officer has no discretion in the matter and is required to move forward with arrest and engagement with the juvenile justice system knowing this can exacerbate the youth's behavior and risks.

Study Limitations

The dynamics of SROs and school environments are complicated. This study demonstrated this complexity in several areas on data collection and potential for applicability for other programs. First, there were clear differences in the state-reported data and law-enforcement-reported data regarding criminal activities. Based on the reporting year of this study, the verification of arrests for assaults, drugs, and other activities by the RCSD conflicted with state-reporting data by the school regarding school discipline as a result of criminal behaviors. This may be due to two reasons. First, the data-reporting parameters by the South Carolina Department of Education define the reporting of out-of-school suspensions and/or expulsions only as a result of physical violence or criminal activity. This suggests that schools may have had other reasons for suspension and expulsion that are unreported, which may impact the measures of school climate factors in other research. Second, there could be a difference in practice of school discipline and criminal activity. Schools that reported no suspensions or expulsions during the period to the Department for which RCSD verified arrests for assaults or criminal activity suggests that students may not be receiving dual punishments for incidents, or that they are removed from the school altogether, thereby impacting reporting.

Second, interactions between officers and students by race could not be evaluated with integrity. Due to concerns by the school districts in labeling youth as involved with law enforcement for non-law-enforcement interactions, concessions on the collection of student information were made. Personally-identifiable information (PII) on each student (e.g., name, date of birth, social security number, student identification) was not collected in the Interaction Form. This hindered the ability to identify unique versus repeat interactions among students and SROs.

Third, this study may not be generalizable to other SRO programs. Differences in policies, MOAs, assignment of officers, perceptions of roles by officers and by school administration, and other environmental factors all impact the variation and distribution of SRO activities. As SRO programs have been more prominent in policing and standardized through national associations and federal guidance, we may see more commonalities among programs that would allow for transferability of this study's concepts and distribution of roles.

Last, there is no national database that captures the organizational characteristics of SRO programs, the distribution of roles among SRO programs, nor the activities performed by SROs. The nuances among SRO program governance can shift the distribution of roles significantly. The existing measures of only one outcome of an SRO role has skewed picture of SRO programs, resulting in further confusions on the purpose and intent of SROs in schools. This also hinders comparing SRO programs nationally or regionally to reveal good practices or solutions for school-based issues. While the RCSD has made the effort to build its baseline data around their programmatic roles and expectations, truly understanding how this data compares to other programs and to further learn from other programs requires national and/or regional information.

What is Next for SRO Programs?

It is routine to propose that more research needs to be performed. However, we are at a pivotal time in terms of expanding and defining SRO programs. The pace of research to inform this current expansion may not match the pace of more program implementation. Existing research suggests that more police is not likely to have an impact on crime or school safety (Eck, Lee, & Corsaro, 2017; Turanovic et al., 2018). In the interest of being better informed about what should come next, there are three areas to focus on to facilitate future research.

First, guidance for SRO programs should include program performance measures and/or recommendations for data collection on SRO activities. Policing, in general, has adopted data-driven strategies to deploy resources and address community concerns. The application of data within the school environment calls for a need to collect school-specific interactions and information to support a data-driven program. While current guidance for SRO programs address roles, responsibilities, working with youth populations, and several other categories, there is a clear gap in how to measure programs or program activities. This gap may be due to the variations of roles and technical capabilities of agencies; however, these problems have been overcome before when measuring police activities. As law enforcement agencies and private-industry security firms have become reliant on advanced technology platforms to measure their performance, it is timely to expect them to measure their performance in school security. The expectations for SRO programs to review data on a monthly (or even weekly basis) is routine. Digital case management systems and management of large, diverse data sets are easily conducted within today's policing technologies.

Second, with better data measures and evaluation, SRO programs should routinely evaluate disproportionate contact between police and minority group students. This is even more relevant as the socioeconomic make-up of our schools becomes concentrated with groups that have been historically marginalized and mistreated by police. This evaluation should not lead to an immediate punishment of the agency (e.g., consent decree), but should be a requirement for routine evaluation to determine equitable practices and correct any unintended consequences that further marginalize youth.

Third, there is a need to develop a national data set that focuses on SRO programs, which would support future research. This national data set should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Organizational authority (e.g., peace officer, private security)
- Structure of SRO program (e.g., number of officers, experience)
- Training of SRO program (e.g., hours, topics)
- Definition of roles (e.g., Triad Model, additional expectations)
- Assignment of officers to schools (e.g., permanent, part time, school level)
- Volume of activities performed per role
- Reporting of outputs and outcomes by defined activity areas
- Presence of counselors and/or social workers in the school environment
- Presence and use of diversionary programs (both pre- and post-arrest)

Third, as there continues to be role conflict as we designate funding for officers over school counselors or social workers, future research could evaluate the cost and benefits of police and social workers, either individually or in partnership, in a school environment. We have seen the benefits of social workers or other mental health counselors partnering with police for patrol operations and responses (Justice Center, The Council of State Governments, 2019). National programs focused on continuum-of-care for youth development and violence prevention among youth focus on cross-systems collaborations to provide services and demonstrate effective responses.[28]These therapeutic approaches may support agencies seeking to minimize police contact with youth for low-level offenses, and increase school achievements and positive youth development (Legewie & Fagan, 2019; Mears et al., 2015; Wolf & Kupchik, 2017).

[28] Programs supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development at University of Colorado Boulder Institute of Behavioral Science, and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention demonstrating evidence-based outcomes include cross-functional and cross-systems approaches.

Conclusion

The need for security in the school is without question; however, the response to the problems that students and teachers are facing may not require a criminal justice response or more police. Placing more SROs in schools without a clarity of roles contributes to the risk of history repeating itself with the criminalization of youth behaviors. Furthermore, the prevalence of depression, anxiety, and fear among youth are the emotional responses to insecurity and disorder – not criminal behaviors themselves. The use of drugs (e.g., marijuana) to self-medicate for anxiety, attention disorders, and depression are unfortunately common today, as well as feeling the need to carry personal protection weapons (e.g., pepper spray). Rather than criminalize these behaviors, collaboration among educators, public health, and law enforcement can support a response that keeps youth development as the core goal and focuses on solving the problems of the local community. As legislation seeks to ensure school safety, the funding should not be toward a single responsible agency or person, but of collaborative partnerships that contribute to solving problems and increasing safety in the school environment.

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APPENDIX A

IMPACTS TO RICHLAND COUNTY SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

The partnership with Richland County is ongoing and has resulted in several changes for the program and the community. These changes can be described in three impact categories: 1) Operational Improvements, 2) Program Management, 3) Partnerships and External Communications.

Operational Improvements. Prior to this effort, the SRO program lacked a clear program design and evaluation model. The first improvement included revisions to SRO roles through the MOA with school districts. This formal agreement sought to clarify the expectations of roles, as well as the process to engage with SROs. Since the department was dealing with backlash from a negative interaction within a classroom, further parameters regarding the officers' involvement within classroom conflicts were established (also discussed above).

The second improvement was the development of how to measure the roles defined by the SRO. The first interaction form generated by RCSD sought to fulfill information and data gaps identified by the Office for Civil Rights. This first version used in the 2016-2017 school year sought to answer OCR needs but fell short of fulfilling RCSD's data interests to understand their program. Furthermore, the form (a Word document) and the process for submission (e.g., email and review to supervisor, saved on a local drive) led to a series of restraints on the program (e.g., collection process, review requirements, storage for analysis). An analysis of this first four months of data allowed for common themes to emerge. This information also allowed for SRO training sessions with real-life scenarios. These training sessions supported SRO leadership on developing the reporting expectations (e.g., quality over quantity) and clarity of roles in the temporal ordering of events (e.g., only counseling interaction versus a law enforcement interaction that resulted in counseling meeting). Awareness of these scenarios further supported the

development of the SRO operating manual and identification of annual training opportunities in specific skills (e.g., conflict mediation, trauma-informed care). As previously mentioned, online and in-person learning sessions on completing the SRO form also included scenarios based on prior interactions, allowing for a deeper connection between concepts and practices for SROs.

This evaluation process also supported the development of a new form for the 2017-2018 school year. This second iteration of the form – and the basis of this dissertation – revised the form data parameters to pivot from SRO roles to performance measures developed from a culmination of public health, education, criminal justice, and organizational behavior research. This version also included the adoption of digital reporting processes in order to allow for timely and actionable review of interactions. The ability of the SRO leadership to review activities and evaluate themselves in a timely manner led to several program management impacts.

Program Management. Clarity on SRO roles for the program and the implementation of routine data collection on activities, allowed the RCSD SRO leadership to understand the common interactions SROs were having among students. Without a baseline of prior years' interactions, the RCSD SRO leadership evaluated the monthly volume of roles and data priorities identified within each role to further define the program, communicate needs with school administration (discussed further in next section), and support officer training. For example, one of the data priorities within the Counselor role was the identification of risk and protective factors. Over each month, the volume of factors and their descriptions allowed for RCSD SRO leadership to understand the prevalence of aggression, anxiety, and attention disorders among students commonly interacting with officers. This supported the RCSD SRO's training to include topics of youth development, trauma informed care, conflict mediation, and de-escalation

techniques among youth. The SRO program also used this data to develop new policies related to managing students with disabilities and behavioral health issues, a conscious discipline strategy, and an SRO Training Manual.

Over the course of the year, the long-term data patterns benefited SRO leadership in understanding concerns. Collectively, the data represent potential risks among students (e.g., concerns on anxiety and victimization) and the occurrence of criminal events (e.g., assaults). The routine evaluation of this data developed performance based management practices and the identification of potential risks (Bratton & Malinowski, 2008; Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2008; Schaible & Sheffield, 2012; Sparrow, 2015; Uchida, Swatt, Shellie, & Varano, 2014). Awareness on the types of meetings for counseling and topics by students and SROs allowed the SRO leadership to identify more training for staff on these topics as well as allow for peer mentoring among SROs with prior experiences and training (e.g., senior officers methods in defusing situations). These evaluations also assisted in identifying needs in the school environment. For example, awareness of potential fights allowed SROs to be present in specific areas at specific times (e.g., at lunch in the courtyard) to potentially prevent or more quickly intervene in student conflicts. Benefits were also identified for the SROs to collaborate with patrol officers and school officials on overall safety measures. For instance, several students reported to different SROs a suspicious person and vehicle attempting to talk with kids walking to school. The monitoring of these reports allowed for common descriptions and occurrences to be flagged for the SROs work with the school regarding safety training for youth, and with patrol officers on lookouts in the community during the times in which kids walked to/from school.

Partnerships and External Communications. The use of data allowed RCSD to continue with their collaborative partnerships with the schools through a more

informed approach and focus. Information and analysis from the Interaction Form allowed RCSD to further support their school and city council meetings with details on common needs among youth and explanations of activities. This supported new partnerships with juvenile attorneys, judges, and community resources as the RCSD sought alternatives to criminal justice responses. As this jurisdiction is also evaluating the potential for more or less officers in schools, being able to demonstrate the type of activities performed and how these activities support the youth and the school have assisted in justifications for the SRO program funding and funding resources for other services. These partnerships and shared responsibilities over the development of youth continue at the time of this writing.