School-Based Law Enforcement in Idaho

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Executive Summary

Idaho Incident Based Reporting System

- The most frequently reported school offenses committed by juvenile offenders include simple assault (32.2%); drug narcotic crimes (19.3%); and larceny crimes (16.8%).
- Simple assault and drug narcotic crime represent a notably larger percentage of school-based crimes than non-school based crimes.
- Juveniles ages 5-13 years represent a larger proportion of offenders of school-based crimes compared to non-school based crime across every crime type.
- Although females represent approximately 25% of juvenile offenders, they account for 44% of victims of school-based offenses and 50% of victims of all other juvenile offenses.
- Consistent with national data, the majority of victims of juvenile crime are victimized by someone known to them rather than a stranger.

Prevalence of School Based Law Enforcement in Idaho

- Approximately 43% (19) of sheriff's offices employ an SRO. Forty-one percent (33) of local law enforcement agencies employ an SRO. In Idaho, approximately 78% of designated SROs or SRO supervisors are employed by local law enforcement agencies.
- Nearly 63% of primary and secondary schools (not including charter schools and preschools/kindergartens) had access to an SRO in 2015.

Survey of School Based Law Enforcement Officers

Roles and Duties

- On average, school-based law enforcement officers spend 36% of their time on law enforcement, 40% on mentoring/advising, 18% on education/teaching, and 6% on other duties.
- More than 45% of school-based law enforcement officers in Idaho identify 'law enforcer' as their primary role, followed by nearly 38% indicating mentor/counselor as their primary role.
- The most commonly reported activities are monitoring school grounds (4.43) and counseling/mentoring students (3.77). Across every duty examined, principals underestimated the frequency of officers performing the task when compared to SRO accounts.
- While officers feel they are used appropriately in most roles, a significant number of officers feel they are not used enough to train/educate school staff (65%), teach/educate students (43%), assist with school safety drills (36%), and attend school staff meetings (30%).

Training

- Most agencies (62%) have minimum training or experience requirements for the SRO position and more than 90% of participants have received training specific to their role as a school-based officer.
- While officers note a variety of training topics that would benefit them in their role as an SRO, the top five are: (1) School safety (active shooter, threat assessment, emergency planning, etc.); (2) Laws/Policies (updates on laws and policies related to schools and youth); (3) Any training (NASRO or other specialized training program, trends related to youth, etc.); (4) Social media/technology; (5) Working with disabled or mentally ill youth
- The most common barriers to training are lack of availability locally or statewide (75%) and lack of funding (64%).

Funding/Recommendations

- The two primary funding sources for SROs are school districts and law enforcement agencies. Approximately 72% of school-based officers are fully or partially funded by law enforcement agencies and an estimated 53% are fully or partially funded by school districts.
- Nearly three fourths (74%) of school-based officers feel there is a need for additional SROs in their area.
- Nearly 75% of school-based officers report serving two or more schools with a few officers responsible for as many as ten schools.
- The most common recommendation from school-based officers is more training for SROs.

Effectiveness of School-Based Law Enforcement Programs

- The overwhelming majority of SROs and Principals believe the SRO position helps build or improve relationships between law enforcement and youth, prevent and/or reduce crime in schools, and helps improve school safety.
- More than 96% of school-based officers and nearly 92% of principals also support the continuation of the SRO position at their school.

School-to-Prison Pipeline

- The majority of SROs and Principals do not believe the SRO position results in more youth entering the juvenile justice system.
- School comparisons indicate the average rate of reported harassment/bullying is nearly 4 times higher in schools *without* an SRO (2.5325 per 100) compared to schools *with* an SRO (0.659 per 100).
- Rural agencies with an SRO noted significantly higher rates of suspensions and referrals to law enforcement compared to agencies without an SRO. However, no statistically significant difference was observed in urban agencies.
- Agencies with an SRO reported more than three times the rate of school-based offenses compared to similar agencies without an SRO.
- However, more advanced analysis of IIBRS data indicate no statistically significant differences between the rate of reported school-based offenses and agency employment of an SRO.
- The amount of time an SRO spends on law enforcement and mentoring/counseling roles significantly influences the rate of school-based offenses. Specifically, as the amount of time the SRO(s) spends on law enforcement increases, the rate of school-based offenses also increases. Alternatively, as the amount of time the SRO(s) spent on mentoring/counseling increases, the rate of school-based offenses decreases. In other words, the influence of the school-to-prison pipeline is minimized when the SRO emphasizes a mentoring/counseling role instead of a law enforcement role.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary **1**

Review of Research **1**

History and Prevalence 1

School Resource Officer Programs: Definition, Structure, and Goals 2

Roles of SROs 2

Training 4

Criminalization of Student Misconduct 4

Effectiveness 5

Conclusion 6

Methodology **7**

Results **8**

..... **8**

Idaho Incident Based Reporting System 7

Prevalence of School-Based Law Enforcement in Idaho 14

Survey of School Based Law Enforcement Officers 14

Survey of School Principals 19

School-Related Concerns 20

Effectiveness of School-Based Law Enforcement 21

School to Prison Pipeline 23

School Comparisons 25

Agency Comparisons 26

Conclusion **27**

References **27**

Appendix **27**

Review of Research

History and Prevalence

The concept of police presence in schools has been discussed for decades. The first reported school-based law enforcement program was developed in Flint, Michigan in the 1950s (Justice Policy Institute, 2011; Brown, 2006; Thomas, Towvim, Rosiak, Anderson, 2013). However, it wasn't until the 1990s that such programs began to gain noticeable momentum (Justice Policy Institute, 2011; Brown, 2006; Thomas et al., 2013; Coon & Travis, 2012; Theriot, 2009). In 1977, police were regularly stationed in only one percent of public schools (National Institute of Education, 1977). By 1997, a law enforcement officer was stationed for 30 or more hours per week in six percent of schools (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, local police departments employed more than 9,400 school-based police officers (now recognized as school resource officers [SRO]) throughout the United States in 1997 (Reaves & Goldberg, 2000). Between the late 1990s and early 2000s, the number of SROs continued to increase dramatically. By 2003, there were nearly 20,000 school resource officers employed by local law enforcement agencies or sheriffs' offices (Hickman & Reaves, 2006a; Hickman & Reaves, 2006b).

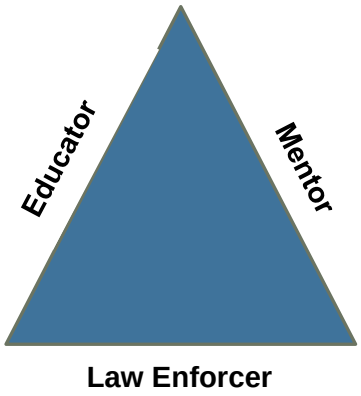
After the substantial increase in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the number of SROs began to decrease slightly. In 2007, there were approximately 1,000 fewer SROs employed by local law enforcement or sheriffs' offices compared to 2003 (Reaves, 2010; Burch, 2012). A recent national study suggests that more than 20% of schools in 2007-2008 had a full-time police officer and approximately 47% had part-time officers (Na & Gottfredson, 2013). However, the prevalence of SROs varies based on the type of school and surrounding community. Specifically, high schools are more likely to have full-time SROs compared to middle schools and elementary schools and urban areas are more likely to have full-time SROs compared to rural areas (Na & Gottfredson, 2013). Since this is the most recent data available, it is unknown whether the prevalence of SROs has continued to decrease in recent years. However, the National Association of School Resource Officers (n.d.) maintains that "school-based policing is the fastest growing area of law enforcement" (About NASRO, para. 4).

While there are a number of potential explanations for the drastic growth of school resource officers in the late 1990s and early 2000s, there are four factors that are suspected of having the largest influence. First, the increasing juvenile crime rate in the 1980s and 1990s resulted in a growing concern regarding juvenile delinquency (Hurley-Swayze & Buskovick, 2014; James & McCallion, 2013; Thomas et al., 2013). Second, several high profile school shootings (e.g., Columbine) exacerbated the fear of school-based violence (Hurley-Swayze & Buskovick, 2014; James & McCallion, 2013; Thomas et al., 2013; Coon & Travis, 2012; Justice Policy Institute, 2011). One study found that one of the most common reasons for schools choosing to implement an SRO program was national media attention on school violence (Coon & Travis, 2012). Third, the culmination of these two factors helped drive the movement toward zero-tolerance policies and the need for law enforcement presence in schools to enforce them (Justice Policy Institute, 2011). Lastly, an increase in federal funding for community-based policing efforts, such as school resource officers, provided financial incentives and feasibility to implement school-based policing programs (Hurley-Swayze & Buskovick, 2014; Thomas et al., 2013; Coon & Travis, 2012; McKenna, Martinez-Prather, & Bowman, 2014). Specifically, the Community Oriented Policing

Services (COPS) In School Program provided millions of dollars in funding for school resource officer initiatives (James & McCallion, 2013; Justice Policy Institute, 2011).

School Resource Officer Programs: Definition, Structure, and Goals

Simply defined, a school resource officer is a sworn law enforcement officer assigned to one or more schools who is tasked with improving school safety in an effort to foster a healthy learning environment (Thomas et al., 2013; Finn & McDevitt, 2005; Cray & Weiler, 2011; Johnson, 1999). The premise is that increased visibility of law enforcement in schools will deter school-based crime, therefore improving school safety (Johnson, 1999). Because of the dual nature of the position, SROs must navigate two separate systems: local law enforcement and the school (Rhodes, 2015; Coon & Travis, 2012). Although SROs are typically employed by a local police department, the school principal may serve as their immediate supervisor (Coon & Travis, 2012). Therefore, facilitating collaboration between the school(s) and the law enforcement agency is a crucial component of an SRO program.



In addition to the goal of improving school safety, SRO programs also seek to enhance relationships between juveniles and police (Jackson, 2002; Raymond, 2010; Theriot, 2016; Finn, 2006). Placing law enforcement officers in schools is thought to minimize the divide between police and juveniles subsequently improving perceptions of police and increasing reporting of school-based crimes. With an emphasis on prevention and early intervention, SRO programs illustrate a more proactive rather than reactive form of policing (Thomas et al., 2013). In order to accomplish these goals, SROs take on a variety of different roles from mentor to law enforcer.

Roles of SROs

Although the roles of SROs are widespread, the majority of research condenses them into three primary categories: law enforcer, mentor/counselor, and educator (Canady, James, & Nease, 2012; Finn & McDevitt, 2005; Finn, 2006; Hurley-Swayze & Buskovick, 2014; Justice Policy Institute, 2011; May & Higgins, 2011; Thomas et al., 2013; James & McCallion, 2013). This categorization of SROs' responsibilities is frequently referred to as the triad model (Canady et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2013). The law enforcer role involves tasks such as monitoring school grounds, enforcing law violations (e.g., investigations, issuing citations, and making arrests), and responding to school safety concerns (Canady et al., 2012; McKenna et al., 2014; Thomas et al., 2013; Rhodes, 2015). The primary component of the mentor/informal counselor role is building positive relationships with students by interacting with students on a daily basis, engaging in conversations, being approachable, and being available to meet with students to provide advice or discuss problems they are facing at school or at home (McKenna et al., 2014; Thomas et al., 2013). Lastly, the role of educator involves teaching students, school staff, and the community (Thomas et al., 2013). SROs are often responsible for implementing national prevention programs such as Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E) and Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T; Finn & McDevitt, 2005; Thomas et al., 2013). SROs may also provide guest lectures in classrooms or community forums on relevant crime issues such as teen dating violence, substance abuse, gang involvement, and bullying (Thomas et al., 2013; McKenna et al., 2014; Raymond, 2010). They may also be involved in training staff on crisis intervention, conflict

resolution, crime prevention, and emergency response protocol (Thomas et al., 2013).

While there is a general consensus regarding the categorization of SRO responsibilities, there is variation regarding the amount of time designated for each role (Finn & McDevitt, 2005; McKenna et al., 2014; Justice Policy Institute, 2011; May & Higgins, 2011). In general, school-based law enforcement officers spend most of their time on law enforcement activities with less time dedicated to fulfilling the mentor/counselor and educator roles (Finn & McDevitt, 2005; McKenna et al., 2014; Justice Policy Institute, 2011; May & Higgins, 2011; Canady et al., 2012; Coon & Travis, 2012). According to a nationwide assessment, school resource officers spend approximately half (48%) of their time on law enforcement, a quarter (24%) on advising/mentoring, 12% on teaching, and 16% on other activities (Finn & McDevitt, 2005; Justice Policy Institute, 2011). A more recent study of SROs in Kentucky found similar results; officers reported approximately 58% of their time was dedicated to law enforcement, 25% to counseling, and 15% to teaching (May & Higgins, 2011). A qualitative study of school-based law enforcement officers in Texas further suggests that 77% of officers view law enforcement as their primary role (McKenna et al., 2014). Similarly, approximately 60% of SROs in Minnesota view law enforcement as their primary role (Hurley-Swayze & Buskovick, 2014).

Although general trends indicate an emphasis on law enforcement, the distribution of each role may vary based on the specific environment and program. For example, one SRO program serving middle schools in the Southwest spends approximately 40% of their time on teaching and only 10% on law enforcement while another program serving all school levels in the West dedicates more than 60% to law enforcement and less than 10% to teaching (Finn & McDevitt, 2005). This variation may be partially influenced by the amount of time the program has been in effect. Several programs reported a focus on law enforcement at implementation followed by a shift to mentoring and teaching roles as the program continued (Finn & McDevitt, 2005).

In addition to the three roles included in the triad model, supplementary duties have been identified including emergency manager and surrogate parent (Community Oriented Policing Services [COPS], n.d.; McKenna et al., 2014). Emergency manager includes tasks such as coordinating with first responders, school administrators, and other community agencies to develop safety plans and protocols for bomb threats, school shootings, and other threats to school safety (COPS, n.d.). Qualitative interviews with school-based law enforcement officers in Texas further identified the role of surrogate parent, which involves acting as a parental figure for students and assisting with basic needs such as clothing or school supplies (McKenna et al., 2014). More than one-third of officers in the study viewed this role as a component of their job (McKenna et al., 2014).

Although the roles of school-based law enforcement officers are well-documented in research, it is important to consider whether school administrators (i.e., principals) and SROs agree on the roles they are expected to perform. According to one national study, principals and SROs generally agree that law enforcement activities are the most common (Coon & Travis, 2012). However, perceptions of police involvement in specific activities varied between SROs and principals. For example, 55% of principals reported that SROs refer students to resources for help compared to 79% of SROs. Similar discrepancies were identified for a variety of activities including attending athletic events, patrolling school grounds, and writing police reports (Coon & Travis, 2012). This gap in perception may help explain why SROs report school personnel misunderstanding their roles as

one of their top challenges (National Association of School Resource Officers, 2013).

Training

Considering the wide array of tasks performed by school-based law enforcement officers, including counseling and advising, it is important to examine the level of training officers receive. One national survey of school resource officers found that two-thirds of states included in the survey did not require specialized training for school resource officers (Trump, 2001). However, although it is not required, officers may still receive specialized training. In Minnesota, 87% of SROs received training specific to their role as an SRO (Hurley-Swayze & Buskovick, 2014). The most common topics covered in these trainings included school-related law (92%), active shooter (90%), threat assessment (75%), and emergency planning (72%; Hurley-Swayze & Buskovick, 2014). Less than half of the officers received training on topics such as the effect of trauma on youth, counseling, mentoring, and childhood development (Hurley-Swayze & Buskovick, 2014). The amount of training received may also depend on years of experience as an SRO; in Kentucky, 61% of veteran officers (more than 2.5 years as an SRO) had received advanced training specific to school-based law enforcement compared to 7% of new officers (2.5 years or less as an SRO; May & Higgins, 2011). The majority of SROs have at least two years of college education and several years of law enforcement experience (Trump, 2001; Hurley-Swayze & Buskovick, 2014; May & Higgins, 2011). In fact, 67% of SROs in the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) have more than 10 years of law enforcement experience (Trump, 2001).

Recommended topics for specialized SRO training include mental health, adolescent development, bias and cultural competence, trauma-informed practices, de-escalation techniques, and school-specific topics such as bullying (Thomas et al., 2013). These types of trainings can help officers better understand adolescent decision-making, recognize the symptoms of trauma and respond appropriately, identify bias, and individualize interventions to meet the needs of the particular student (Thomas et al., 2013). Another training that has been recommended for SROs is crisis intervention team (CIT) training (James, Logan, & Davis, 2011). Officers who have received CIT training report greater levels of empathy and patience, increased understanding of mental illness, and improved self-efficacy when working with individuals exhibiting alcohol or drug dependency, depression, and schizophrenia (Bahora, Hanafi, Chien, & Compton, 2008; Hanafi, Bahora, Demir, & Compton, 2008; James et al., 2011). Properly trained SROs may serve as valuable contributors to school-based crisis intervention teams (James et al., 2011).

Criminalization of Student Misconduct

A primary concern regarding the implementation of SRO programs is the potential criminalization of student misconduct. Prior to school-based law enforcement programs, student misconduct such as fighting, bullying, or disrupting the classroom, were handled by school officials and only reported to law enforcement if the official deemed it necessary (Brown, 2006). Today, with the presence of law enforcement officers in schools, complaints of student misconduct may result in an arrest and referral to the juvenile justice system rather than school disciplinary action (Brown, 2006). The Justice Policy Institute (2011) argues “while reported incidents of violence and crime in schools are at the lowest level since the early 1990s, arrests and referrals of students to the juvenile justice system by SROs are increasing” (p. 13). They further cite data from Georgia indicating that referrals to the juvenile justice system increased from 89 per year in the 1990s to 1,400 per year in 2004 (Justice Policy Institute, 2011). However, others assert that the simultaneous decrease in juvenile arrests and increase in the presence of SROs

illustrates that school-based law enforcement programs do not provide tracks into the juvenile justice system (Canady et al., 2012).

While the information presented provides interesting speculation, there are two studies that have examined the influence of SROs on the criminalization of student misconduct. The first, conducted by Theriot in 2009, examined 13 schools with an SRO and 15 schools without an SRO in one county in the Southeast. Initial findings illustrated the importance of taking into account school poverty considering that schools with an SRO were significantly more likely to experience economic disadvantage compared to schools without an SRO. When taking into consideration the influence of school poverty, the arrest rate for disorderly conduct in schools with an SRO was nearly five times higher compared to schools without an SRO (8.5 and 1.8, respectively; Theriot, 2009; Justice Policy Institute, 2011). However, the presence of an SRO had no effect on the total number of arrests, decreased the rate of arrests for assault by 52.3%, and decreased the rate of arrest for possession of a weapon on school property by 72.9% when accounting for school poverty. Therefore, this study provided mixed results regarding the influence of SROs on the criminalization of student misconduct (Theriot, 2009).

A more recent study conducted by Na and Gottfredson (2013) examined 470 middle schools and high schools throughout the United States. In order to provide accurate results, a variety of potential factors were taken into consideration including school poverty, location (rural v. urban), school level (middle v. high school), percentage of minority students, community crime rate, and more. Even so, schools with at least one full-time SRO had more than double the rate of referrals to law enforcement for simple assaults without a weapon compared to schools without a full-time SRO. Similar, yet less pronounced, results were found for all non-serious violent crimes. However, the increased use of school-based police officers did not have a significant effect on use of harsh discipline, such as suspension or expulsion. Furthermore, despite concerns that police presence disproportionately influences special education and minority youths, no evidence of this assumption was observed. Overall, Na and Gottfredson (2013) conclude that these findings support the premise that "increased use of SROs facilitates the formal processing of minor offenses" (p. 640).

Effectiveness

While questions remain as to whether SRO programs are contributing to the criminalization of student misconduct, it is important to examine if they are successfully achieving the goals of improving school safety and students' attitudes towards the police. Several studies have sought to provide an answer to this question by examining students, school administrators, and SROs perceptions. Jackson (2002) surveyed students in four public high schools within a rural county in Missouri and compared the results between schools with an SRO and those without an SRO. The presence of an SRO was not found to make a difference in students' attitudes towards the police or offending. Interestingly, students in schools with an SRO felt their risk of detection by police was lower compared to students in schools without an SRO. However, SROs were found to be beneficial for preventing assaults on school grounds (Jackson, 2002).

Another study examined the effectiveness of SRO programs in nine high schools and 18 middle schools using surveys of SRO administrators, SROs, and students as well as school disciplinary records (Johnson, 1999). The majority of SROs reported a decrease in misdemeanor arrests and school fights since the program was implemented. Most of the school officials also cited a decrease in drug use, theft,

fighting, weapons violations, illicit sexual behavior, and gambling since the establishment of the SRO program. Students reported that the mere presence of the SRO served as a deterrent for some forms of misconduct. School disciplinary records (i.e., suspensions) confirmed an overall decrease in offenses since the assignment of SROs (Johnson, 1999).

Additional examinations of the effectiveness of SRO programs provide mixed results. In-depth interviews with students from two high-security public schools suggest that many students do not feel the presence of an SRO makes a large difference in the safety of the school (Bracy, 2014). However, some students discussed positive interactions with the SRO and viewed him/her as a useful legal resource (Bracy, 2014). One survey of 1,956 middle and high school students found that interactions with the SRO were unrelated to feelings of safety while another suggests that more SRO interactions improves students' attitudes of the SRO (Theriot & Orme, 2014; Theriot, 2016). Two national studies also present conflicting results with one suggesting that the presence of SROs is significantly associated with an increase in weapon/drug crime (Na & Gottfredson, 2013) and the other stating promising evidence of decreases in smoking, gang activity, fighting, truancy, and arrests for criminal behavior in addition to more positive attitudes and trust in the police (Finn & McDevitt, 2005). While empirical evidence regarding SRO programs are mixed, it is evident that SROs believe they are making positive contributions to the school environment. More than two-thirds of SROs report preventing an assault against a student or school official and 92% report preventing an average of 1-25 violent acts each school year (Trump, 2001).

Conclusion

Since the 1990s, school-based law enforcement programs have increased substantially. At last count, nearly 70% of urban high schools had full-time SROs (Na & Gottfredson, 2013). School resource officers are tasked with coordinating between the police department and school administrators in addition to performing a wide array of duties including law enforcement, mentoring/counseling, and teaching. Although there are a variety of potential benefits of SRO programs, some are concerned that such programs facilitate the criminalization of student misconduct, which has been partially supported in research. The primary purpose of school-based law enforcement is to improve school safety and youths' attitudes and perceptions of the police. Evaluations of effectiveness are limited and provide mixed results in regards to accomplishing these goals. Perceptions of SROs and school officials tend to be very positive while student surveys and experimental studies are inconclusive. This lack of agreement illustrates the need for additional research that combines various methods including surveys and official statistics (Brown, 2006).

Methodology

Four data sources were used in the development of this report:

1. Survey of school-based law enforcement officers in Idaho
2. Survey of school principals in Idaho
3. Disciplinary data gathered from the Office for Civil Rights
4. Idaho Incident Based Reporting System

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of school-based law enforcement programs in Idaho, multiple data sources were utilized. First, a survey was emailed to every known school-based law enforcement officer in Idaho with the exception of two positions that were being filled (n=148). School-based law enforcement officers included designated SROs or school liaison officers, SRO supervisors, and officers responsible for attending to school-related concerns. The list of officers was developed by contacting every law enforcement agency in Idaho and asking if the agency employed a school resource officer (SRO) or school liaison officer. Each officer received the initial survey invitation followed by three reminder emails. A total of 103 officers (70%) fully or partially completed the survey. Since officers were not required to answer every question, the response rate for each individual question varied. Additionally, due to a faulty skip pattern influencing the roles and duties section of the original survey, a follow-up survey was sent to all of the participants that missed this section due to the error. As a result, the response rate for the roles and duties section of the survey was 56 percent.

In addition to the survey of school-based law enforcement officers, a survey was also emailed to the principal of every public primary or secondary school in Idaho with the exception of charter schools and preschools/kindergartens (n=576). Alternative schools and other specialty schools, such as magnet schools, were included. The list of schools was derived from the Idaho Department of Education's website; email addresses were obtained via school websites and contacting schools directly. Each principal received an initial survey invitation followed by three reminder emails. A total of 172 principals (30%) fully or partially completed the survey. Approximately 24% of principals from schools that have access to a school-based law enforcement officer participated in the survey. Access was defined as having an officer assigned or available to assist at the school. Since principals were not required to answer every question, the response rate of each individual question varied.

School disciplinary records were also obtained through the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) for the following school years: 2000/2001, 2004/2005, 2006/2007, 2009/2010, 2011/2012, and 2013/2014. Due to guidelines limiting the dissemination of educational data as well as ease of collection, disciplinary data were obtained through the OCR rather than the Idaho Department of Education or individual school districts. The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), a branch of the Office for Civil Rights, gathers data reported by more than 72,000 schools across the United States on a biennial basis (CRDC, 2012). Therefore, the data are limited to certain years, may not include all of the schools in the state, and are based on reports from school districts.

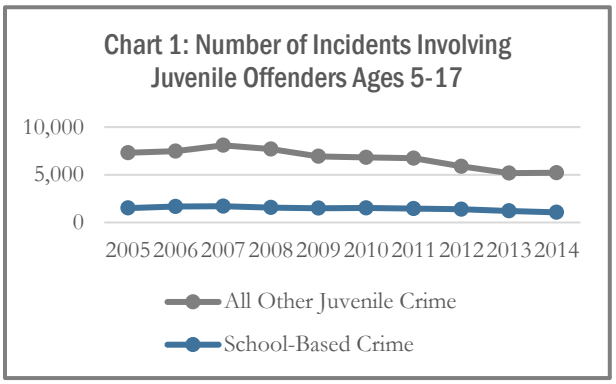
The Idaho Incident Based Reporting System (IIBRS) also includes data related to school-based offenses. Specifically, any incidents reported to law enforcement that occurred on school grounds are documented. These incidents can be further categorized by age, race/ethnicity, and sex of the offender as well as law enforcement agency and county. Incidents that occurred on school grounds from 2005-2014 involving an offender(s) 18 years of age or younger were exam.

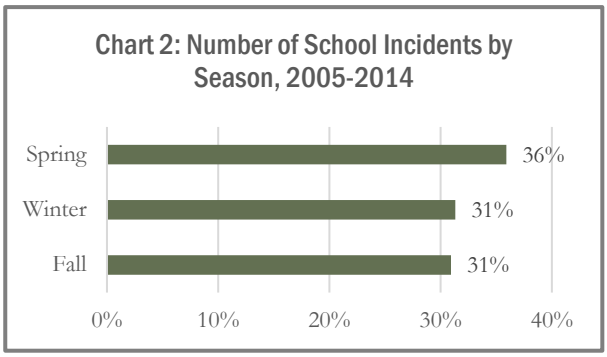
Results

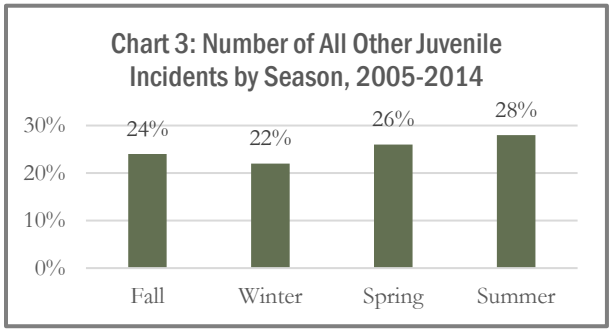
Idaho Incident Based Reporting System

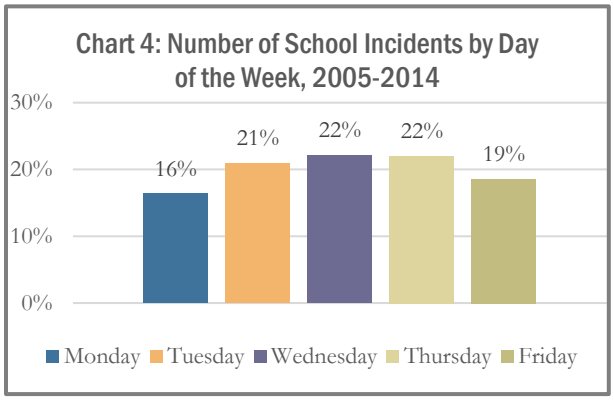
Data for this section was obtained from the Idaho State Police repository of police reports contained within the Idaho Incident Based Reporting System (IIBRS) for the years 2005 through 2014. IIBRS collects information on victims, offenders, arrestees, as well as location. Incidents occurring on school campuses, from elementary schools through universities, are grouped into a location category titled school/college, thus permitting the examination of school-based crimes. For the purposes of this report, school offenses include crimes occurring at school, by a school-age offender (5-17 years), on school days (Monday-Friday not including holidays), during school hours (7am-4pm), and during the school season (August 15-June 5). All other incidents involving school-age offenders were included in the "all other juvenile crime" category[1]. This includes offenses by school-age offenders occurring on non-school days (weekends, holidays, summer vacation) and on school days but outside of school hours (5pm to 6am).

Incident characteristics. Chart 1 shows the number of reported incidents with a juvenile offender that took place at school (during school hours, school season, and school days) and away from school between 2005 and 2014. While crime involving juvenile offenders has seen an overall decrease, it is evident the majority of juvenile crime occurs outside of school, with the highest percentage occurring during summer months. In order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of school crime in Idaho, reported school-based incidents were examined by season, day of the week, time of day, crime type, and county. As illustrated in Chart 2, spring (March-May) accounts for the largest percentage of



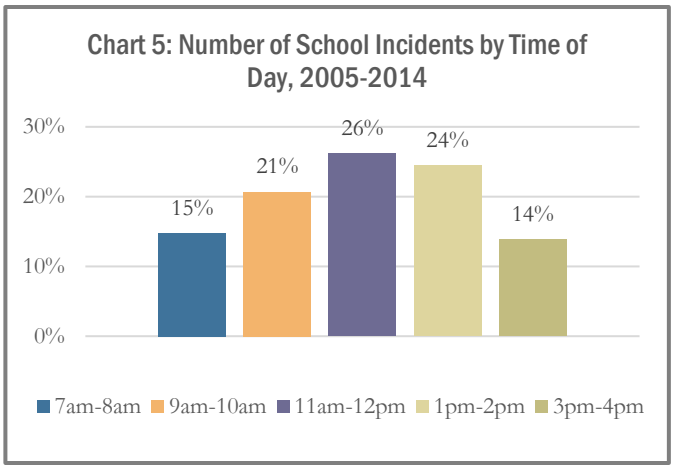






[1] Results include Group A offenses only.

incidents followed by winter (December-February), and then fall (September-November). Interestingly, a national study of school crime using NIBRS data found the highest number of incidents between 2000 and 2004 occurred during the fall, followed closely by spring (Noonan & Vavra, 2007). While incidents are relatively evenly dispersed throughout the week, slightly more incidents occur on Wednesdays and Thursdays compared to the rest of the week. The school day with the lowest percentage of school incidents is Monday. In regard to time of day, the 11am and 12pm hours account for the largest percentage (26%) of school incidents, which may be partially attributed to lunch break. In fact, the 12:00pm hour accounts for the largest percentage (14%) of incidents compared to every other hour examined. The second most frequent time period for incidents to occur is later in the afternoon during the 1pm and 2pm hours. This information provides a general picture of when school incidents take place. Specifically, most occur during spring (March-May), on Wednesdays and Thursdays, between 11am and 2pm.



In addition to analyzing incidents, it is also important to examine specific offenses. Within each incident can be a number of crimes or offenses. IIBRS can track up to 10 offenses per incident with the most severe taking precedent. Table 24 shows the number of school crimes committed by juvenile offenders broken down by offense type. The most frequently reported school offenses committed by juvenile offenders include:

1) Simple assault (32.2%);
2) Drug narcotic crimes (19.3%); and
3) Larceny crimes (16.8%).

These three crimes account for 68% of all reported school offenses committed by juvenile offenders between 2005 and 2014. This closely resembles national data which finds the most frequently reported

Table 1: Types of Offenses Committed by Juvenile Offenders, 2005-2014

	School		All Other Juvenile Offenses	
Crimes Against Property	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Larceny Crime	**3,542**	**16.8%**	**29,617**	**28.0%**
Destruction/Vandalism	1,371	6.5%	15,362	14.5%
Burglary/Breaking & Entering	250	1.2%	6,614	6.2%
Stolen Property Crime	153	0.7%	949	0.9%
Arson Crime	94	0.4%	1,040	1.0%
Motor Vehicle Theft Crime	43	0.2%	1,996	1.9%
Fraud (attempted or completed)	33	0.2%	894	0.8%
All Other Crime	32	0.2%	744	0.7%
Forgery/Counterfeiting	25	0.1%	331	0.3%
Robbery	0	0.0%	4	0.0%
Embezzlement	0	0.0%	116	0.1%
Bribery	0	0.0%	4	0.0%
Crimes Against Persons				
Simple Assault	**6,802**	**32.2%**	**14,953**	**14.1%**
Intimidation	507	2.4%	1062	1.0%
Aggravated Assault	402	1.9%	2,647	2.5%
Sexual Assault	118	0.6%	3,729	3.5%
Kidnaping/Abduction	10	0.0%	112	0.1%
Non Violent Sex Crime	3	0.0%	216	0.2%
Non-forcible sex offense	3	0.0%	284	0.3%
Homicide	0	0.0%	23	0.0%
Crimes Against Society				
Drug Narcotic Crime	**4,062**	**19.3%**	**11,365**	**10.7%**
Drug Equipment Violations	2,248	10.7%	11,623	11.0%
Weapons Crime	1,280	6.1%	1,935	1.8%
Pornography/Obscene Material	113	0.5%	251	0.2%
Prostitution	1	0.0%	9	0.0%
Gambling	0	0.0%	4	0.0%

*Sexual assault includes Forcible Rape, Forcible Sodomy, Forcible Fondling, and Sexual Assault with an Object

school offenses between 2000 and 2004 include simple assault (28%), drug/narcotic violations (24%), destruction/damage/vandalism of property (7%), and larceny (6%)(Noonan & Vavra, 2007). All other juvenile offenses exhibit a similar distribution, although with varying frequency. The most commonly reported non-school offenses include:

1) Larceny (28%);
2) Destruction crimes (14.5%);
3) Simple assault (14.1%);
4) Drug narcotic crime (10.7%); and
5) Drug equipment violation (11%).

While the list of most commonly reported offenses is similar between school and all other juvenile offenses, simple assault and drug narcotic crime represent a notably larger percentage of school-based crimes compared to all other juvenile crimes. Weapons crimes also represent a higher proportion of school-based offenses. On the other hand, larceny and destruction crimes account for a much larger proportion of all other juvenile offenses than school-based offenses.

In IIBRS, these offenses are defined as follows:

- Simple assault: "an unlawful physical attack by one person upon another where neither the offender displays a weapon, nor the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury…"
- Drug/narcotic offense: "the unlawful cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, use, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance."
- Larceny/theft offense: "the unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property from the possession, or constructive possession of another person."
- Destruction/damage/vandalism of property: "to willfully or maliciously destroy, damage, deface, or otherwise injure real or personal property without the consent of the owner or the person having custody or control of it."

Table 2: School Incidents by County, 2005-2014

	Average Rate	Average Population
Bannock	13.992	15,398
Bingham	7.838	10,486
Valley	7.837	1,356
Minidoka	7.496	4,135
Clearwater	6.587	1,153
Power	5.855	1,682
Nez Perce	5.631	6,259
Bonner	5.240	6,679
Bonneville	5.218	22,197
Statewide	**4.890**	**299,718**

* Offender rates are per 1,000 juveniles ages 5-17

Table 3: All Other Juvenile Incidents by County, 2005-2014

	Average Rate	Average Population
Clearwater	35.460	1,153
Valley	32.120	1,356
Nez Perce	31.088	6,259
Bannock	29.375	15,398
Twin Falls	27.839	14,575
Lewis	26.513	611
Kootenai	26.289	25,018
Bonneville	26.112	22,197
Bingham	25.354	10,486
Shoshone	24.931	1,988
Canyon	23.296	40,914
Bonner	22.909	6,679
Ada	22.811	73,080
Statewide	**22.615**	**299,718**

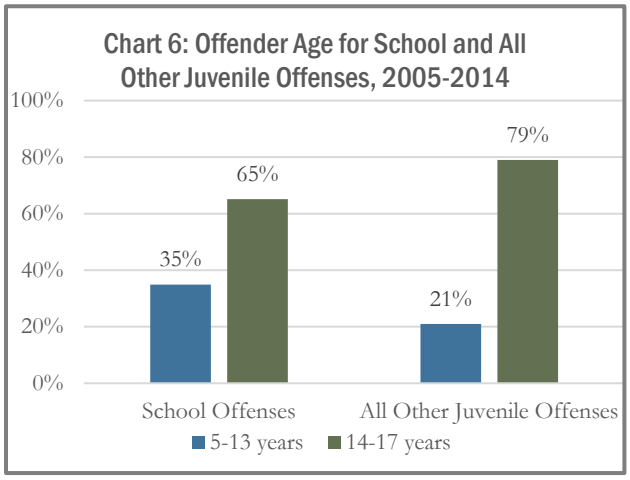
* Offender rates are per 1,000 juveniles ages 5-17

- Drug equipment violation: "the unlawful manufacture, sale, purchase, possession, or transportation of equipment or devices utilized in preparing and/or using drugs or narcotics."

In addition to crime type, school offenses were further examined by county. Table 2 shows the counties with the highest rates of school-based incidents. Bannock County has the highest rate of school incidents in Idaho equaling 13.992 per 1,000 juveniles ages 5-17. The top nine counties fall above the statewide average of 4.890 per 1,000.

When compared to rates of non-school incidents, six of the counties with the highest rates of school incidents also have one of the top ten highest rates for all other juvenile crime. Clearwater County has the highest rate for all other juvenile incidents equaling 35.460 per 1,000. Conversely, Lincoln County has the lowest rate of school and all other juvenile incidents in the state with a rate of 0.403 for school incidents and 6.155 for all other juvenile incidents. As noted previously, overall, the rate of school incidents is significantly lower than the rate of all other juvenile incidents across every county.

Offender characteristics[2]**.** The majority of offenders of both school and all other juvenile offenses are age 14 to 17. In fact, between 2005 and 2014, individuals age 14-17 represented approximately 30% of the school age population (i.e., age 5-17), but accounted for 65% of school-based offenders and an even larger percentage of all other juvenile offenders (79%). Conversely, individuals age 5-13 represent a larger percentage of school-based offenders compared to all other juvenile offenders (35% and 21%, respectively). In fact, significantly more school offenses involve a juvenile between the ages of 5 and 13 compared to all other juvenile offenses.[3]



Consequently, individuals age 14-17 represent a significantly larger proportion of non-school offenders[4]. At around age 15, the percentage of reported offenders committing school-based crime decreases substantially while non-school crime among that age group subsequently increases.

Offender age was further examined in relation to the top five crime types: simple assault, drug narcotic crime, larceny, drug equipment violation, and destruction/vandalism of property. Juveniles ages 5-13 years represent a larger proportion of offenders of school-based crimes compared to non-school based crime across every crime type examined. Most notably, individuals age 5-13 account for 47% of school-based simple assaults, compared to 28% of non-school based simple assaults. This younger age group also accounts for a much larger proportion of school-based drug

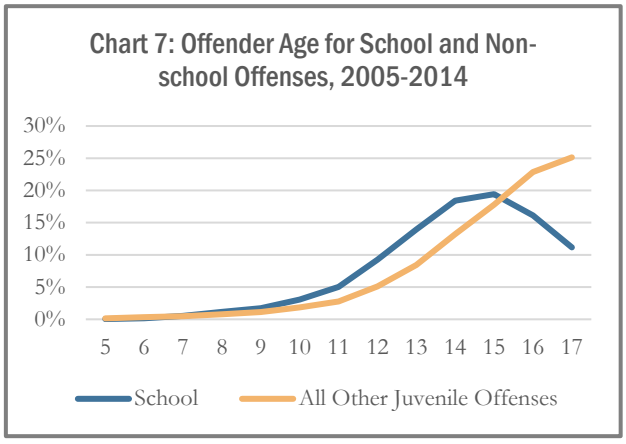


Table 4: Offender Age by Crime Type, 2005-2014				
	School		Non-school	
	5-13	14-17	5-13	14-17
Simple assault	47%	53%	28%	72%
Drug narcotic crime	16%	84%	4%	96%
Larceny	36%	64%	20%	80%
Drug equipment crime	11%	89%	3%	97%
Destruction/Vandalism	41%	59%	31%	69%

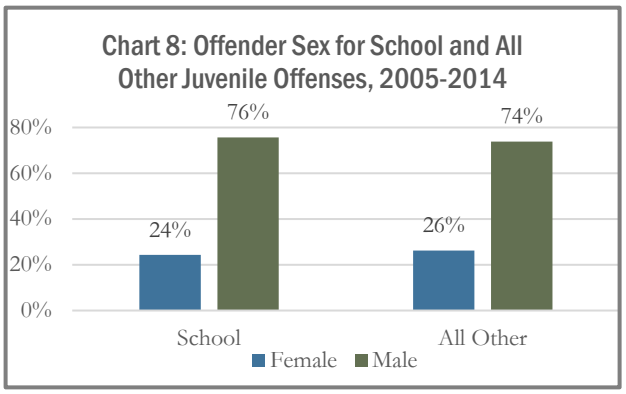
[2] Offender characteristics include results where offender information is known.

[3] $\chi^2 = 1717.317$, $p < .01$, Phi = -0.123.

[4] $p < .05$, Mean difference = 0.82591

offenders compared to non-school based drug offenders (27% and 7%, respectively). Alternatively, individuals age 14-17 represent a higher proportion of non-school based offenders across every crime type examined.

In addition to age, race and sex of the offender was also examined. A similar percentage of school and all other juvenile offenses involve female and male offenders; however, males account for approximately 51% of the school age population but 76% of school-based offenders. While males represent a disproportionate amount of both school and all other juvenile offenders, they account for a slightly larger proportion of school-based offenders.

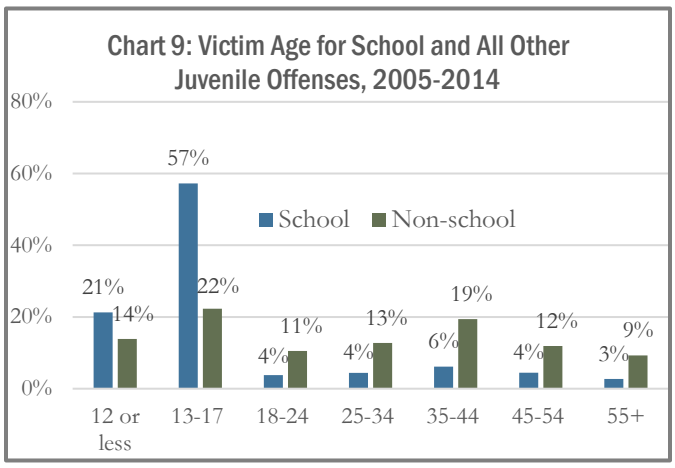


Similar to the statewide population distribution, the notable majority of both school and all other juvenile offenders are white. While still a small percentage, it is interesting that American Indians represent a notably larger percentage of school offenders compared to all other juvenile offenders. A similar, yet less pronounced, trend is present among Blacks as well. In fact, between 2010 and 2014[5], American Indians accounted for 1.9% of school-age residents (5-17) and 2.8% of school-based offenders. During the same time period, Blacks accounted for 1% of school-age residents (5-17) and 2.2% of school-based offenders[6]. Asian/Pacific Islanders evidence an opposite trend accounting for a smaller percentage of school-based offenders compared to their representation in the school-age population (0.5% and 1.45%, respectively).

Table 5: Offender Race for School and All Other Juvenile Offenses, 2005-2014

	School	All Other
American Indian	3.3%	1.7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.5%	0.4%
Black	2.2%	1.8%
White	94.1%	96.1%

Victim characteristics[7]. Victims of school-based offenses are significantly more likely to be younger compared to victims of all other juvenile offenses8. Specifically, as would be expected, the considerable majority (79%) of victims of school-based offenses are under 18 years of age compared to 36% of victims of non-school offenses. Interestingly, nearly one in five (19%)



[5] Date range reflects the most recent years for which population data were available.

[6] Population data derived from: U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). State characteristics datasets: Annual state resident population estimates for 6 race groups (5 race alone and two or more races) by age, sex, and Hispanic origin: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2015. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/popest/data/state/asrh/2015/SC-EST2015-ALLDATA6.html

[7] Victim characteristics include results where victim information is known.

[8] $\chi^2 = 7{,}809.071$, $p < .01$, Cramer's V = 0.285

victims of all other juvenile crime are between the ages of 35 and 44. Furthermore, although females represent approximately 25% of juvenile offenders, 44% of victims of school-based offenses and 50% of victims of all other juvenile offenses are female. These results suggest that a large proportion of juvenile offenses are committed by males against females.

Similar to offender characteristics, American Indians and Blacks account for a larger percentage of victims of school-based crimes compared to their representation in the school age population. Specifically, although American Indians account for 1.3% of the school-age population, 1.8% of victims of school-based crimes are American Indian. Blacks account for 0.7% of the school-age population and 1.3% of victims of school-based offenses. In regards to ethnicity, Hispanics account for similar percentages of victims for both school and all other juvenile crime.

In addition to demographic characteristics, the victim's relationship to the offender was also reviewed. Consistent with national data, the majority of victims are victimized by someone known to them rather than a stranger. Of the school-based offenses in which the relationship is known, the majority of victims are victimized by a friend/acquaintance (67%) followed by otherwise known (21%). Victims of all other juvenile offenses are most commonly victimized by a family member (36%) or friend/acquaintance (34%). Furthermore, school-based crimes are more likely to involve a victim who is also the offender and less likely to involve an offender who is a stranger. For NIBRS reporting purposes, the 'victim was offender' category includes cases "where all of the participants in the incidents were victims and offenders of the *same* offense", such as a physical altercation where both parties are charged with assault (FBI, 1992, p. 51).

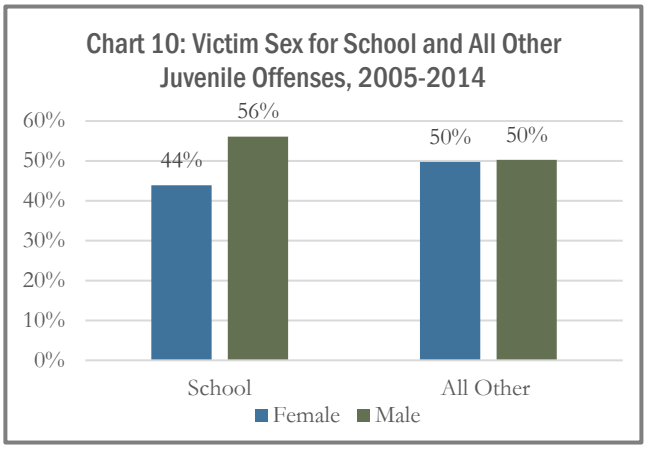


Table 6: Victim Race for School and All Other Juvenile Offenses, 2005-2014		
	School	All Other
American Indian	1.8%	0.6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.4%	0.4%
Black	1.3%	1.1%
White	96.6%	98.0%

Table 7: Victim Ethnicity for School and All Other Juvenile Offenses, 2005-2014		
	School	All Other
Hispanic Origin	10.2%	9.2%
Not of Hispanic Origin	89.8%	90.8%

Table 8: Victim-Offender Relationship		
	School	All Other
Family - Non-intimate	1.1%	36.4%
Friend/Acquaintance	67.4%	35.2%
Intimate	1.2%	3.9%
Otherwise Known	21.0%	13.0%
Stranger	1.3%	6.5%
Victim was offender	8.0%	5.0%

Prevalence of School-Based Law Enforcement in Idaho

Contacts with all law enforcement agencies in the state indicate there are 150 school-based law enforcement officers in Idaho. There are 44 sheriff's offices and 63 local law enforcement agencies in Idaho. Approximately 43% (19) of sheriff's offices employ an SRO with a total of 32 designated SROs or SRO supervisors employed by county law enforcement agencies. Forty-one percent (33) of local law enforcement agencies employ an SRO with 111 designated SROs or SRO supervisors employed by local departments. In Idaho, approximately 78% of designated SROs or SRO supervisors are employed by local law enforcement agencies with the remainder employed by sheriff's departments. Larger law enforcement agencies are significantly more likely to employ one or more designated SROs (χ^2= 14.512, p<.01, Cramer's V = 0.387). Approximately 30% of departments with 0-10 sworn officers and 100% of agencies with 100 or more sworn officers employ an SRO.

Table 9: Size of Agency Employing SRO	
Number of sworn officers	%
Small (0-10)	30
Medium (11-50)	58
Large (51-99)	80
Extra Large (100+)	100

*n=97

Nearly 63% of primary and secondary schools (not including charter schools and preschools/kindergartens) have access to an SRO, meaning an officer is assigned or available to assist at the school. Junior and senior high schools are most likely to have access to an SRO; specifically, 71% of middle schools and 70% of high schools[9] have access to an SRO. The majority (61%) of elementary schools[10] also have access to an SRO.

Table 10: Schools with Access to an SRO	
Type of School	%
K-12	29
Elementary	61
Elementary/Middle	0
Middle	71
Middle/High	50
High	70
Alternative	70
Total	63

*n=638

Survey of School Based Law Enforcement Officers

Demographics: Of the 103 survey participants, 82% are designated SROs, 9% are SRO supervisors, 6% identify as school liaison officers, and 3% perform some other role. The average age of participants is 41.6 years and the overwhelming majority are male (92%) and Caucasian (91%). On average, participants have served 14 years as law enforcement officers and 5 years as SROs. Approximately 91% have served six or more years in law enforcement while 71% have served five years or less as an SRO. The vast majority (90%) of school-based officers have more than a high school diploma or GED with 39% earning a 4-year degree or higher. Most participants became school-based officers after applying for the position (76.7%) while others were assigned by their agency (15.5%).

[9] Includes middle/high schools

[10] Includes elementary/middle schools and K-12 schools

Roles and Duties[11]: On average, school-based law enforcement officers report spending 36% of their time on law enforcement, 40% on mentoring/advising, 18% on education/teaching, and 6% on other duties.

Table 11: Gender (n=103)	
Female	8%
Male	92%

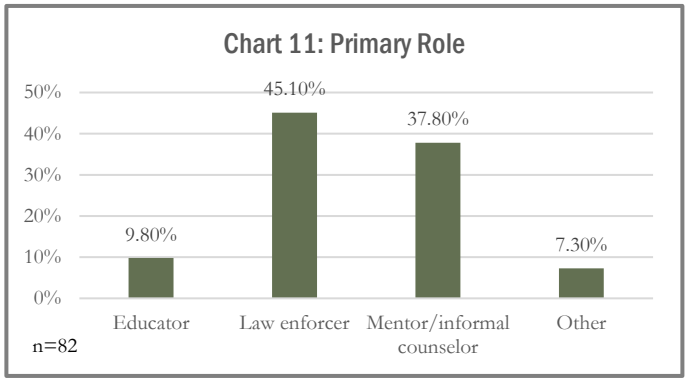
Table 12: Race (n=103)	
Caucasian	91%
Hispanic	6%
Black	1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%

Table 13: Highest Level of Education (n=100)	
2-year associate's degree	16%
4-year bachelor's degree	34%
High school diploma/GED	10%
Master's degree or higher	5%
Some college	36%

Table 14: Years as Law Enforcement Officer (n=99)	
0 to 5 years	9%
6 to 10 years	24%
11 to 15 years	31%
16 to 20 years	16%
21 to 25 years	12%
26 to 30 years	4%
30+ years	3%

Table 15: Years as an SRO (n=99)	
0 to 5 years	71%
6 to 10 years	19%
11 to 15 years	8%
16 to 20 years	1%
21 to 25 years	1%

In Idaho, law enforcement and mentoring/counseling are the most prominent roles of school-based officers with 83% identifying either law enforcement or mentoring/counseling as their primary role. An additional 37% listed law enforcement as their secondary role while 43% identified mentoring/counseling as their secondary role. The variety of duties performed by school-based officers were examined using a Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 5 (daily). The most commonly exercised duties include monitoring school grounds (4.43) and counseling/mentoring students (3.77). In addition to the duties listed in Table 8, officers also indicated coaching school sports teams, completing administrative tasks (e.g., report writing), addressing school safety, and traffic enforcement, among many others. When compared with the results from the survey of principals, there are considerable discrepancies between officer and principal perceptions of the duties school-based officers perform. Most notably, officers indicate counseling/mentoring students multiple times per week (3.77) while principals estimate officers participate in such duties less than once per month (1.48). Across every duty examined, principals underestimated the frequency of officers performing the task when compared to SRO accounts.



[11] Due to a faulty skip pattern influencing the roles and duties section of the original survey, a follow-up survey was sent to all of the participants that missed this section due to the error. As a result, the response rate for the roles and duties section of the survey was 56 percent.

Table 16: Duties of SROs		
Duty performed	SROs	Principals*
Monitor student areas or school grounds	4.43	2.21
Counseling/mentoring students	3.77	1.48
Address conflict among students or students and staff	3.09	1.28
Address delinquency (illegal acts at school)	3.06	1.81
Assist with crimes involving youth that occur outside of school	2.73	1.59
Communicate with parents about student behavior or misbehavior	2.70	1.31
Refer youths or parents to community resources	2.26	1.15
Enforcement of student Code of Conduct (school rules)	2.15	1.46
Truancy or attendance enforcement	2.06	1.08
Collaborate with community agencies to help a student obtain services/resources	1.98	1.12
Investigate or identify cases of child abuse or neglect	1.91	1.14
Attend after school events as an SRO	1.90	1.05
Teach/student education	1.88	1.27
Train/educate school staff	1.59	0.81
Searches of lockers or students	1.45	0.63
School safety drills	1.33	1.15

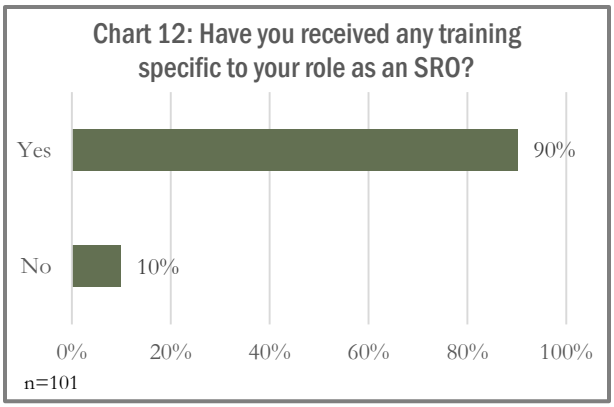
*Only includes principals of schools with access to a school-based law enforcement officer (n = 96); N SROs = 82.

In addition to examining how frequently officers engage in various SRO-related duties, participants were also asked if they felt they were used in certain roles too much, an appropriate amount, or not enough. While officers feel they are used in most roles an appropriate amount, a notable amount of officers feel they are not used enough to train/educate school staff (65%), teach/educate students (43%), assist with school safety drills (36%), and attend school staff meetings (30%).

Table 17: Use of SROs in the Following Roles			
Roles	Not enough (%)	An appropriate amount (%)	Too much (%)
Enforcement of student Code of Conduct (school rules)	0	90	10
Address delinquency (illegal acts at school)	8	90	3
Truancy or attendance enforcement	14	76	11
Counseling/mentoring students	9	91	0
Address conflict among students or students and staff	6	91	3
Train/educate school staff	65	35	0
Teach/student education	43	55	2
School safety drills	36	64	0
Attend school staff meetings	30	70	0
Monitor student areas or school grounds	2	96	1
Searches of lockers or students	8	92	0
Attend after school events as an SRO	14	86	0

*n=82

Training and Eligibility: Most agencies (62%) have some training or experience requirements for the SRO position and more than 90% of participants have received training specific to their role as a school-based officer.



Agency eligibility requirements include law enforcement experience (usually 2-3 years), completion of NASRO or other SRO specific training course, ability to work well with youth and the public, supervisor recommendation, and good standing within the department (e.g., no disciplinary action), among others.

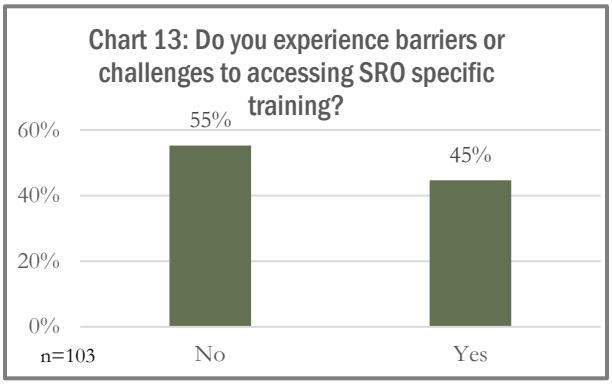
Table 18: SRO Specific Training (n=82)

Training Topic	%
School-related law (searches, free speech, etc.)	85
Active shooter	84
School-based threat assessment	79
School-based emergency planning	78
Bullying	67
Working with school administration	58
Community policing	58
Mentoring/counseling	57
Effects of trauma, neglect, or abuse on youth	48
Restorative justice in schools	44
Positive school climate	38
Child or adolescent brain development	36
Trauma-informed practice	18

The vast majority of school-based officers have received training on school-related law (85%), active shooter (84%), threat assessment (79%), and emergency planning (78%). The majority of participants have also received training on bullying (67%) while few have been trained on topics such as brain development (36%) and trauma-informed practice (18%). While officers note a variety of training topics that would benefit them in their role as an SRO, the top five include:

1. School safety (active shooter, threat assessment, emergency planning, etc.).
2. Laws/Policies (updates on laws and policies related to schools and youth).
3. Any training (NASRO or other specialized training program, trends related to youth, etc.).
4. Social media/technology.
5. Working with disabled or mentally ill youth.

Interestingly, many of the participants requesting training on topics such as school safety and laws/policies indicate they have already received some level of training on these topics. Therefore, it appears many school-based officers would like continuous training on these key issues. For example, 95% of officers requesting training on school-related and juvenile law have been trained on the issue at some point in their career. Although the majority of school-based officers have received some form of SRO specific training, nearly 45% indicate



they experience barriers to accessing such training. The most common barriers include lack of available training locally or statewide (75%) and lack of funding (64%).

Funding: The two primary funding sources for SROs are school districts and law enforcement agencies. Approximately 72% of school-based officers are fully or partially funded by law enforcement agencies and an estimated 53% are fully or partially funded by school districts.

Table 19: Funding Sources (n=99)	
School district	53%
Law enforcement agency	72%
State or federal grant	8%
Private funding	1%
Levy	1%

Of the SRO positions receiving some school district funding, more than half receive 50% or more of their funding from the school district. Similarly, of the positions receiving some form of law enforcement funding, the vast majority (75%) receive 50% or more of their funding from law enforcement. However, while only 10% of positions are funded completely by school districts, more than 35% are fully funded by law enforcement. Overall, the majority of positions appear to be funded through a combination of sources.

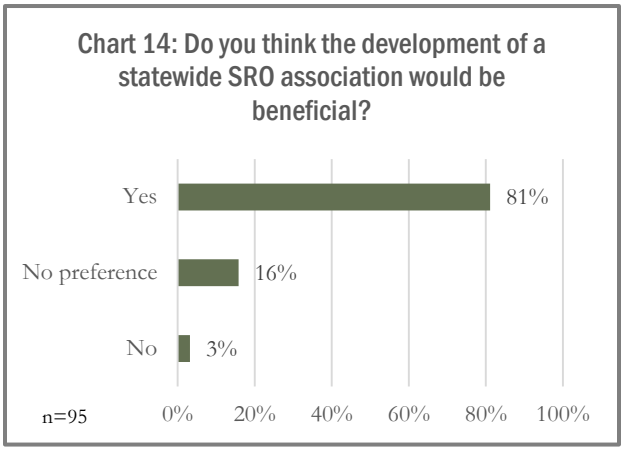
Additional SROs: Nearly three-fourths (74%) of school-based officers feel there is a need for additional SROs in their area. Many participants commented on the difficulty of serving multiple schools, the development of new schools, and the need for more SROs in elementary schools. Nearly 75% of school-based officers report serving two or more schools with a few officers responsible for as many as ten schools.

A similar sentiment is noted in the principal survey results; of the participants indicating no access to an SRO, 68% stated they would like to have an SRO at their school.

Rewards/Challenges: The overwhelming majority (94%) of school-based officers indicate the most rewarding part of their job is having a positive influence, building relationships, helping, and working with youth. Other rewards include community relations and partnerships, the opportunity to educate, and ability to provide safety. The top challenges noted by school-based officers include:

1) dealing with parents;
2) lack of understanding or support from school administrators/staff; and
3) time constraints

Recommendations: The most common recommendation from school-based officers is more training for SROs. Ideas primarily focus on local, standardized, specialized, and/or continuous training opportunities. The considerable majority of officers also support the development of a statewide association for school resource officers to facilitate training and information sharing, among other things.



Survey of School Principals[12]

Of the 172 principals who fully or partially completed the survey, the majority are male (60%) and Caucasian (97%) with an average age of 48 years. The overwhelming majority (91%) have a master's degree and have been at their current school for less than 5 years (72%). Elementary school principals represented the largest percentage of participants (44%).

Table 20: Gender	
Female	40%
Male	60%

Table 21: Race	
Caucasian	97%
Hispanic	0%
Black	1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1%
Other	1%

*n=166

Table 22: Highest Level of Education	
4-year bachelor's degree	2%
Master's degree	91%
Doctorate degree	7%

*n=170

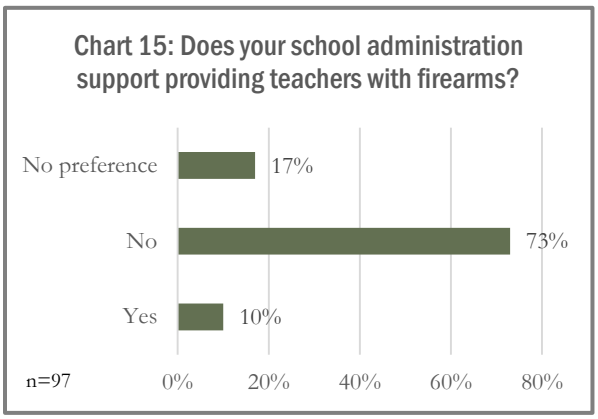
Table 23: Years as Principal of Current School	
0 to 5 years	72%
6 to 10 years	15%
11 to 15 years	8%
16 to 20 years	3%
21+ years	2%

*n=158

Table 24: Type of School	
Pre-K-Kindergarten	6%
Elementary	44%
Elementary/Middle	2%
Junior High	15%
Junior/Senior High	6%
Senior High	13%
K-12	9%
Alternative	8%
Other	6%

*participants were permitted to select all that apply; therefore, the results may not add up to 100

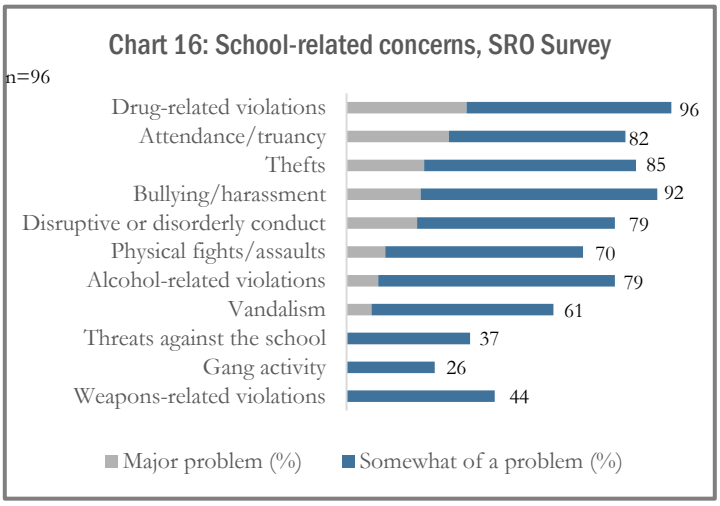
In relation to the topic of school safety, principals were asked if their school administration supported providing teachers with firearms. Results suggest that nearly 75% of school administrations do not support the implementation of policies aimed at providing teachers with firearms.



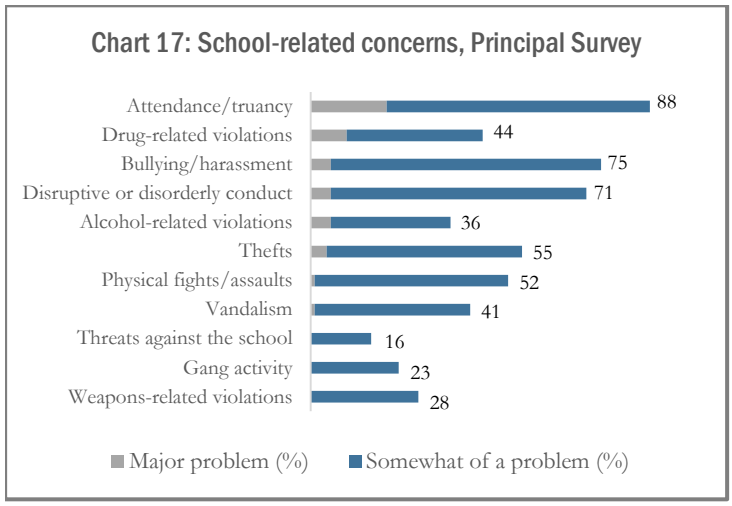
[12] A total of 172 principals (30%) fully or partially completed the survey. Approximately 24% of principals from schools that have access to a school-based law enforcement officer participated in the survey.

School-Related Concerns

In an effort to provide a general picture of school-related concerns throughout Idaho, participants were asked to rank school-related concerns based on the prevalence in their school(s). School-based officers report drug-related violations, attendance/truancy, theft, and bullying/harassment as major problems affecting the schools they serve. Similar concerns are reported by principals, although to a lesser degree. When considering only school-based officers and principals of secondary schools, drug-related violations, bullying/harassment, attendance/truancy, and theft remain top concerns; however, some discrepancies between officers and principals are identified. For example, school-based officers identify alcohol-related violations as a problem more than principals (81% and 65%, respectively) while principals report attendance/truancy as a problem more than school-based officers (97% and 85%, respectively). Furthermore, school-based officers are considerably more likely to report bullying/harassment and drug-related violations (24% and 3%) as major problems compared to principals (39% and 9%).



n=96



n=97

Table 25: Concerns of SROs and Principals at Secondary Schools

	SRO			Principal		
	Major problem (%)	Somewhat of a problem (%)	Total (%)	Major problem (%)	Somewhat of a problem (%)	Total (%)
Gang activity	0	28	28	0	32	32
Threats against the school	0	35	35	0	15	15
Weapons-related violations	0	44	44	0	27	27
Vandalism	6	54	60	3	53	56
Physical fights/assaults	11	58	69	0	65	65
Disruptive/disorderly conduct	15	64	79	6	68	74
Alcohol-related violations	8	72	**81**	6	59	**65**
Thefts	22	63	85	12	68	79
Attendance issues/truancy	28	57	**85**	24	74	**97**
Bullying/harassment	**24**	69	93	**3**	88	91
Drug-related violations	**39**	60	99	**9**	65	74

*N SROs =72; N Principals=34

Effectiveness of School-Based Law Enforcement

In order to measure effectiveness, it is important to consider the primary goals of school-based law enforcement programs: (1) improve school safety, (2) prevent school-related crime, and (3) foster relationships between law enforcement and youth. In Idaho, principals and SROs overwhelming agree that school-based law enforcement programs are successfully accomplishing these goals. In fact, more than 90% of SROs and 80% of principals agree or strongly agree that SRO positions are meeting these desired objectives. More than 96% of school-based officers and nearly 92% of principals also support the continuation of the SRO position at their school.

Table 26: Perceptions of Effectiveness

	SRO (%)	Principal (%)*
The SRO position helps build or improve relationships between law enforcement and youth	95.1	83.3
The SRO position helps prevent and/or reduce crime in schools	95.0	80.2
The SRO position helps improve school safety	95.1	87.5
I believe the SRO position should continue	96.1	91.7

*Only includes principals of schools with access to a school-based law enforcement officer (n= 96); N SRO = 102.

In order to study this issue more closely, the perceived influence of school-based law enforcement on specific offenses was also examined. School-based officers and principals were asked how the presence of an SRO influenced the frequency of a variety of offenses at their school.

School-based officers report having the most influence on:

1) alcohol-related violations (80%)
2) weapons-related violations (80%), and
3) drug-related violations (77%).

Conversely, principals perceived SROs as having the most influence on:

1) bullying/harassment (66%),
2) disruptive or disorderly conduct (62%), and
3) physical fights/assaults (56%).

Considering that many of these issues are less of a concern at primary schools, perceived influence was further examined among SROs and principals of secondary schools only. Principals of secondary schools indicate notably higher perceived effectiveness of SROs reducing school-based offenses compared to principals in general. For example, 50% of principals in general felt the SRO decreased or significantly decreased drug related violations at their school compared to 79% of principals at secondary schools. Furthermore, principals of secondary schools perceived SROs as having the most influence on physical fights/assault (82%), drug-related violations (79%), and bullying/harassment (79%). While these results indicate some discrepancy between school-based officers and principals regarding which violations are reduced by the presence of an SRO, there appears to be general agreement among participants that SROs are effectively reducing the prevalence of school-based offenses.

Table 27: How has the presence of an SRO influenced the frequency of the following offenses at your school(s)?						
	SRO (%)			Principal (%)		
	Decreased	Significantly Decreased	Total	Decreased	Significantly Decreased	Total
Alcohol-related violations	61	19	80	34	11	45
Weapons-related violations	50	30	80	34	14	47
Drug-related violations	58	19	77	39	11	50
Disruptive or disorderly conduct	60	17	77	53	9	62
Physical fights/assaults	57	20	77	43	13	56
Bullying/harassment	69	8	77	64	2	66
Thefts	64	9	73	48	3	52
Threats against the school	42	29	71	30	11	41
Vandalism	57	11	69	42	6	48
Gang activity	34	25	58	26	13	38
Attendance issues/truancy	38	0	38	42	2	44

*Only includes principals of schools with access to a school-based law enforcement officer (n=95); N SRO = 91.

Table 28: How has the presence of an SRO influenced the frequency of the following offenses at your school(s)? - Secondary Schools						
	SRO (%)			Principal (%)		
	Decreased	Significantly Decreased	Total	Decreased	Significantly Decreased	Total
Alcohol-related violations	65	17	83	50	24	74
Drug-related violations	66	16	81	53	27	79
Weapons-related violations	54	26	80	41	32	74
Disruptive or disorderly conduct	64	13	77	61	15	76
Bullying/harassment	71	6	77	77	3	79
Physical fights/assaults	57	17	74	55	27	82
Thefts	66	7	73	62	6	68
Threats against the school	46	26	71	41	24	65
Vandalism	59	9	68	59	15	74
Gang activity	37	24	61	27	29	56
Attendance issues/truancy	34	0	34	46	3	49

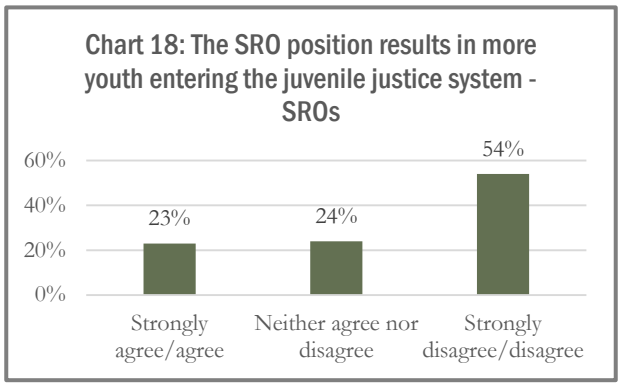
*Only includes principals of secondary schools with access to a school-based law enforcement officer (n=34); N SROs = 70

School to Prison Pipeline

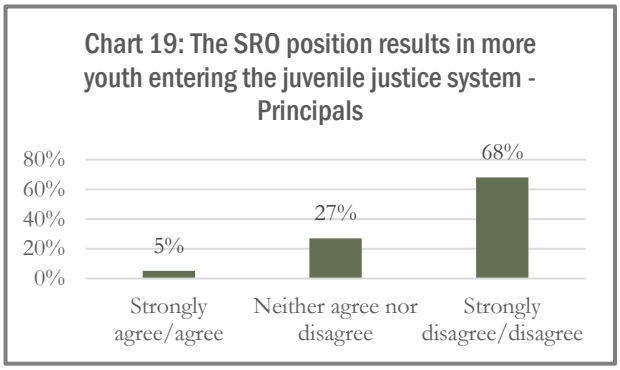
In addition to discussions of effectiveness, there is widespread debate regarding the influence of school-based law enforcement programs on youth involvement in the justice system. Some research suggests that school-based law enforcement programs contribute to the growing number of youth entering the juvenile justice system by increasing the use of criminal sanctions for behavior that would have previously been considered student misconduct and handled informally; a process known as the school-to-prison pipeline (see Review of Research for more details). In an effort to conduct a comprehensive examination of this phenomenon, multiple data sources were utilized including surveys, IIBRS, and school disciplinary data.

School-based law enforcement and principal surveys. In order to measure perceptions of the school-to-prison pipeline, both school-based law enforcement officers and principals were asked about the influence of the SRO position on youth involvement in the juvenile justice system. The majority of school based officers (54%) and principals (68%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that school-based law enforcement increased youth involvement in the justice system. However, nearly one in four officers agreed or strongly agreed that SRO positions have that effect.

Principals were asked about the existence of zero tolerance policies at their school, defined as those in which certain behaviors result in automatic expulsion from school. Zero-tolerance policies are often discussed in relation to the school-to-prison pipeline, since these policies can have unintentional consequences like removing students from the educational system, a protective factor. The majority of responding principals indicate having a zero tolerance policy for possession of a firearm (82%) and possession of other weapons (56%). A high percentage also report having such policies for illegal drug use (47%).



*n=102

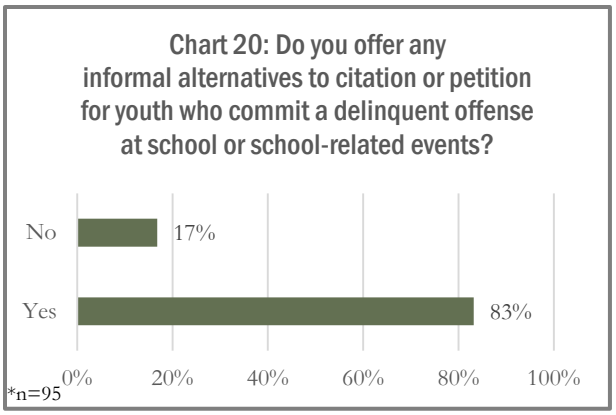


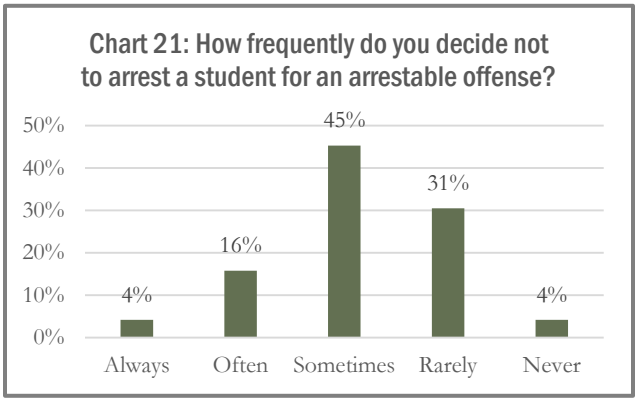
*Only includes principals of schools with access to a school-based law enforcement officer (n = 96)

Table 29: Zero-Tolerance Policies	
Possession of a firearm	82%
Possession of other weapons (e.g., knife, replica gun, or other sharp object)	56%
Bullying	35%
Assault/fighting	30%
Illegal drugs	47%
Alcohol	37%

*Only includes principals of schools with access to a school-based law enforcement officer (n=95)

In addition to the presence of zero-tolerance policies, availability of alternatives and factors influencing decision-making are important to consider regarding the phenomenon of the school-to-prison pipeline. Therefore, school-based law enforcement officers were asked about the availability of diversion programs at the school(s) they serve as well as what factors influence their decision to arrest. More than 80% of school-based officers indicate the availability of informal alternatives (i.e., diversion programs) at the school(s) they serve. However, more than one-third of officers report they rarely decide not to arrest for an arrestable offense compared to 15% who report they often do so.





While there are a variety of factors influencing an officer's decision to use formal sanctions, participants reported that the most important considerations include:

1) applicable laws, rules, and regulations,
2) severity of the alleged misbehavior, and
3) quality of evidence.

The majority of school-based officers (62%) consider the potential consequences of the student's involvement in the juvenile justice system as an important or very important factor when deciding whether or not to use formal sanctions. For example, the potential for the student to get behind in school while incarcerated was noted as a concern. Furthermore, the need to ensure that the child is punished ranked as one of the least important factors when deciding whether or not to use formal sanctions.

Table 30: Please rank the following factors based on their importance in your decision to use formal sanctions.	
Applicable laws, rules, and regulations	4.58
Severity of the alleged misbehavior	4.56
Quality of evidence	4.43
The student's history of misbehavior	4.08
Expectations of whether the student will continue to misbehave	3.96
The student's attitude when approached about the alleged misbehavior	3.85
The potential consequences of the student's involvement in the juvenile justice system	3.59
The wishes of school administrators	3.26
The need to ensure the student is punished for misbehavior	3.13
Perception of how the child's parent(s) will respond to the misbehavior	2.83

*n=93

*n=95

School Comparisons

In an effort to further examine the effectiveness of SROs as well as the school-to-prison pipeline, disciplinary data was obtained from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). Every other year, schools report a host of information to OCR including number of expulsions, suspensions, arrests, and referrals to law enforcement. Schools also report the number of reported incidents of harassment/bullying on the basis of sex, disability, race, color, or national origin as well as the number of students disciplined for such behavior. Because the data are provided at the discretion of the school, results are limited to what each school reported. Therefore, results only include incidents reported by the school and do not account for potential inaccuracies in the data or differences in reporting practices.

Table 31: Comparison of 18 schools with and without SROs

	2011-2012		2013-2014	
Expulsions	Total	Rate	Total	Rate
SRO	2	0.054	6	0.155
No SRO	26	0.701	4	0.104
Suspensions				
SRO	345	9.237	279	7.213
No SRO	351	9.469	239	6.187
Arrests				
SRO	2	0.054	8	0.207
No SRO	4	0.108	2	0.052
Referrals to Law Enforcement				
SRO	57	1.526	33	0.853
No SRO	42	1.133	51	1.320
Disciplined for Harassment/Bullying				
SRO	35	0.937	13	0.336
No SRO	90	2.428	62	1.605
Reported Harassment/Bullying				
SRO	27	0.723	23	0.595
No SRO	111	2.994	80	2.071
Total Enrollment				
SRO	3735		3868	
No SRO	3707		3863	

*Rates are per 100 students enrolled.
*Schools were selected for comparisons based on enrollment numbers.

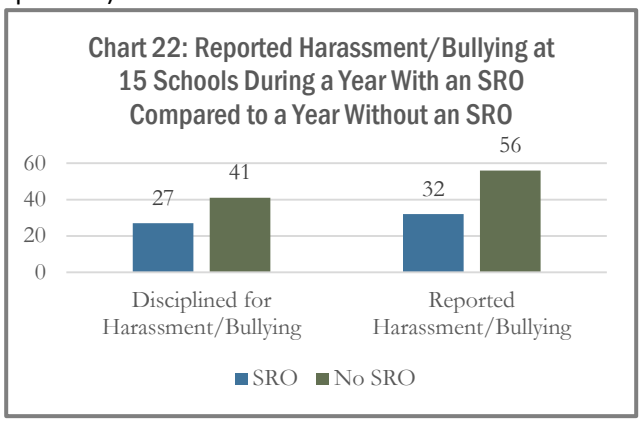
In order to adequately examine the prevalence of school discipline between schools with and without SROs, schools were divided into comparison groups based on their total enrollment in the 2014-2015 school year. Eight schools with an SRO (who spends a consistent or scheduled amount of time at the school each week) were compared with eight similarly sized schools without an SRO. In the 2011-2012 school year, schools with an SRO reported lower rates of expulsions, suspensions, arrests, reports of harassment/bullying, and discipline for harassment/bullying compared to schools without an SRO. However, in the 2013-2014 school year, schools with SROs reported higher rates of expulsions, suspensions, and arrests compared to schools without an SRO. Across both years examined, schools with an SRO evidenced notably lower

Table 32: Comparison of 15 Schools With a Change in SRO Status from 2009 to 2011 or 2011 to 2013

	SRO		No SRO	
	N	Rate	No SRO	Rate
Expulsions	4	0.092	6	0.143
Suspensions	199	4.558	376	8.987
Arrests	0	0.000	15	0.359
Referrals to Law Enforcement	2	0.046	23	0.550
Disciplined for Harassment/Bullying	27	0.618	41	0.980
Reported Harassment/Bullying	32	0.733	56	1.338

*Rates are per 100 students enrolled.

rates of reported harassment/bullying compared to schools without an SRO. In fact, the average rate of reported harassment/bullying across both years was nearly 4 times higher in schools *without* an SRO (2.5325 per 100) compared to schools *with* an SRO (0.659 per 100).



Due to fluctuations in funding, some schools' access to an SRO varied over the time period examined. A total of 15 schools evidenced a change in SRO status between one of the years in which disciplinary data are available (i.e., 2009-2010, 2011-2012, and 2013-2014) and reported disciplinary data both years. The comparison of these schools with and without access to an SRO indicate less frequent use of school disciplinary action during the year in which each school had access to an SRO. During the year these schools did not have access to an SRO, there were a total of 376 suspensions (8.987 per 100 students) compared to 199 suspensions (4.558 per 100 students) during the year when each school had an SRO available. Similarly, the year when each school had access to an SRO evidenced notably fewer arrests, referrals to law enforcement, disciplinary action for harassment/bullying, and reports of harassment/bullying.

Agency Comparisons

Considering that changes in school disciplinary action may be influenced by variation in use of more formal sanctions, IIBRS data were also examined and compared among similar agencies with and without SROs. During the time period examined (for which data are available), four agencies were identified as experiencing a change in the employment status of an SRO. Specifically, these agencies reported two consecutive years without employing an SRO and two consecutive years with employment of an SRO. As illustrated in Table 33, higher rates of school-based offenses[13] were reported to law enforcement during the two years with an SRO compared to the two years without an SRO. However, it is important to note that the rate of non-school offenses[14] was also higher during years with an SRO. In addition to comparing agencies with a change in the employment status of an SRO during the designated time period, similar agencies with and without an SRO were also compared.

Table 33: Average Rate of School and Non-School Offenses by Agency for Two Years with an SRO Compared to Two Years without an SRO

	SRO		No SRO	
	School	Non-School	School	Non-School
American Falls PD	2.335	9.088	0.445	3.785
Boise CSO	1.182	1.103	0.454	2.727
Shelley PD	1.135	3.748	0.896	6.046
Shoshone CSO	0.251	4.540	0.592	3.094
Total	1.226	4.619	0.597	3.913

*Comparisons based on total school enrollment and general population served by the agency
*Rates calculated based on the population served by each agency (per 1,000)

Agencies were matched for comparison based on the general population and

[13] Includes offenses committed by school-age offenders (5-17 years) at school, on school days (Monday-Friday not including holidays), during school hours (7am-4pm), and during the school season (August 15-June 5).
[14] Includes offenses committed by school-age offenders (5-17 years) away from school during the school season (August 15-June 5).

school enrollment in the area served by the agency. Specifically, agencies with a general population and school enrollment within an average of 10% of each other were matched for comparison. Of these comparisons, three had a different SRO status between the two similarly matched agencies (i.e., one employed an SRO and the other did not). As shown in Table 34, using the same years for comparison, agencies who employed an SRO reported notably higher rates of school and non-school offenses compared to similar agencies that did not employ an SRO. Specifically, agencies with an SRO reported more than three times the rate of school-based offenses compared to similar agencies without an SRO.

Table 34: Average Rate of School and Non-School Offenses for 6 Agencies With and Without SROs for Two Years				
	School Offenses		Non-School Offenses	
	SRO	No SRO	SRO	No SRO
Agency Comparison 1	0.351	0.454	1.053	2.727
Agency Comparison 2	3.057	0.487	15.918	3.910
Agency Comparison 3	1.321	0.590	6.039	1.769
Total	**1.576**	**0.511**	**7.670**	**2.802**

*Comparisons based on total school enrollment and general population served by the agency
*Rates calculated based on the population served by each agency (per 1,000)

In order to examine this observation further, all agencies with and without SROs were compared using t-tests for significance. Analysis of IIBRS data indicate no statistically significant differences between the rate[15] of reported school-based offenses and agency employment of an SRO. Thus, agencies with at least one SRO did *not* have significantly higher rates of school offenses reported to law enforcement compared to agencies without an SRO. In regards to disciplinary data, agencies with an SRO noted significantly higher rates of suspensions and referrals to law enforcement compared to agencies without an SRO. While this finding remains consistent in specific analysis of rural agencies, the effect is eliminated when considering only urban agencies (see appendix). While agency employment of an SRO had no statistically significant effect on school-based offenses, the average amount of time the SRO(s) spent on law enforcement and mentoring/counseling roles did evidence a statistically significant effect. Specifically, as the amount of time the SRO(s) spent on law enforcement increased, the rate of school-based offenses also increased. Alternatively, as the amount of time the SRO(s) spent on mentoring/counseling increased, the rate of school-based offenses decreased. In other words, the influence of the school-to-prison pipeline is minimized when the SRO emphasizes a mentoring/counseling role instead of a law enforcement role.

Table 35: Average Time Spent on Each Role and Number of School-Based Offenses by Agency		
Roles/Duties	**Pearson Correlation**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Law Enforcement	0.242	0.000*
Mentoring/Counseling	-0.183	0.007*
Education	-0.127	0.640

*$p < 0.05$

[15] Rates were calculated using the total school enrollment for each agency

Conclusion

School-based law enforcement is commonplace in Idaho with an estimated 63% of schools having access to an SRO. Common needs identified within the profession include funding for more SROs, increased training opportunities available locally and statewide, and improved collaboration with school staff. Similar to previous research, current findings are mixed in regards to effectiveness of SROs and the school-to-prison pipeline. Both SROs and school principals have highly positive perceptions of effectiveness. Furthermore, analysis of disciplinary data finds considerably fewer reported incidents of bullying/harassment in schools with an SRO. However, rural agencies with an SRO evidence significantly higher rates of reported suspensions and referrals to law enforcement, although no such effect is observed in urban jurisdictions. While initial agency comparisons suggest nearly three times higher reported incidents of school-based crime among agencies with an SRO compared to similar agencies without an SRO, further analysis indicates no statistically significant difference between rates of school based offenses and agency employment of an SRO. SRO emphasis on mentoring/counseling was also found to significantly reduce the prevalence of reported school-based offenses. Therefore, school-based law enforcement programs effectively improve perceptions of school safety among principals and reduce the prevalence of reported harassment/bullying in schools. However, SRO programs with a heavy law enforcement emphasis may also contribute to the criminalization of student misconduct and the school-to-prison pipeline.

The presented findings underscore areas for development within school-based law enforcement in Idaho. First, SROs highlight training as a critical need; therefore, implementing affordable and local SRO specific trainings is an important step for improving the impact of school-based law enforcement programs. Survey responses revealed that school principals did not always agree on the roles and duties of SROs and SROs tended to want more involvement with school administration. Therefore, it may prove beneficial to provide joint training to school administrators and SROs on the role and duties of SROs. Second, considering the positive influence of mentoring/counseling on reducing the criminalization of student misconduct, less emphasis on law enforcement and greater focus on mentoring/counseling would be beneficial. Training could also help to provide the proper mentoring/counseling skills. Lastly, SRO programs have the potential to be key components of anti-bullying and harassment efforts in schools. A team approach involving meaningful collaboration between school officials and school-based law enforcement officers is a promising framework for improving school response to bullying/harassment.

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Appendix

T-test: Juvenile Crimes Reported to Law Enforcement by Agency Employment of an SRO					
	Mean		Std. Deviation		Sig. (2-tailed)
	SRO	No SRO	SRO	No SRO	
School	6.89	9.25	5.53	50.97	0.433
Non-school	23.90	36.16	14.46	103.37	0.068
Summer	6.75	8.26	5.11	22.18	0.292
Arrest only (school months)	16.90	20.15	11.19	57.91	0.284
Arrest only (summer months)	3.22	6.03	2.88	18.80	0.017

T-test: Reported School Disciplinary Actions by Agency Employment of an SRO					
	Mean		Std. Deviation		Sig. (2-tailed)
	SRO	No SRO	SRO	No SRO	
Expulsions	2.45	1.73	10.08	4.79	0.482
Suspensions	84.10	57.07	49.42	62.61	0.000*
Arrest	1.44	0.79	4.14	2.87	0.162
Referrals to Law Enforcement	7.40	3.37	10.66	6.07	0.001*
Disciplined for Harassment/Bullying	6.75	10.56	8.76	36.61	0.265
Reports of Harassment/Bullying	5.49	9.12	6.41	23.48	0.102

*$p < 0.05$

T-test: Reported School Disciplinary Actions by Rural Agency Employment of an SRO					
	Mean		Std. Deviation		Sig. (2-tailed)
	SRO	No SRO	SRO	No SRO	
Expulsions	3.79	1.23	14.12	3.32	0.191
Suspensions	90.43	57.23	50.58	63.58	0.001*
Arrest	2.17	0.85	5.60	3.03	0.107
Referrals to Law Enforcement	9.25	3.01	13.41	5.83	0.002*
Disciplined for Harassment/Bullying	8.44	11.17	10.15	38.75	0.609
Reports of Harassment/Bullying	6.88	9.59	7.20	24.79	0.293

*$p < 0.05$

T-test: Reported School Disciplinary Actions by Urban Agency Employment of an SRO					
	Mean		Std. Deviation		Sig. (2-tailed)
	SRO	No SRO	SRO	No SRO	
Expulsions	1.14	5.94	1.92	10.52	0.126
Suspensions	77.88	55.73	47.88	56.13	0.151
Arrest	0.72	0.31	1.59	0.82	0.353
Referrals to Law Enforcement	5.59	6.20	6.63	7.32	0.763
Disciplined for Harassment/Bullying	5.10	5.87	6.82	9.05	0.723
Reports of Harassment/Bullying	4.13	5.49	5.24	7.30	0.523

*$p < 0.05$