Pennsylvania School Resource Officers as Mentor/Counselors, Including Levels of Intervention

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Dedication

To Andy, Greg, and Katie:

Thank you for allowing me to disappear with my computer for hours on end. Thank you for having fun family adventures on weekends and then telling me all about them! Most of all, thank you for your moral support and believing that I could succeed.

Best family ever!

To Siri:

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Abstract

This study begins with an examination of current scholarly literature surrounding School Resource Officers (SROs) and the SRO triad. The SRO triad is the foundation defining that SROs operate as law enforcement, informal mentor/counselor, and law-related teacher. The first research question examined how SROs view their positions within their organizations and how they identify themselves within the triad. The hypothesis that SROs most strongly associate with the mentor/counselor prong of their position was supported. A hierarchical cluster analysis was also performed to group SROs into clusters based on frequency of job-related behaviors, rather than mere self-selection into prongs. The cluster analysis revealed two distinct clusters of SRO behaviors with SROs in Cluster 1 reporting significantly more likelihood of feeding students, donating necessities to students, and sparking interest in law enforcement than Cluster 2. A second research question focused on how SROs respond to incidents of misbehaviors and crime within schools in Pennsylvania. A regression analysis predicting likelihood of diverting students from the justice system from SRO behavior indices suggested the number of teaching tasks was a stronger, more positive predictor of diversion than mentoring or law enforcement tasks. In addition, the survey revealed that, despite having the power to arrest, SROs most often opt for a much less intrusive intervention, and prefer, with few exceptions, to refer an incident to school administrators for discipline. Significance of this research highlights the positive attributes of School Resource Officers, and should be taken into consideration when resources are considered for introduction to schools.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

The effort to protect our country's most valuable assets, our children, gained momentum after the tragic massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut on December 14, 2012. On that day a shooter forcefully entered Sandy Hook Elementary School and killed 20 elementary school children and six staff members after killing his mother away from school grounds (Langman, 2012). The imagery of a safe haven school ground was shattered and the country was shaken. Twenty-seven lives were lost in that building, including the shooter, and questions arose as how to best protect our children in school. School security measures became a priority (Malcolm, 2018; Mallin & Flaherty, 2018). New methods for the securing of buildings emerged, including the addition of security cameras and, most seemingly logical, the addition of armed police officers within our school buildings (St. George & Wiggins, 2013).

The concept of police officers in schools is not a new idea. According to the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), specially trained police officers have been assigned to schools since the 1950's (NASRO, 2017). The premier design began in Flint Michigan and, as of 2007, there are an estimated 20,000 school resource officers, or SROs, nationwide (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007). Despite the presence of police in our schools for nearly 70 years, misconceptions have persisted that these officers transform a learning environment into a police state (Berger, 2002). Critics suggest that because police have the power to arrest, then arrest will be the only option utilized regardless of the seriousness of the incident. Criticism of police in our schools suggests that an aura of mistrust is created with the belief that the presence of an SRO actually encourages students to misbehave (Berger, 2002).

The misconception that SROs arrest simply due to the presence of a disturbance or crime detracts from the professionalism of the SRO position. These misconceptions, coupled with the personal experience of the researcher, allowed for the gap in research to be filled with explanations of how SROs service their schools and how they intervene when encountering incidents of misbehaviors and crimes. As professionalism progresses in the policing industry, SROs are included in regular trainings to be effective within their roles. As early as the 1930's in the Wickersham Commission Reports, Monroe & Garrett (1931) indicate that professionalism in policing is essential to job performance and satisfaction. The SRO is more than a uniform and gun strolling the hallways proactively seeking arrests, citations, and statistics. These officers, tasked with working alongside children, are specially trained by NASRO to understand that policing in schools is different than policing the streets (Bridges, 2017). SROs often volunteer for their assignments, are passionate about their positions, and are invested in the welfare of their school communities. However, there are certain characteristics to ensure an officer is a good fit for working in a school environment. The officer selected for the position must be interested in working with youth, must have empathy for students with emotional disturbances and mental illness, must have excellent interpersonal skills, must easily build rapport and form supportive relationships (James, Logan, & Davis, 2011). This officer must also be able to balance the needs of the school district with that of the police organization. The SRO is the liaison between the two entities.

Former Tucson, Arizona Chief of Police Bernard Garmire (now deceased) recognized the paradigm shift within policing for a successful SRO program (NASRO, 2007). Garmire cited that the procedures and goals will, "upon examination, prove that it aspires toward innovation and a more sophisticated service to the community" (NASRO, 2007, p. 8). Garmire observed that

in a dynamic society, roles fulfilled by its institutions change as society changes. In part, as a result of Chief Garmire's proactive approach, Tucson, Arizona has been recognized by NASRO as the program that paved the way for modern SRO programs (NASRO, 2007).

SRO Training

During NASRO training, officers are offered tips and suggestions for building positive relationships with teens and school staff. The training is formatted to focus on the three primary roles of the SRO, referred to as the SRO triad or triad model. The three prongs of the triad define that SROs act as law enforcement, informal mentor/counselor, and law related teacher (May & Higgins, 2011; Rosiak, 2009). Instruction involves 40 hours of training for the basic SRO class which includes education on all three prongs of the triad. An understanding of teen brain development as well as de-escalation techniques are part of the law enforcement prong. In the mentor and counseling prong training, officers receive tools to act as positive role models in addition to informal counseling techniques. For the teaching portion of the triad, officers learn both classroom management tools and communication skills in order relay law-related education to students (NASRO, 2018). To supplement training on the triad approach, SROs are taught about social media investigations, human trafficking, violence and victimization, and building relationships with diverse students. The advanced SRO training is comprised of 24 hours of instruction and addresses law updates, social media evolution, current youth related topics, and the skills to perform a site-assessment at the SRO's school. The advanced course supplements standard police training and requires successful completion of the basic SRO course (NASRO, 2018).

The skills taught through NASRO training can be applied across multiple prongs of the triad. Active listening skills are taught and may be applied during interviews, as well as while

counseling students, or during casual conversations. Engaging with students and letting them know you are interested in what they have to say will serve as the foundation for long term relationships (Daniels, Bilsky, Chamberlain, & Haist, 2011; Schlosser, 2014). As relationships are nurtured, crime prevention develops organically. According to Sandy Hook Promise, the national non-profit organization that evolved following the school shooting, in four out of five school shootings, at least one other person had knowledge of the attacker's plan but failed to report it. The organization reports that in almost every documented case, “warning signs were given off that were not understood, were not acted upon quickly or were not shared with someone who could help” (Sandyhookpromise.org, 2018). Having access to School Resource Officers in school allows for the opportunity to speak with an officer in a comfortable environment during a period of emotional neutrality. Outside of the school environment, students may never have the occasion to speak with an officer unless a 911 call were placed or they were in need help. Given those circumstance, the opportunity for casual conversation may not be available. If the encounter is strictly business, there is little opportunity to establish a relationship. Within the school building, students are able to feel comfortable on their “home turf” and may be more willing to engage in conversation if prompted by the SRO. This allows for the diversity of speaking with a community member not typically available unless beckoned. This conversation in a comfortable and controlled environment may negate any preconceived notions or stereotypes students may have about police.

While engaging in teaching lessons, active listening skills will enhance the lesson and allow for back-and-forth between “teacher” and student to ensure that the communication sent is the same which is received (Birzer & Tannehill, 2001). Another aspect to the teaching prong is achieving a thorough competency in technology. This will allow the SRO to conduct successful

investigations and mentor students on proper digital citizenry. In order to counsel students effectively on proper internet activity, the SRO must exhibit proficiency with popular social media platforms, and stay current on the language used by teens. Finally, the threat assessment training allows the SRO to work with guidance counselors, Student Assistance Teams (SAP), and administrators to assist in identifying a student who may be in crisis (NASRO, 2018).

The need for this study has emerged as SRO numbers continue to rise. The 2007 statistic from NASRO estimates approximately 20,000 SROs nationwide (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007). This estimation is based upon the lack of mandatory reporting requirements for law enforcement assignments. As SRO numbers increase, so do their number of interactions with students every day. The goal of this study is to illustrate how SROs are interacting with students when faced with misbehaviors and crimes. While widely accepted that the SRO position has three essential functions, the least attention, in research and in practice, is given to the teaching prong. The second goal of this study is to highlight teaching opportunities outside of the traditional D.A.R.E (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) curricula, which is commonly associated with SROs.

Definition of Terms

The terms that are used in this study are derived from the policing and educational community or are designed to explain concepts within this study and are defined below:

Crime: A violation of the Crimes Code of Pennsylvania. A statute defines the violation as well as the grading of the offense.

Intervention: How the school-based police officer chooses to take a course of professional action when presented with a criminal violation or misbehavior.

Juvenile: A young person under the age of 18.

Misbehavior: An action or course of conduct that is inappropriate or improper. This action may or may not fit the criteria for a criminal violation; however, in this context, it will be used for a minor disruption of sorts.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): This contractual agreement between school district and police department lists the responsibilities, and limitations, of the SRO; in essence, a job description.

MPOETC: Municipal Police Officer Education and Training Commission.

NASRO: The National Association of School Resource Officers.

School Police Officer (SPO): A sworn law enforcement officer assigned to a school who has not received training in the SRO triad model; not a member of NASRO.

School Resource Officer (SRO): A sworn law enforcement officer assigned to a school who has received training in the triad model of law enforcement, mentoring and counseling, and law related teaching through NASRO.

Student: A person attending school. In this context, included are those persons in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade and may include persons over 18 years old.

Triad Model or SRO Triad: The three prongs of the School Resource Officer position. They are law enforcement, mentor/counselor, and teacher.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study investigated the following research questions and assumed the subsequent hypotheses:

RQ (1) How do SROs view themselves in their role within their organization?

H (1) Pennsylvania SROs would most strongly identify with the Mentor/Counselor role of their position.

RQ (2) How do Pennsylvania School Resource Officers respond to incidents of juvenile misbehaviors and crimes in school?

H (2) Pennsylvania SROs will demonstrate differing diversion scores based on different job-related behaviors.

The following chapters will begin with an analysis of existing literature surrounding school resource officers. Through his examination the researcher was able to identify a gap in literature as to the daily practices of SROs and how their prong of association in the SRO triad corresponds with their activities. Following the literature review is a quantitative analysis of SRO methodology. This analysis includes the process for participant selection and the survey methodology. Results then follow to answer the two research questions. First is the rationale for utilizing cluster analysis to analyze SRO identification, then multiple regression tests explore the importance SROs place on diversion from the juvenile justice system. Appendices at the conclusion of the capstone include the survey instrument and examples of the three prongs of the SRO triad in action.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The evidenced based research regarding the success or failure of School Resource Officers, or SROs, for Middle and High Schools throughout the United States is very limited. Much of the existing literature relating to SROs focuses on a feeling of safety and security among administrators, staff, and students within schools (Black, 2009; Theriot & Orme, 2016; Trump, 2004). These studies focus primarily on the Law Enforcement prong of the SRO triad, and disregard the Mentor/Counselor and Teaching prongs essential to the SRO position. Following the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut on December 14, 2012, the effort to protect our country's most valuable asset, our children, gained momentum. School security became a priority resulting in new methods for securing buildings, the addition of security cameras, and most seemingly logical, the addition of armed police officers within our school buildings (St. George & Wiggins, 2013). It was then that SRO programs grew in popularity across the country. The following examination of current research addresses how SROs view their roles within their organizations, as well as their use of discretion within that role. Popular press is also examined to learn how SROs apply alternatives to the law enforcement prong of the SRO triad.

The National Association of School Resource Officers, or NASRO, is the organizational leader in training, education, and resources for School Resource Officers. NASRO provides SROs with educational support and training in Mentor/Counseling, as well as the tools required to build positive relationships with both students and staff (NASRO, 2017). Additional trainings offered advance the SRO's knowledge and skills as a law enforcement officer, informal counselor, and educator, as well as crime prevention through environmental design (CPtED),

school law updates, and risk management. NASRO is dedicated to providing SROs with comprehensive tools to operate successfully within an educational environment and understand concepts such as de-escalation techniques and the development of the teen brain. Along with the various training components, tools are provided so SROs have access to current and applicable law-related education as well as classroom management tips (NASRO, 2017). The SRO position has a foundation in the Triad model. This model transform traditional policing and expands the responsibilities of the SRO to do more than just enforce the law. To expand on Chief Garmire, policing in schools involves more than applying law enforcement tactics, it's drawing upon years of experience deescalating crises, and utilizing community resources available to police in the school environment. The triad is composed of three prongs - which the SRO function as a Law Enforcement officer, a Mentor/Counselor, and a Teacher. The benefit to this concept is, that while applying all three, the SRO can focus as much or as little on the prong that is most required by the school district or community. In a community plagued by gang violence or drug activity, the law enforcement tasks of the SRO may require more focus. Referrals to juvenile court or notifications to the Office of Children and Youth may be required to force intervention upon families with troubled juveniles. In a community which lacks sufficient resources to educate about drug and alcohol trends, the SRO may need to dedicate more time into educational endeavors like D.A.R.E (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), or the health risks in vaping or opioid use, and dangers associated with binge drinking. The amount of time spent mentoring and counseling may outweigh the time spent teaching, and that ratio may vary based upon the school building or grade level. An SRO in an elementary school focuses less upon the law enforcement prong of the triad and spend more time on the teaching prong, educating students on police and community helpers, building positive relationships, stranger danger, and online safety.

Tasks of the SRO

The tasks for a School Resource Officer are much different than an officer assigned to routine patrol duties. Some of the tasks among SROs in a Colorado study include handling criminal complaints, conducting investigations, establishing relationships with students to prevent juvenile delinquency, teaching law-related topics in classrooms, participating in after-school activities, counseling students, and participating in school/district committees (Weiler & Cray, 2011). The tasks of the SRO program investigated by Weiler and Cray (2001) were threefold:

1. Provide a safe learning environment and help reduce school violence,
2. Improve school law enforcement collaboration, and
3. Improve perceptions and relations among students, staff, and law enforcement officials.

According to Benigni (2001), a respondent reported his role as an SRO being consistent with the expectations set forth by NASRO as well as his police department. He was expected to be visible, available, and open-minded. The SRO is not a hall monitor, cafeteria monitor, or lavatory monitor, and when the issue of an arrest arises, the SRO and principal discuss the incident to make a mutual decision on the outcome (2001). Complimenting Benigni, the need for a strong relationship between the SRO and top school administrators strengthens the notion of a collaborative approach to the benefit of stakeholders (Chrusciel, et al, 2015; Wolf, 2013). The expectations or tasks to be performed by the officer assigned as the SRO must be clear from the police department as well. If for example, the position is viewed as a “babysitter” or as a dead-end assignment, as opposed to any other specialized assignment, the likelihood of filling the position with an undesirable candidate increases. Having an undesirable candidate creates

concerns about possible violations of student's constitutional rights since the SRO frequently intervenes at the request of school administrators (Weiler & Cray, 2011). The implications of undesirable officers filling this specialty assignment could be devastating. Given the publicity surrounding police in our schools combined with a desire to safeguard rights, the SRO must not only act legally and ethically in accordance with the United States Constitution and state law, but also refrain from activity that might appear unethical or illegal.

Coaston-Shelton (2009) researched job satisfaction among SROs. Results of the study indicate that SROs were most satisfied when employing a variety of their skills. SROs enjoyed the ability to operate outside of the traditional law enforcement role by encouraging problem solving and conflict resolution skills by teaching and modeling positive alternatives to violence. With the ability to be proactive with students, SROs are able to utilize their skills and training in preventing violence and conflict (Coaston-Shelton, 2009). The respondents in Coaston-Shelton's (2009) study were satisfied in their assignment, many of whom had volunteered for the position. Given their high level of job satisfaction, SROs tend to be more productive, reliable, involved, and motivated, resulting in benefits to both the school and police organization. This positive outlook assists in forging constructive relationships with students and staff, encouraging a productive school environment, and teaching students life skills that are transferable into adulthood to become productive citizens (Coaston-Shelton, 2009; Hall, 2015).

Rapport Building

Building rapport with students and staff prove to be essential to the success of SRO programs. A successful School Resource Officer (SRO) has to be able to cultivate relationships with students and establish trust (Dickmann 1999; Portner, 1994). By meeting with students between classes and developing a general situational awareness, connections are developed

among the students and the officers. These regular interactions during the school year can establish a baseline of student's normal behavior, so that variations to the norm are observed by the SRO. The School Resource Officers are invested in their student's futures and in developing a rapport with them through regular, positive interactions (Mulqueen, 1999). The police officers selected for assignment as School Resource Officers should have outstanding communication skills and be invested within the community and the long-term success of their students. Gaining the trust of students requires time and patience as well as honesty and support. Students are perceptive and recognize if their SRO truly cares for them and wants them to succeed (Finn, McDevitt, Lassiter, Shively, & Rich, 2005; James, Logan & Davis, 2011). The investment by the SRO can be observed through proactive endeavors. An invested SRO, one who is satisfied in the job assignment, will suggest program implementation where a deficit is observed. Examples include the creation of "clothes closets" where clothing and hygiene items are discretely stored and offered to students who cannot afford them. SROs have implemented therapy dog visitations into schools leading up to stressful events like mid-term exams, final exams, mandatory testing, and leading up to school breaks. Often SROs will coach extra-curricular activities or lead clubs and groups in addition to their assigned duties as a way to further involve themselves in their student's lives. SROs worry about their students. If a concern is observed, unlike patrol officers who respond to emergency after emergency, the SRO has the luxury of following up with a student day after day. When an SRO detects a troubled student, they will likely advise stakeholders in that student's life, as well as take it upon themselves to build a relationship with the child.

Grant (1993) described school-based police officers as "Campus Cops" or as "Officer Friendly" tasked with serving as a positive role model. Among other tasks, "Officer Friendly"

serves to encourage positive student behavior by educating students about illegal drug and alcohol awareness, safe driving techniques, and how to avoid gang involvement. These instructional endeavors are examples of how SROs apply the teaching prong of the SRO triad model. Further findings are that as a "Campus Cop," the School Resource Officer's primary responsibility involves keeping the peace at the school by enforcing the law, watching for illegal drugs, and monitoring gang activity (Grant, 1993). By wearing a uniform and enforcing the law, SROs are able to apply the law enforcement prong of the SRO triad.

Schlosser (2014) examined a Midwest Police Department's School Resource Officer program as he shadowed an SRO to better understand the triad, as well as the role of the SRO within the school. Schlosser found there were numerous friendly, casual interactions with students including addressing students by their names and greeting them in hallways upon arrival. Along with the personal connections, the SRO encouraged teamwork and taught D.A.R.E (Drug Awareness and Resistance Education). Despite the daily interactions, relationship building, and teaching activities, the SRO was routinely presented with incidents requiring some type of law enforcement intervention. Law enforcement intervention does not always result in an arrest, but it does necessitate a timely response and follow up (Schlosser, 2014). Despite an SRO having the ability to effectuate an arrest, a seizure is not the only intervention available. SROs have the unique ability to encounter students regularly and can often spend time one-on-one to get to know the student to understand why a student was brought to the attention of an SRO. This investment of the SROs time equates to mentoring and counseling and may have lasting positive results including diverting a juvenile from the juvenile justice system. An example of an incident requiring law enforcement intervention may be found in a physical fight. If two or more students start yelling and it escalates into a physical altercation, the SRO will physically intervene and

pull students apart to end the altercation. Once separated, if there are injuries, the SRO may use first aid training before the nurse is involved. If the students are uninjured, the SRO may turn the students over to school administrators and work with guidance counselors to ascertain why the fight started in an effort to remedy their concerns. The school may apply discipline in the form of detention or suspension, or the SRO and guidance counselors can work on remediating the concerns and have a restorative meeting in a supervised environment. The SRO may not arrest either student, but may still take an active role in speaking with the students to offer skills on how they can express their anger without it resulting in a physical fight.

Qualifications and Characteristics for School Resource Officers

In a 1999 ethnographic study, Dickmann examines SROs to expose that SROs felt compelled to be problem solvers. In an effort to solve problems, the SRO must be able to identify, then properly address the problem. While relaying information between the police, the school, and outside agencies, the SRO acts as a liaison and effective communication skills enhance their ability to bring organizations together for a common goal of problem solving.

According to Peterson (2002), further skills that a School Resource Officer should possess include a thorough understanding of the educational setting, juvenile law, special education law, and public speaking in classrooms. Finn, et. al., (2005) as well as James, et. al., (2011) expanded on SRO skills and specifically addressed the preferred characteristics of an ideal School Resource Officer. These characteristics include caring about kids and acknowledging that students are perceptive and will recognize if their SRO does not truly care. To be successful within the school community, the SRO must communicate well, possess the ability to teach or the capacity to learn how to, and be flexible enough to work with school administrators. SROs must have the capacity to work independently, and should not be an officer

commonly referred to as a rookie or one with a relatively short amount of time of service as a police officer. A police officer transitioning into a school environment will have a new job description and will communicate with a new demographic of the community. The ability to be flexible will allow the SRO to communicate with school administrators so both understand the expectations of the position. Speaking with students during their school day is a regular occurrence, so conversation skills must come easily and casually. As a role model, language must be appropriate and be free from profanity or graphic content. Although relationship building is crucial, there must be strict boundaries to assure that the SRO is not a peer, rather an appropriate, professional role model. The SRO may not be under immediate direct supervision once stationed in a school environment. This officer must have the drive and work ethic to perform without immediate supervision

Lonsway (2002) suggests that female police officers may be better candidates to serve as School Resource Officers. The reasons for female police officers serving as an SRO lie in the facts that most female officers rely on a style of policing that uses less physical force, are better at defusing and de-escalating potentially violent confrontations with citizens, and are less likely to become involved in problems with use of excessive force (Lonsway, 2002). Kelly and Swezey (2015) agree with Lonsway that gender plays an important role in finding the appropriate School Resource Officer to ensure the success of the program. A successful program will lie in part with successful candidate selection (Swezey, 2015). When placing a uniformed police officer in a school, the soft skills, like the ability to deescalate and communicate, are as vital as the hard skills, such as firearms training and defensive tactics. Three integral points are specified by Klotz (2016): first, recruit and hire appropriate SRO candidates; second, provide ongoing training and

evaluations; and third, train police officers and school staff in a variety of techniques such as restorative justice practices and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Role of the SRO

Research has shown that generally, most students are fearful or somewhat wary of police officers; therefore, the role of the school resource officer is to bridge the gap between students and police through the SRO triad model of law enforcement, mentor/counselor, and teacher (Barnes, 2016; Lavarello & Trump, 2001; Weiler & Cray 2011). Klotz (2016) addresses how memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between school districts and police departments safeguard civil rights, enhance school safety, and reduce the school-to-prison pipeline in a variety of ways. These MOUs help to clarify the role of the police officer serving as an SRO. It is important to note that contrary to perception, School Resource Officers are not to be considered disciplinarians enforcing school rules (Benigni, 2001; NASRO, n.d.). Utilizing SROs to enforce school discipline may result in negative consequences and ultimately an unsuccessful program. Conflict with school administrators may appear when SROs are requested to complete tasks seen as outside the scope of their duties. When duties are assigned that fall outside the expected role of the SRO, job dissatisfaction and conflict occur. When SROs are treated like security guards or substitute teachers, SROs report these tasks detract from their professionalization and their relationship building. Examples that could contribute to role conflict and result in job dissatisfaction may include monitoring physical education classes and lunchroom or bus duty (Coaston-Shelton, 2009). Role conflict may also arise when there is disagreement as to the function of the SRO. If school superintendents, administrators, police chiefs, and SROs cannot agree on the duties and goals of the School Resource Officer position

and program, role conflict will undoubtedly occur and undermine the success of the program (Benigni, 2001).

Kennedy (2000) investigated job performance expectations of principal, assistant principals, teachers, and SROs in Tennessee to establish the role of the SRO. Participating SROs reported that counseling was a task most often completed, despite the fact that law enforcement was the prong of the triad with which SROs most identified. When examining the role of the SRO, respondents most expected the SRO to contribute to school safety and security, act as a positive role model, maintain safety and security in the school building and on the school property, help to reduce acts of violence, and communicate with students. The least expected role of the SRO was acting as an instructional substitute. Of the participant's responses, there was overwhelming agreement that the benefits of an SRO outweighed any disadvantages (Kennedy, 2000). There were differences in perceptions though between the school administrators and the SROs. While SROs viewed that they dedicated most of their time to mentoring and counseling activities, the school administrators perceived that SROs focused mostly on their law enforcement role. Disadvantages in various studies include the criminalization of juvenile misbehaviors, a distressing number of arrests for disorderly conduct, and a perceived over reliance on law enforcement tactics (Theriot, 2009; Fisher, 2015). Fisher and Hennessy (2016) also noted that schools with SROs had higher number of suspensions and expulsions, thereby creating a barrier to the learning environment.

While most research agrees on the benefits of SRO programs, there were disagreements as to the role of the SRO when addressing issues such as enforcing student regulations and escorting disruptive students. Conflicting perceptions arose with the SROs involvement in assisting with attendance/truancy, escorting visitors, and participation in the school management

team (Kennedy, 2000). Unless described specifically in the MOU, some school administrators had differing opinions whether the SRO should be involved in truancy matters and escorting visitors. Some expected the SRO's involvement and others had no preference. The lack of preference in involvement may be related to uniformed police officers being viewed as imposing figure, and therefore may be perceived as an administrative figurehead within the school building. Those perceptions may be supported or contradicted based upon the school administrator's treatment of the SRO and the established MOU. Given that SROs do not involve themselves in school discipline, their role in maintaining order and addressing misbehaviors may be quantified by examining discipline records to see if their presence has an effect. In exchange, or in conjunction with, SROs may participate in other school teams like Student Assistance Programs, Crisis Management Teams, Safe School Committees, and/or Threat Assessment Teams. Regular meetings with school administrators allow for information sharing between police and school to provide comprehensive information about students and their families.

Describing the role of the SRO in an ethnographic study, Dickmann (1999) addressed the role and conflicts experienced by SROs from both school administration as well as fellow officers. One of the conflicts reported was to whom the SRO reported. There was not always a defined answer, creating confusion as to whether the SRO reports to the building principal or to the police department supervising officer. A second conflict reported was balancing the cultures and subcultures of both police and school. SROs reported that the school culture "is slow to change and you feel like you have to "tiptoe through the tulips" because you "never know where you stand" (Dickmann, 1999). Another SRO viewed the culture of the police department and school as similar in that both felt as if they were the problem solvers and both cultures recognized that going outside of the chain of command could result in trouble. The ambiguity

and occasional conflict require that SROs be flexible enough to thrive in both environments, as well as alter their language and demeanor depending on the environment they occupy.

Understanding where the SRO belongs becomes difficult when the SRO feels isolated and has a sense of disconnect from both organizations, as opposed to a sense of inclusion to both. Within the policing community, the SRO is excluded given that they are not part of a patrol unit and therefore not privy to day-to-day activities. Often the SRO position is viewed as being a "kiddie cop", or the SRO is not respected as being a real police officer. Within the school community, the SRO may be distrusted as an outsider, and unfamiliar with the culture of school climate. With a feeling of isolation, relationship building is essential to integrate to the school environment. Despite this sense of isolation, SROs are still expected to build relationships with students as well as parents; familiarize themselves with building layouts, classrooms, police departments, and city streets; and switch language and demeanor based on speaking with students, staff, parents, police officers, or community member. While completing these tasks, SROs continually encounter unpredictable interruptions (Dickmann, 1999). Given the unique tasks and stressors in how SROs are utilized in many non-traditional law enforcement ways, SROs require much flexibility to simultaneously accommodate the needs of the school and police organization.

As SROs establish their role within their organization, the potential for conflict among prongs of the triad may interfere with daily activities. Fisher (2015) recognizes that if a student seeks out an SRO to discuss a problem, the SRO may fall back on his/her breadth of training in law enforcement and minimal training in counseling, resulting in the student's referral to the juvenile justice system. However, since SROs see their students every day and are therefore able to monitor common behavior over time, knowing the students and their routine behavior can lead

to predictive clues about future behavior. SROs discussed watching for minor crimes and the progression toward more serious crimes (Daniels, et. al., 2011; Taşğın, Demirkol, & Aksu, 2015). Through repeated, regular, casual interactions SROs are able to cultivate relationships with students and establish themselves as a support within the school setting. By observing students' normal behaviors over time, police training allow SROs to identify student's abnormal behaviors.

Police Intervention by the SRO

Osborough (1965) recognized that special consideration must be applied to the treatment of offenders under the age of 21. This is due to the considerable number of adult offenders who had once been juvenile delinquents; "any improvements that can be made in the handling of juvenile offenders should have value in combating adult crime as well as other delinquents" (Osborough, 1965, p. 2). British police may have opted to avoid arresting a juvenile if the offense were not serious, if they had not had previous contact with the juvenile, and if the offender admitted their responsibility. Their reasoning was to avoid the trauma and stigma that may occur by appearing in court. As opposed to an arrest, alternatives may include a variety of supervisory measures like general supervision, help in obtaining a good job or vocational training, providing transportation to work, offering medical care, and admission to hospitals in lieu of foster homes if necessary (Osborough, 1965). These interventions blurred the image of the juvenile liaison officer into the role of a social worker, similar to today's SRO. Such interventions exist and are applied to first time, low level juvenile offenders. An example is the Youth Aid Panel which promotes restorative justice practices and is a diversion from the juvenile justice program, allowing juveniles to take responsibility for their actions without earning a criminal record (montcopa.org, 2018). Restorative justice practices stress the importance of

learning from in the incident and how those actions impacted others as opposed to imposing a traditional punitive response from the criminal justice system. Restorative practices help strengthen the community and result in lower rates of exclusionary discipline (Davis, 2013).

Given that American law enforcement evolved from British traditions, it is reasonable to surmise that American policing retained certain British foundations. Black (1971) investigated the factors in which police officers utilize or withhold their power to arrest in adult cases. Considered were factors such as**:**

- the suspect's race,
- the legal seriousness of the alleged crime,
- the evidence available in the field setting,
- the complainant's preference for police action,
- the social relationship between the complainant and suspect,
- the suspect's degree of deference toward the police, and
- the manner in which the police come to handle an incident, whether in response to a citizen's request or through their own initiative (Black, 1971).

While the previously described factors specifically address adult arrests, they exemplify the discretion applied prior to effectuating an arrest. The mere presence of a crime is insufficient to justify an arrest of an adult or a juvenile.

Basic law enforcement procedures such as search and seizure and actual arrest procedures take on new meaning with the School Resource Officer given that there target recipients are juveniles. Under New Jersey v. T.L.O. (1985), the Supreme Court decision addressed the constitutionality of search and seizure procedures within schools. The standard addresses reasonable suspicion and the use of force by SROs working in conjunction with school

administrators (New Jersey v. T.L.O, 1985). “The standard set forth in T.L.O. is considered more lenient to officers and school officials as it was first decided by the Supreme Court to strike a balance between constitutional rights and the need for school official to maintain a proper and safe educational environment” (Batterton, 2015, p. 5). Given that the standard for search and seizure is reasonable suspicion for school administrators, and yet the standard is probable cause for police officers, good communication is essential to protect student privacy while in school (Batterton, 2015; Coaston-Shelton, 2009). Through communication between school administrators and SROs, searches and seizures can be planned in an effort to safeguard student rights**.**

SROs possess a tremendous amount of discretion and with this ability, Black’s (1971) previous factors are able to be considered prior to deciding upon an arrest. Another consideration during the development of a case and during evidence gathering is whether or not the SRO is acting in the sole capacity of a police officer or as a school administrator. It is of the utmost importance to establish the role of the SRO, have a clear MOU, and document accordingly as to ensure that student’s rights aren’t being violated during an investigation.

Theriot (2009) discusses arrest rates by SROs and the criminalization of student behavior. He probes whether having an SRO assigned to a school increases numbers of arrests and contributes to a prison-like environment. Theriot’s results indicate that a decrease in arrests for weapons and assault charging were promising and that SROs may actually have a positive impact on the school environment. However, as for the number of arrests for disorderly conduct, he labeled the number as “troubling” and stressed the importance of education especially for disadvantaged students (Theriot, 2009; May, Ruddell, Barranco, & Robertson, 2016). Theriot surmises that students who are arrested may face higher absenteeism and may therefore perform

more poorly in school, thus depriving them of a proper education and setting them at a disadvantage for their future**.**

Addressing Theriot's concerns over the "troubling" number of arrests, Wolf (2013) builds upon Black's 1971 application of discretion in The Social Organization of Arrest. In determining when and why SROs make arrests in school, Wolf suggests that SROs use a tremendous amount of discretion in the decision to arrest, even when sufficient evidence exists to justify such arrest. Despite having sufficient evidence, SROs often opted to apply alternative interventions instead (Wolf, 2013). SROs pursued arrest alternatives when disciplinary sanctions were available. Factors that SROs took into consideration included, but were not limited to, the availability of evidence, the seriousness of the crime and impact to victim, the wishes of the victim's parent/guardian, the attitude of the student regarding the alleged criminal behavior, and the student's history of misbehavior (Wolf, 2013). Wolf's recognition of the factors considered prior to arrest support Osbourne's (1969) findings that juveniles need extra considerations.

Addressing Theriot's concerns over the "troubling' number of arrests for disorderly conduct may be explained in a variety of ways. First, the disorderly conduct arrest may be in lieu of a more serious arrest for the actual crime. For example, a student engaging in a fight may have been arrested for disorderly conduct instead of assault, resulting in lesser penalties. Second, the arrest may have been as a result of escalating and culminating behaviors in which a student was regularly finding themselves in trouble, when other interventions were proving to be unsuccessful. Third, a disorderly conduct arrest may have been made following a crime so that the juvenile could appear in front of a judge and receive court-mandated services from therapists, probation, and/or offices of Children and Youth in an effort to provide structure. Simply

claiming that disorderly conduct arrests are “troubling” may disregard an ungovernable population in need of structure and help.

Fisher (2015) complements Theriot (2009) and suggests that the role conflict SROs experience between counselor and law enforcer may result in higher rates of exclusionary discipline. Whereas a student may seek out an SRO for counseling (due to family concerns, drug activity, or gang involvement), the SRO may view the described behavior as criminal and inflict more severe discipline or apply law enforcement intervention more than would a guidance counselor or social worker (2015). Fisher addresses concerns that if SROs fail to take appropriate action, they may set the tone that misbehavior is tolerated which may lead to a sense of disorder. These findings appear contradictory insinuating that SROs must take “appropriate action” without falling back on their breadth of law enforcement training. While Theriot suggests SROs are more inclined to arrest for disorderly conduct, Fisher concludes that SRO presence results in more exclusionary discipline, but it is unclear if SROs are the primary reason for the discipline (Fisher, 2015; Theriot, 2009). Either way, both studies indicate the SRO may be a barrier to a successful learning environment for juveniles**.** Hirschfield (2008) reported the implications of exclusionary disciple and the lasting sociological effects. By hardening our schools as targets to school violence, a prison-like environment is created. Referring to “rampages” and “the crisis of school violence,” quick fix punitive solutions were devised (Hirschfield, 2008, p. 85). A current maximum-security prisoner who was a product of a zero-tolerance urban school without an SRO reported,

> That school was run more like a prison than a high school. It don’t have to be nothing illegal about it. But you’re getting arrested. No regard for if a college going to accept you

with this record. No regard for none of that, because you're not expected to leave this school and go to college. You're not expected to do anything. (Hirschfield, 2008, p. 79).

Police Discretion for SRO's

Formal court decisions and policy procedures for arrest and search and seizure are important issues to determine tasks for the School Resource Officer. The bottom line has always been discretion of these tasks. The research is limited and Schulenberg (2009) as cited by Hall (2015) states that police have three progressive prongs in applying discretion to youth misbehaviors. First, is there enough evidence to establish a case? If so, the second prong is applied to determine the appropriate level of law enforcement intervention. Finally, the third prong allows the officer to decide the appropriate resolution through citation, diversion, or court appearance. Hall acknowledges that SROs might choose to identify factors in juveniles to determine if the student should be arrested, warned, referred to school administrators, or referred to social service agencies. Situational variables taken into consideration include the incident type, location, and other offender characteristics, like the offender's attitude (Hall, 2015). The results of Hall's study indicate that SROs used their discretion in 97% of the instances where a student violated the law, resulting in arrests 40% of the time indicating that the SROs in the study viewed their role as maintaining an orderly and stable environment (Hall, 2015).

Taşğın, Demirkol, and Aksu (2015) add another component in the determination of the application of discretion. The study revealed that SROs take into consideration the attitude of the juvenile offender's parents toward the SRO as well. If the family has a negative reaction toward the SRO, then the SRO was more likely to apply discretion negatively toward the juvenile in a way to deliver the message that "this behavior is not acceptable" (Taşğın et. al., 2015).

Donald Bridges, President of the National Association of School Resource Officers stated in his address pertaining to Policing the Schools (2017) that, “we need officers to understand the way their schoolhouse is policed is far different from the strategies that you would use on the street” (Policing the Schools, 2017). Bridges (2017) stresses that with the appropriate memorandums of understanding (MOUs) the guidelines for the intervention of SROs are defined. Intervention by an SRO does not mean that an arrest is the appropriate outcome, rather, it clarifies that an SRO may counsel, or intervene with other non-traditional methods. Often, non-traditional methods may include restorative justice practices or referring to diversionary programs. In referencing the memorandums of understanding (MOU) instructions might include “friendly contact between the police department and city’s youth; or education of children regarding the role of laws, courts, and police in society; or disciplining students is a School District responsibility” (Bridges, 2017).

Specialized Training and Functions for the SRO

James, et. al. (2011) recognize that police officers often respond to emotional disturbances and assist with individuals suffering from mental illness. Some of these instances involve people improperly medicated, non-medicated, agitated, potentially violent, and irrational. Officers are called upon to deescalate these crises. The skills police officers acquire do not expire once assigned to a school-based environment. Because of the training police officers receive, adding them to a school-based crisis intervention team allows SROs to apply their training, knowledge, and experience to strengthen student support (James, et. al., 2011).

SROs interact with students throughout the day, oftentimes proactively forming positive relationships. Interactions are not just when the student is in trouble or has committed a crime. These regular interactions build trust and improve communication between police officers and

students. This trust and relationship foundation enables students to approach SROs when they learn of troubling or more dangerous situations. Learning of dangerous behaviors from the students allows school personnel the ability for early intervention (James, et. al., 2011). When SROs are involved with their student body in the role of teacher and counselor, fewer incidents of violence and criminal behavior were reported. This was attributed to the SROs proactive approach to student problems. Despite initial feelings of suspicion toward SROs, those perceptions shortly faded since SROs were seen as contributors of a safe and stable learning environment (Finn et. al, 2005; James, et. al., 2011).

McNair (2013) builds upon James et. al. and lists some of the additional training SROs receive that mirror more traditional mental health professionals. Some of the trainings include school crisis response, de-escalation techniques, threat assessment strategies, anti-bullying strategies, recognition of child abuse, social–emotional support, and cultural awareness (McNair, 2013). The benefits of these trainings in the school environment allow the SRO to provide a policing perspective to emergency preparedness and emotional support within the educational setting. As the SRO position evolves, the focus on maintaining safety and security includes mental wellness safety and security (McNair, 2013).

Robles-Piña and Denham (2012) discuss the benefits of including SROs as part of the administrative team to develop, implement, and enforce bullying intervention programs such as W.I.T.S (walk away, ignore, talk-it-out, seek help). The SRO is able to assist in student conflict resolution, peer mediation and support, empathy building, cooperative learning, and social skills education against victimization (Robles-Piña, 2012). For empathy building, the SRO is able to apply techniques from the triad prongs of counselor and educator “to assist in developing students’ feelings, values, and emotions, which have all been recognized as powerful tools in the

improvement of the overall school climate" given that SROs are a natural ally to reach out and encourage empathy (2012). Further exercising the counselor/educator prongs, SROs can "befriend" bullying victims to assist in victims overcoming shyness and to establish social support for witnesses. In order for SROs to be successful in bullying interventions, they need to shift from reactionary law enforcer to a more proactive, positive, preventative role model (Robles-Piña, 2012).

Taşğın, et. al., (2015) surveyed SROs in a mid-sized Midwestern city to gain insight on their perspective of juvenile misbehavior. Of the SROs surveyed, most focused on attempting to build relationships with juvenile offenders and victims as opposed to the entire juvenile population. SROs were reluctant to use the label "delinquent" on a juvenile, even if they had been adjudicated a delinquent by the court system, because of the negative stigma of the label. SROs stated they made a significant effort to assist offenders in righting their wrongs and rebuilding strained relationships (Taşğın et. al., 2015). When asked about the SRO role and the efficiency juvenile justice system, an SRO responded,

> . . . [It's] becoming more complex through the years and as a result it is getting harder and harder to deal with the situation just because it is becoming more complex. Whether it is parenting, whether it is technology, laws or rules, or people's rights things are popping up which basically change the things [sic], but in any government or bureaucracy, things don't change too fast…We need to have laws that we can use to help. Times had changed but the laws did not. (Taşğın et. al., 2015, p. 17).

Kelly and Swezey (2015) surveyed school resource officers along the east coast and learned that SROs were satisfied with completing law enforcement functions that included patrolling school facilities and grounds, responding to crime/disorder reports from school staff

and students, making arrests, and writing police reports. These same SROs reported that mentoring/counseling demanded most of their time and resulted in the highest levels of their job satisfaction, especially among female SROs. They also thought that their role as advisors was almost as important as their role as law enforcement, and 93% reported being satisfied with these duties and most reluctant in their teaching roles. While the SROs expressed a desire to work collaboratively with school administrators, they expressed displeasure over being treated as "glorified security officers" (Kelly & Swezey, 2015).

SROs Applying the Teaching Prong of the Triad in Popular Press

On September 27, 2006, a gunman entered Platte Canyon High School in Bailey, Colorado, held seven girls hostage, and eventually shot and killed Emily Keyes (www.iloveyouguys.org, 2017). "The "I Love U Guys" Foundation was created to restore and protect the joy of youth through educational programs and positive actions in collaboration with families, schools, communities, organizations and government entities. This foundation collaborates with SROs across the country providing free training materials on current issues like sexting and school violence. Also provided are sample plans that SROs can implement and present to their school for emergency preparedness and family reunification (iloveyouguys.org, 2017).

The Fargo-Moorhead community in North Dakota has suffered several underage drinking tragedies in the last few years prompting action from a local SRO. Officer Chris Porter initiated a public event for students, teachers, and parents to encourage enhanced communication skills as well as provide education on youth alcohol use and abuse (Porter, 2011). In a collaborative effort between SRO Porter, the Otto Bremer Foundation, the North Dakota Department of Human Services, and the Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation, as well as the members and funders of

Prairie Public, the High Risk High (www.highriskhigh.org) was created. High Risk High is a complete website offering personal stories, legal issues, testimonials, and recovery stories to middle school, high school, college aged students, as well as parents on the dangers of alcohol (highriskhigh.org, 2011). SRO Porter's involvement is in building relationships with students, establishing trust, and spreading the message that social events do not have to involve alcohol (http://www.highriskhigh.org/hrh/hrhresourceofficer).

In December 2016, SRO Ginny Atkinson-Hall presented to school administrators in Kansas, on Crime Prevention through Environmental Design or CPtED. Not only is the SRO able to advise administration on the layout of buildings as well as observing weaknesses by finding areas where students may be vulnerable. The SRO can then teach students what to look for and the basis for human behavior. Teaching safety and maintaining order is not solely looking to see who is around and walking in groups, but it is building design and using the environment to enhance group safety. CPtED addresses psychology and perception, and their effects on human behavior (Increasing Safety at Derby Schools, 2016). When presented by an SRO, another facet to promoting school safety is uncovered.

After examining existing research into School Resources Officers, a gap in the literature was identified relating to SROs pertaining to their prong identification and their response to incidents of misbehavior. By posing the two previously defined research questions, this body of work hopes to serve as a resource for school districts and police departments in the creation, or expansion, of SRO programs. Reinforced is the importance of positive relationship building and rapport between SROs and students. By examining examples of the triad in practice, a clearer picture of the scope of the position is developed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

As per Black (1971), school resource and police officers have wide discretion when dealing with negative behaviors of the students they oversee; just because a crime occurs, doesn't mean an extreme disciplinary result will result. The professional experience of the researcher spurred this endeavor and assisted in creating research questions which were then rigorously and statistically tested. This researcher's experience contradicted previous research indicating that SROs criminalize juvenile misbehaviors (Theriot, 2009), so the goal was to explore the likelihood of criminalization. The purpose of the survey project was to question current Pennsylvania SROs and SPOs regarding their jobs, with a particular focus on what types of behaviors they perform on the job, what levels of intervention they utilize in their job, and how they identify as a resource officer, among other questions on the survey. The intentions of the survey and its subsequent quantitative analyses were to relate and extend previous research discussed in Chapter 2 to a sample of Pennsylvania school resource officers. More specifically, the purpose of the survey was to explore two primary research questions. First, how do SROs in the sample self-identify into one of the three prongs and can SROs be grouped using the frequency of job-related behaviors, rather than mere self-identification? In addition, another research question was to explore likelihood of diverting juveniles from the justice system and what SRO behaviors predict diversion.

Participant Sample

The sample for this study came from a regularly updated list of School Resource Officers in Pennsylvania. The list is an excel spreadsheet maintained through a Yahoo! internet based group and includes accurate information updated quarterly. Inclusion to this list is voluntary and

provides such information as the SRO's name, email address, police department, and preferred phone number. Participating in this group are 222 SROs, representing 138 of the 502 school districts in Pennsylvania. Membership to this list is through invitation by the NASRO Region Three Director. NASRO Region Three covers Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware. The potential sample was supplemented with additional names from lists of attendees from Basic and Advanced SRO training sessions attended by the researcher. Finally, participation was also requested through word-of-mouth to known colleagues of the researcher who were not represented on any of the previously mentioned lists. Criteria for the respondents were:

- employed as a police officer by either a municipality or school district,
- assigned to a school or school district, and
- work within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

To maintain confidentiality and to prevent any bias from the recipient identifying other participants in the study, each potential respondent received a personal email requesting their participation, with an enclosed URL website hyperlink to the online survey. It was assumed that when participants saw they were the sole recipient of the survey, they could respond honestly without fear of repercussion from a supervisor or school administrator. Research indicates that some SROs feel uneasy with school administrators given that they have to "tiptoe through the tulips" because they "don't know where they stand" (Dickmann, 1999). Because of this trepidation, the survey confidentiality was of paramount importance, so respondents felt comfortable answering the questions, even if their chosen level of intervention may be considered unconventional. In order to obtain the highest number of participants, the survey was distributed in September when school resource officers were in their buildings at the start of the

school year. Instructions indicated that the expected time to complete this survey was 6 minutes, and respondents were asked to complete the survey within the month of September. An email containing the survey was then distributed to the approximate 300 Pennsylvania School Resource Officers.

Survey Methodology

The online survey was designed using Qualtrics software (see Appendix A for full survey questions with response options). A variety of measurement scales were used: categorical, interval and ratio scales to allow a variety of statistical analyses to be conducted. Initial questions were descriptive in nature. Respondents first encountered a consent disclaimer requesting their participation. Job description questions were asked next. The first question asked if the respondent was a school resource officer (SRO) or a school police officer (SPO). The next questions asked how many years the SRO/SPO has been in their position, what grade levels they are responsible for, the geographic region of their school, and whether the respondent had received formal SRO training. These questions assessed the length and breadth of experience and training of the officers. The participant then ranked the prongs of the SRO triad in the order that they associate, from most to least. SROs were then asked if their daily activities interfere with their desired prong of association. SROs also gave a numerical response, as part of a percentage equaling 100, identifying where information originated that resulted in an arrest.

To understand how SROs employ discretion, SROs were presented with two matrices listing a series of misbehaviors commonly encountered in schools. For each misbehavior, the SRO chose up to three preferred levels of intervention for how they would address the misbehavior. Respondents were permitted to choose up to three interventions because often officers have the freedom to choose a range of discretionary actions they can take in response to

a behavioral violation. Circumstances which may affect the level of intervention may by the number of discipline referrals this student has had, the affect the action has had among the school community, or known struggles the juvenile is encountering at home or at school. The response choices were: Do nothing; counsel or mentor; refer to school administrators; official warning (written or verbal); refer to diversionary program; issue citation; arrest for a lesser charge; or juvenile petition or criminal complaint. Responses were numerically coded with "do nothing" earning a score of zero, and "juvenile petition or criminal complaint" earning a score of seven, so higher numbers meant more extreme intervention on the part of the SRO. This matrix will then allow the researcher to compare if identification with various prongs influences how they respond to misbehaviors.

SROs were presented with another two matrices listing job-related behaviors commonly performed by SROs and asked to indicate how frequently they performed these activities. Choices were: most days; every week; every month; rarely; never. Responses were coded with "most days" earning a score of four and "never" earning a score of zero. The purpose of this matrix was to assess what job-related behaviors SROs perform on a daily basis and could be used to group SROs according to similarity in self-reported job activities.

Acknowledging that SROs have options to consider when making a decision to arrest, respondents in the survey were asked to check off which options they consider when arresting. Thirteen behavioral options were offered, as well as a text box to create/write-in a fourteenth additional reason provided by the respondent.

A 5-point Likert scale question asked the SRO how important it is to divert a juvenile from the juvenile justice system. Finally, SROs were asked demographic questions, such as

gender, age (given ten-year increments), and the number of years in police work (given five year increments).

Statistical Analyses

All analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Version 25. In addition to exploring demographic information of the final sample, a variety of inferential statistical analyses were used to explore the research questions of interest. For RQ1, cross tabulations were used to explore how SROs in the sample self-identify into one of the three prongs. Then, the frequency of job-related behaviors were assessed, followed by using these job-related behaviors as the independent variables in a cluster analysis to see if SROs could be categorized on their behaviors, rather than their self-identification into one of the three prongs. For RQ2, a multiple regression was conducted to explore whether the likelihood of diverting juveniles from the justice system could be predicted from SRO behaviors. It is important to note that some questions in the survey were treated as interval scales in order to perform the cluster analysis and regression analysis. Some readers may note that some survey items do not have "equal intervals" between the answer options of the scale, however, for purposes of this capstone, they were treated as such and limitations to this method are addressed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

Introduction

After providing the demographics of survey respondents, this chapter is divided by research question. Research question 1 addressed: How do SROs view themselves within their organization? The hypothesis was that SROs would most strongly identify with the Mentor/Counselor role of their position. A thorough explanation of the use of hierarchical cluster analysis to explore RQ1 is provided. Research question 2 asked: How do SROs respond to incidents of juvenile crimes and misbehaviors? The dependent variable measures how important the SRO believed that diversion from the juvenile justice system was. The hypothesis was that SROs would demonstrate differing diversion scores based on different job-related behavioral measures. Multiple regression analysis is used to explore RQ2.

Demographics

Of the approximate 300 surveys distributed, a total of 74 participants completed the online survey resulting in a 25% response rate; 42 participants identified as “School Resource Officers” and 32 identified as “School Police Officers.” Approximately 41% of respondents had been a resource officer for less than 4 years (n = 30), 28% had been employed as a resource officer for 5 to 9 years (n = 21), and 31% were employed for over 10 years in the resource officer role (n = 23).

Figure 1 is a map of counties within Pennsylvania, with a tick mark indicating the geographic location of respondents who opted to include their respective school district and/or police department as part of their survey response.

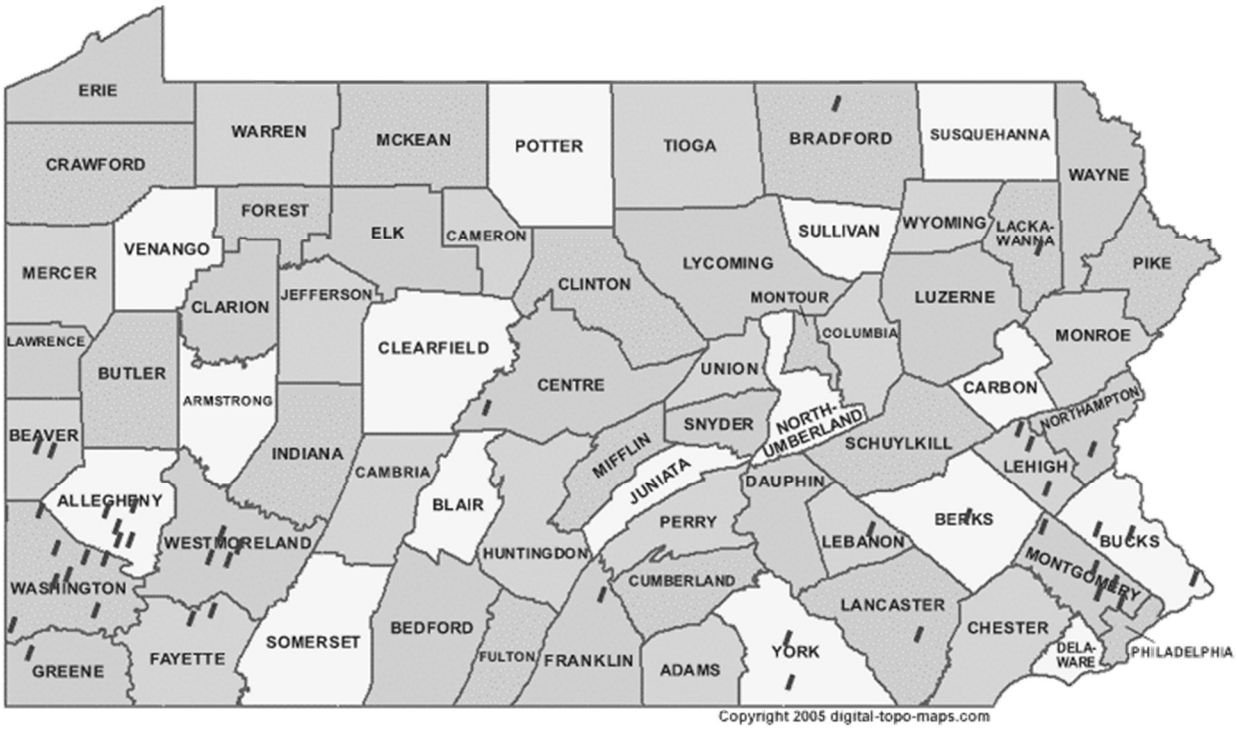

Figure 1. Counties represented by survey respondents

Approximately 16% of respondents described their geographic region as urban (n = 12), 61% described their region as suburban (n = 45), and 23% were employed in a rural geographic region (n = 17). Respondents were asked to check all grade levels that they were responsible for, with the majority (n = 61) reporting working at the high school level, either solely or in combination with elementary and/or middle school/junior high locations.

Research Question 1: SRO Identification

The first research question of the project was to explore how SROs perceive themselves in their organization. Respondents were asked to rank order the three SRO triad prongs (Mentor/Counseling, Law Enforcement, or Teaching) from the prong with which they most identify, to the prong with which they least identify. A categorical variable labelled "TopRank" was created from the ranking data with three levels: a value of 1 meant the SRO chose the

mentor/counseling prong as the prong to which they most identify, a value of 2 meant SRO chose the law enforcement prong as the prong to which they most identify, and a value of 3 meant the SRO chose the teacher prong as the prong to which they most identify.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that SROs will most strongly identify with the mentor/counselor prong of the SRO triad. Hypothesis 1 was confirmed. Of the 48 valid responses to the ranking variables, 28 respondents (58%) identified most strongly with the mentor/counseling prong, 16 respondents (33%) identified most strongly with the law enforcement prong, and only 4 (8%) identified most strongly with the teacher prong.

In addition to identifying their preferred prong, respondents also reported their frequency of performing 16 specific SRO behaviors on a 5-point metric scale, with 0 meaning "never," 1 meaning "rarely," 2 meaning "every month," 3 meaning "every week," and 4 meaning "most days." These questions were intended to explore what daily job behaviors were conducted by SROs. Table 1 shows the frequency of SRO behaviors by the top prong choice of respondents. The bar chart shows that SROs that primarily identify with the teacher prong do not perform law-enforcement type behaviors, such as investigating crimes or attending court hearings. Likewise, SROs that primarily identify with the law enforcement prong do not perform teaching-type activities, such as attending PTA meetings or giving presentations to students. SROs that primarily identify with the mentorship prong reported engaging in almost all the listed activities.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for Frequencies of SRO job-related behaviors, by Prong**

Job-related Behaviors	Mentor Counselor Primary SRO Prong	Law enforcement Primary SRO Prong	Teaching Primary SRO Prong
wearing a formal police uniform	3.38	4.00	4.00
investigating crimes	2.67	3.17	1.00
cite, arrest, attend related court hearings	2.31	2.83	1.00
working with guidance counselors, school nurse, or social workers	3.75	3.67	4.00
referring students/families to community services	2.38	2.67	3.00
sparking interest in law enforcement	3.06	3.00	2.00
teaching D.A.R.E, GREAT, or other lesson to students/staff	1.69	1.50	3.00
giving presentations on sexting, bullying, or other teen activities	1.81	1.00	3.00
meeting with Parent Teacher Association (PTA)	1.06	0.67	2.00
meeting with school administrators	3.94	4.00	4.00
walking through hallways to be visible and approachable to staff/students	3.94	4.00	4.00
offering positive reinforcement	3.88	4.00	4.00
making ChildLine referrals	2.00	1.67	2.00
feeding students	1.67	1.67	0.00
donating food, money, supplies to students	1.81	1.67	0.00
attending extra-curricular activities	2.50	2.83	2.00

NOTE: measured on 0 to 4 Likert-type scale, with 0 meaning “never,” 1 meaning “rarely,” 2 meaning “every month,” 3 meaning “every week,” and 4 meaning “most days.”

The frequencies of behaviors in Table 1 were then used in a hierarchical cluster analysis to explore whether natural groups would emerge based on what SROs report doing every day.

Cluster Analysis Introduction and Rationale. The purpose of a cluster analysis is to organize data into meaningful structures; it is an exploratory data analysis tool that can be useful in grouping together items into related sets. For example, we are presented with "clusters" in almost every aspect of our lives: when we enter a restaurant and see different tables of diners, we see clusters of people; when we enter a grocery store and see food items arranged based on similar uses/types, we see clusters of products; and when we see certain advertisements based on demographic characteristics that we share with other customers, we are part of a market segmentation process which grouped us into different clusters of consumers (Hill & Lewicki, 2007).

In this project, cluster analysis was used to explore RQ1 in a different way than by simply asking the SROs to choose the prong that they identified with the most. Asking survey respondents to "group" themselves into prongs is a very overt way of classification. On the other hand, using cluster analysis would allow me to uncover a subtle classification in how SROs naturally separate into groups based on their similarities in how often they perform certain job-related behaviors. Cluster analysis uses continuous variables as independent variables in the analysis, so the behavior variables in the survey are used as the basis for clustering respondents based on their similarity in responding to these variables. The outcome of a cluster analysis is a discrete, categorical variable that represents each respondent's cluster membership.

The type of cluster analysis used here is called "hierarchical," where every individual starts as their own, single-person cluster and then, based on similarities with other respondents,

groupings start to emerge. The process of grouping continues until one large cluster consisting of every respondent emerges (Phillips, 2018). The role of the researcher is to decide when to "stop" clustering. In other words, how many clusters are necessary to best explain the structure of the data, or how many clusters "make sense." Even though hierarchical cluster analysis is exploratory and doesn't have an "a priori" (before the fact) limitation to the number of clusters that should emerge, there are still some analysis decisions that have to be made by the researcher. The researcher must decide (1) what similarity measure to use in determining how close two respondents are to each other, (2) what linkage method is used to bring clusters together into larger groupings (Abu-Bader, 2006; Phillips, 2017).

For the first decision, similarities are merely a set of rules that serve as criteria for grouping items. A similarity measure is a measure of correspondence or resemblance between objects to be clustered and is calculated within the statistical analysis package (Steinbach, Karypis, & Kumar, 2000). Recall that the 16 job-related behaviors in Table 1 were measured metrically, on a 0 to 4 scale. These behaviors are being used to perform the cluster analysis. For metric data, such as these, either correlational measures (which emphasize the similarity in the patterns of values) or distance measures (which emphasize the proximity in the magnitudes of values) can be used to measure similarity. The latter is more commonly adopted, as most applications of cluster analysis focus on magnitude (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984). The default similarity measure in SPSS is Squared Euclidean distance, so this was the similarity measure used in this analysis.

For the second researcher decision in cluster analysis, we need to decide how to determine distances between clusters once individual objects have been linked together. In other words, the first decision regarding distance tells us how to link two individuals together into a

cluster and the second decision tells us when two clusters are sufficiently similar to be linked together. Because this analysis was exploratory, there was not a "set" number of clusters that were expected prior to performing this analysis. Therefore, in general terms, most cluster analyses have a goal to create clusters of *equal* sizes. Most cluster analysis guidelines, including Hill and Lewicki (2007), suggest using Ward's method as the clustering algorithm to minimize the within-cluster differences and to create relatively equal cluster sizes.

Based on these statistical choices, a visual dendrogram is then produced to present the visual clustering process and to determine how many clusters best fit the work-related behavior data. A dendrogram is a visualization of the clustering process: it is read left to right with distance on the X axis and the individual observations (identified by unique subject number) on the Y axis. As two observations are connected due to similarity on key variables, the cases are joined with horizontal lines. The visualization process informs the researcher's decision in determining how many clusters to "keep" (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984).

Cluster Analysis Results for SROs. A hierarchical cluster analysis was performed for the 34 resource officers who had provided complete information on the frequency of the 16 specific SRO behaviors in Table 1.

The dendrogram is presented in Figure 2, with the two bold vertical lines representing a two-cluster and a three-cluster solution. In the three-cluster solution, a cluster of only three people was formed, with the other clusters combining 13 and 18 SROs, respectively. In the two-cluster solution, those three individuals in the third cluster were combined with the larger, initial 18-person cluster, creating a 21-person cluster and a 13-person cluster.

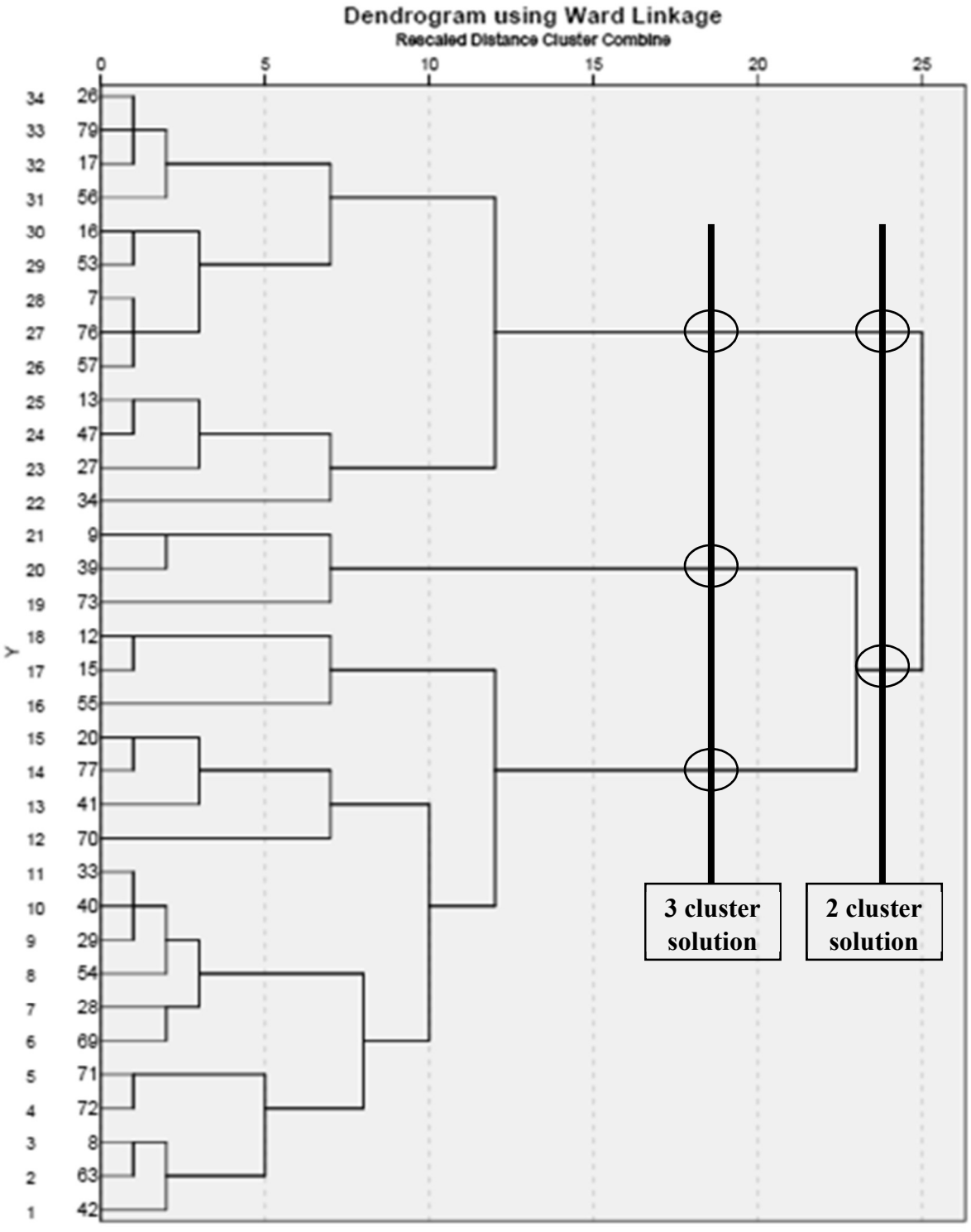

Figure 2. Dendrogram from Hierarchical Cluster Analysis using Ward's Method.

Ideally, one wants similar numbers of individuals in each cluster. Since the three-cluster solution had uneven cluster sizes (18, 13, and 3) and the third cluster contained only 3 individuals, the two-cluster solution was a better choice for subsequent analyses. In addition, to determine if the clusters formed are truly "different" from each other, then t-tests between the clusters could be conducted on other survey variables. Therefore, the two-cluster solution was selected and a new, dichotomous, categorical variable was created in the dataset, representing "cluster membership." Before using cluster membership for t-tests, the two clusters were profiled on demographic variables in the dataset. Table 2 presents the demographic descriptions of the two clusters on gender, years as a resource officer, years as a police officer, geographic region of the school district, and age. Cluster #2 skewed towards older resource officers with more experience than Cluster #1.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Two-Cluster Solution

Descriptive variables		Cluster 1 (n = 13)		Cluster 2 (n = 21)	
		Frequency within cluster	Percent within cluster	Frequency within cluster	Percent within cluster
Years as a resource officer	Less than 4 years	7	54%	7	33%
	5-9 years	2	15%	8	38%
	10 or more years	4	31%	6	29%
Geographic Region of school district	Urban	2	15%	4	19%
	Suburban	9	69%	15	71%
	Rural	2	15%	2	10%
Age category	30-39	4	31%	2	10%
	40-49	4	31%	11	52%
	Over 50	5	39%	8	38%
Years as a police officer	5-9	0	0%	1	5%
	10-14	5	39%	1	5%
	15-19	0	0%	4	19%
	20 or more	8	62%	15	71%
Gender	Male	11	85%	19	90%
	Female	2	15%	2	10%

T-tests were then performed between clusters on the original 16 SRO work-related behaviors to explore whether the clusters revealed significantly different frequencies in performing certain behaviors. The t-tests revealed significant differences between clusters on three activities (see Table 2). Cluster 1 reported significantly higher frequencies of feeding students ($M_{cluster\ 1}$ = 2.54, $SD_{cluster\ 1}$ = 1.05) compared to Cluster 2 ($M_{cluster2}$ = .62, $SD_{cluster\ 2}$ = .67), t (32) = 6.53, p < .001. Cluster 1 reported significantly higher frequencies of donating food,

money, and supplies to students ($M_{cluster\ 1} = 2.54$, $SD_{cluster\ 1} = .66$) compared to Cluster 2 ($M_{cluster2} = 1.0$, $SD_{cluster\ 2} = .71$), $t\ (32) = 6.32$, $p < .001$. Cluster 1 reported significantly higher frequencies of sparking interest in law enforcement ($M_{cluster\ 1} = 3.38$, $SD_{cluster\ 1} = .768$) compared to Cluster 2 ($M_{cluster2} = 2.71$, $SD_{cluster\ 2} = .85$), $t\ (32) = 2.33$, $p < .05$.

Table 3

Significant Differences Between Clusters for Job-related Behaviors

Job-Related Behaviors	Cluster 1 (n = 13)		Cluster 2 (n = 21)		
	M	*SD*	M	*SD*	*t*-value
feeding students	2.54	1.05	.62	.67	6.53***
donating food, money, and supplies to students	2.54	.66	1.0	.71	6.32***
sparking interest in law enforcement	3.38	.768	2.71	.85	2.33*

Note. * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 3 shows only 3 significant differences between the clusters on the 16 SRO behaviors because no significant differences emerged between clusters on the remaining 13 SRO behaviors. These t-tests reveal that resource officers ***mostly*** report similar frequencies of work-related activities; however, Cluster 1 was significantly more likely to feed students, donate necessities to students, and spark interest in law enforcements than Cluster 2.

The cluster analysis, along with the initial question asking respondents to identify with a primary prong (mentor/counselor, teaching, or law enforcement), combine to suggest that the majority of officers (almost 60%) identify as a mentor to students, and younger officers (who were in Cluster 1) seem to perform more mentoring-type behaviors (such as sparking career interest in law enforcement, feeding students, and donating necessities to students) than the

officers in Cluster 2. Because age and years as an officer were measured categorically, not continuously, the correlational relationship between age and experience with frequency of work-related behaviors could not be calculated.

Research Question 2: Multiple Regression Exploring Importance of Diversion

Research question 2 asked: How do SROs respond to incidents of juvenile crimes and misbehaviors? The hypothesis was that different job-related behaviors might differentially predict importance of diversion. One way to explore RQ2 is to examine how important it is to an officer to divert a juvenile from the justice system, with the assumption that in order to divert from the system, lower levels of intervention on the part of the officer are required. To explore this relationship, respondents were asked to rate the importance of diverting a student from the juvenile justice system on a 5-point scale from 0 (not important) to 4 (very important). This measurement was the dependent variable in the regression analysis.

It was hypothesized that a resource officer's daily behaviors might impact this perceived importance but the direction of these effects was not predicted a priori. For example, officers that are constantly performing teaching tasks may have higher levels of importance of diversion because they see themselves as teachers and not law enforcement officers. The direction of the effect of performing more mentoring or more law enforcement tasks on importance of diversion could be positive or negative. For instance, it is conceivable that performing more law enforcement tasks may lead to less importance on diversion, but conversely, the more law tasks an officer performs, perhaps they want more diversion from such tasks.

Because the direction of effects was unknown, a regression was performed, predicting importance of diversion from the types of work-related behaviors performed by the respondents. In other words, do officers' daily tasks impact their perceived importance of diverting juveniles

from the judicial system? Three independent variables were created from selected variables from the 16 SRO job-related behaviors discussed previously. These three predictor variables are indices representing (1) frequency of law enforcement tasks, (2) frequency of mentor/counseling tasks, and (3) frequency of teaching tasks. Frequency of behaviors were measured on a 0 (never) to 4 (most days). The law enforcement index was created by **summing** the frequency of: wearing formal uniforms, frequency of investigating crimes, and the frequency of citing, arresting, attending court. The mentor counselor index was created by **summing** the frequency of working with guidance counselors, frequency of referring to community service and frequency of sparking interest in law enforcement. Finally, the teaching index was created by **summing** the frequency of teaching DARE, GREAT, or other academic lessons, the frequency of giving presentations and the frequency of meeting with the PTA.

All three indices therefore, could range from 0 to 12. Table 4 displays the means and standard deviations for the dependent variable and three independent variables for complete data for 35 respondents. Table 4 also displays the bivariate correlations among all variables. Ideally, a regression should have predictor variables that are uncorrelated with each other (to prevent multicollinearity or "overlap" in predictive power), but should have predictor variables that are significantly correlated with the dependent variable (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 1998; Phillips, 2018). However, with a small sample of 35 people, none of the correlations in Table 3 met conventional levels of statistical significance.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations among Regression Variables

Descriptive Statistics		M	SD
Dependent variable	Importance of diversion a student from the Juvenile Justice system	3.06	. 802
Independent variables	Law Enforcement Index	8.43	2.330
	Mentor Counselor Index	9.26	1.578
	Teaching Index	4.14	2.277

Bivariate Correlations

	Importance of diverting a student from the Juvenile Justice system	Law Enforcement Index	Mentor Counselor Index	Teaching Index
Importance of diverting a student from the Juvenile Justice system	1.000			
Law Enforcement Index	-.187	1.000		
Mentor Counselor Index	-.058	.233	1.000	
Teaching Index	.253	.188	.178	1.000

A multiple regression was performed with all three indices entered simultaneously to predict the importance of diverting the student from the juvenile justice system. First, assumptions of regression analysis were explored. The Durbin-Watson statistic is a test for correlations between residuals (the assumption that residuals are not correlated); this value can range from 0 to 4, with values near 2 indicating no correlation between residuals (Phillips, 2018). The present value of 1.7 means that the regression model tested here did not violate homoscedasticity assumption. Also, the statistical analysis provided a histogram of the standardized residuals, which showed a relatively normal distribution (see Figure 3). Given that the regression assumptions were met, the model can be examined for statistical significance.

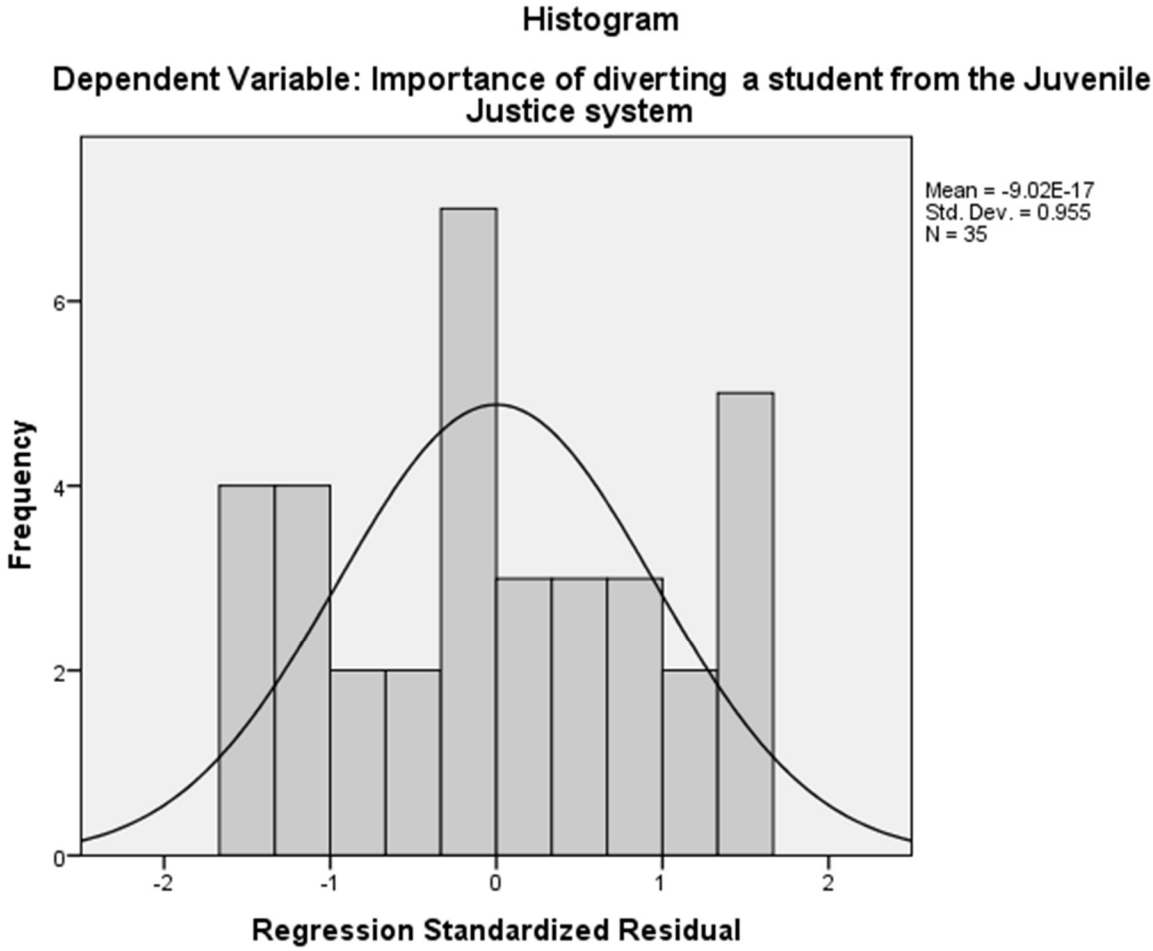

Figure 3. Histogram of regression residuals.

The three indices did not combine to significantly predict importance of diversion, $F(3,31) = 1.46$, *n.s.* The amount of variance in importance of diversion accounted for by the frequency of certain tasks (represented by the three indices) is represented by the R^2 value, which in this case was only .124. This value, while not statistically significant, holds some practical value in the study of SROs. It means that 12.4% of the variance in importance of diversion is explained by how frequently a SRO performs certain job-related behavior. Regression coefficients are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Regression Coefficients Predicting Importance of Diverting a Student from the Juvenile Justice System from Task Indices

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	*t*	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.557	.863		4.122	.000
Frequency of Law Enforcement Activities	-.079	.060	-.230	-1.317	.198
Frequency of Mentor Counselor Activities	-.030	.089	-.059	-.339	.737
Frequency of Teaching Activities	.108	.061	.307	1.775	.086

Examining the regression coefficients in Table 5 show the "direction" of effect for each of the indices in predicting the resource officer's perceived importance of diverting a student from the juvenile justice system. Law enforcement tasks and mentor/counseling tasks showed a negative relationship with diversion, but teaching tasks had a positive relationship with diversion. Based on the unstandardized *B*s in the regression model, we see that the more frequently an SRO performs law enforcement and mentor/counseling tasks, the less important diversion is (both *B*s were negative), but the more frequently an SRO performs teaching tasks, the more important diversion is (*B* was positive). However, none of these predictors reached statistical significance.

The standardized betas presented in Table 5 show the relative importance of each index in predicting importance. Here, the frequency of teaching tasks had the highest standardized beta compared to the other two predictors (.307 versus -.230 and -.059), so it is the most important

predictor in the regression model. Given the small sample size for the regression analysis, this analysis should be interpreted with caution.

An additional regression analysis was conducted which controlled for cluster membership on importance of diversion, prior to including the three behavior indices in the model. Cluster membership was not a significant predictor of diversion importance (B = -.278, t = -.968, *n.s.*). This block regression model did not reach statistical significance and also produced a low R^2 value (R^2 = .176). Finally, this analysis did not result in any change in the relative importance of each predictor; all three frequency indices were still non-significant and in the same pattern, with frequency of teaching tasks the most important predictor in increasing the importance of diversion. These regression results combine to suggest that the more **teaching** tasks an officer performs, the more important diversion from the juvenile justice system is to the officer.

Research Question 2: SRO Responses to Incidents

RQ 2 could also be explored with additional data from the survey that asked respondents to report their initial reaction to a list of various juvenile behaviors. Specifically, respondents were presented with 21 juvenile behaviors and asked, for each behavior, what their first response would be in reaction to the disobedience. Answer options ranged along a continuum of 8 increasingly serious reactions: Do Nothing, Counsel/ Mentor, Refer to School Administrators, Official Warning, Refer to Diversionary Program, Issue Citation, Arrest for Lesser Charge, Juvenile Petition/Criminal Complaint. Table 6 shows the percentage of respondents choosing each reaction as his/her first reaction to the juvenile behavior.

Table 6

Most Frequently Chosen Response to Juvenile Behaviors by SROs

Juvenile behaviors	*Most frequent response to behavior*							
	Do Nothing	Counsel/ Mentor	Refer to School Administrators	Official Warning	Refer to Diversionary Program	Issue Citation	Arrest for Lesser Charge	Juvenile Petition/ Criminal Complaint
Mutual Fight, no injuries	0	7.3	**68.3**	4.9	7.3	12.2	0	0
Mutual Fight, with injuries	0	0	**46.3**	2.4	17.1	17.1	0	17.1
Assault, no injuries	0	2.5	**50**	0	17.5	12.5	2.5	15
Assault, with injuries	0	0	27.5	0	10	7.5	2.5	**52.5**
Sexting	0	24.4	**51.2**	0	17.1	2.4	2.4	2.4
Marijuana possession	0	2.4	36.6	0	7.3	12.2	0	**41.5**
Other drug possession	0	0	29.3	0	4.9	9.8	0	**56.1**
Tobacco possession	0	9.8	**65.9**	4.9	0	17.1	0	2.4
Vandalism	0	0	**57.5**	2.4	7.5	5	2.5	25
Hallway or Classroom disruption	2.4	22	**63.4**	12.2	0	0	0	0
Student drama	5	**55**	37.5	2.5	0	0	0	0
Cyber bullying	0	25	**55.6**	5.6	8.3	0	0	5.6
Theft value <$10	0	13.9	**63.9**	2.8	13.9	0	0	5.6
Theft value $11-$49	0	5.6	**58.3**	0	19.4	8.3	0	8.3
Theft value >$50	0	2.8	**50**	0	13.9	2.8	0	30.6
Underage drinking	0	0	30.6	0	19.4	**47.2**	0	2.8
Gambling	2.9	22.9	**57.1**	2.9	8.6	2.9	0	2.9
Truancy	2.9	5.7	**85.7**	2.9	2.9	0	0	0
Parking violation	5.6	22.2	**41.7**	22.2	0	8.3	0	0
Driving violation	2.8	19.4	**33.3**	25	0	19.4	0	0
Cheating	8.6	11.4	**80**	0	0	0	0	0

Note. Cell numbers reflect percentage of responses for each behavior, so rows round to 100%.

Bolded numbers reflect the most frequent choice of first response to each behavior.

It was hypothesized that SROs, given the choice, would choose to respond to juvenile misbehaviors with lower levels of intervention (such as “do nothing” or “counsel/mentor”). However, as can be seen from the bolded numbers in Table 6, the most frequent first reaction to a juvenile behavior was to refer the student to school administrators. In response to assaults with injuries, Marijuana Possession and Other Drug Possession, the most frequent response was to issue a juvenile petition or criminal complaint. In response to Student Drama, the most frequent response was to counsel or mentor the student, and in response to Underage Drinking, the most frequent response was to issue a citation. Interestingly, these results suggest that perhaps SROs, though identifying with different prongs of job responsibilities and reporting different frequencies of job-related behaviors in RQ1, don’t demonstrate the same type of variation in how they respond to juvenile misbehaviors in RQ2. More research would be needed to explore why there is so little variability in responding to misbehaviors in the present sample. In future studies, a larger sample size focusing specifically on how SROs respond to incidents of misbehaviors, including scenario based questions will lend itself to more insight to the reactions of SROs.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Discussion

While skeptics will remain wary of introducing police officers into schools, research supports that the benefits of SROs outweigh the concerns. SROs are trained police officers with years of experience addressing crises and restoring order. SROs deescalate, they care, and they are invested in their communities. To address the first research question, posing how SROs view their roles within their organization, results from the survey indicated that the majority of SROs who responded viewed themselves most strongly in the mentor/counselor role. This result supports previous research conducted by Ivy (2012) and Kelly and Swezey (2015).

Subsequently, the cluster analysis technique was used to further explore how SROs view their roles, but instead of using a self-selection into one of three prong categories, the cluster analysis created groupings of SROs based on how similarly they performed daily, job-related behaviors. The daily activities SROs most frequently engaged in were working with guidance counselors, school nurses, and social workers, all while wearing a formal police uniform. Respondents spent much of their time regularly meeting with school administrators, offering positive reinforcement, and walking school hallways to be visible and approachable. Two clusters emerged based on SRO behaviors and, even though school resource officers ***mostly*** report similar frequencies of work-related activities, Cluster 1 was significantly more likely to feed students, donate necessities to students, and spark interest in law enforcement than Cluster 2. Cluster 1 tended to consist of younger officers with less SRO experience and seemed to perform more mentoring-type behaviors (such as sparking career interest in law enforcement, feeding students, and donating necessities to students). Future research should explore clusters among SROs in more detail to see if purposely changing the types of daily tasks that SROs engage in will result in different types of SRO identification.

Further analyses of respondent's answers revealed that SROs were not proactively seeking misbehaviors and crimes, rather they were reactive when it comes to arrest. In fact, building upon Black (1971) and Wolf (2013), SROs identified up to 14 variables that they considered prior to effectuating an arrest. These factors reinforce the importance of the mentor counselor role and showcase the positive impact SROs have on their school environments.

In response to RQ2 posing how SROs respond to misbehaviors and crimes in school, the hypothesis that SROs would respond with differing diversion scores based on different job-related behaviors was supported. SROs overwhelmingly responded that they would report misbehaviors and crimes to school administrators as their first option, given no extenuating circumstances. The exceptions resulting in a harsher response were incidents of underage drinking, marijuana possession, and other drug possession. An explanation for the response that SROs would primarily issue a citation for underage drinking may come from a statutory option for the magisterial district justice to admit the juvenile to a pre-adjudication alternative program in lieu of adjudication (PA Crimes Code § 6308, 2018). By issuing a citation, the SRO can recommend that the juvenile attend court-ordered education to learn the dangers of alcohol in an attempt to prevent recidivism. Understanding why an SRO would arrest for marijuana and other drug possession may be explained through the opioid crisis sweeping the nation. Similar to the pre-adjudication programs available for underage drinking, those arrested for drug violations have the option, if certain criteria are met, to appeal to the court for drug treatment and rehabilitation in lieu of criminal charges (Pennsylvania Crimes Code, 2018). By mandating court involvement, treatment and rehabilitation may attempt to break the addiction cycle, or at least offer services not available through lesser intrusive interventions. All the participating SROs responded, at the very least, that it was moderately important to divert a student from the juvenile

justice system. Moreover, the regression results revealed that frequency of engaging in teaching tasks was most closely related to SRO's desire for diversion. These data contradict prior research surmising that SROs criminalize juvenile misbehaviors (Theriot, 2009) and shed a more promising light on how SROs can perform certain work-related behaviors to support diversion. For example, if SROs are instructed to perform more teaching behaviors as part of their job description, perhaps they will likely see an increase in the importance of diversion. Future research should explore how job-related tasks can affect SROs responses to misbehaviors.

Limitations and Future Suggestions for the SRO Survey Project

Given the small sample size of Pennsylvania SROs who completed full surveys, the hypotheses were supported and trended in the proper direction; however, applying these results to the broader population of resource officers should be done with caution and continued testing. By surveying SROs nationwide, a broader spectrum of responses may yield different results. As of 2018, SRO numbers are estimated to be 20,000; however, there is no definite number since the position may be called different titles (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007). In 2018 in Pennsylvania, the NASRO regional director estimates the number of SROs has increased over the last five years, but, since membership numbers are not recorded, the exact numbers are unknown. Certainly a larger sample of participants would have yielded more practically and statistically significant results. A larger sample would also have allowed more sophisticated statistical tests, or would allow exploring some questions in different ways, such as using ANOVA or discriminant analysis to explore RQ 2 in more detail.

Further research on the topic could utilize the same survey questions and possibly even focus on the same research questions. Some suggested changes to the survey would be to make certain questions mandatory (as some respondents skipped questions) and some variables, such

as age and years of service in the SRO or police officer role, should be measured continuously, rather than categorically. These methodological suggestions would have allowed some additional predictors to be included in the regression analysis and may have also provided more insight into the differences between clusters that emerged. Were this study conducted again by future researchers, care must be given to the definition of crimes provided in the survey to ensure consistency from state to state. There may be different statutory regulations based upon jurisdiction and the grading of offenses may differ, which may affect the SRO's chosen level of intervention. In future research, the addition of scenario based questions will allow for narrative style responses and a qualitative analysis would identify trends in responses. Ultimately, the variations of responses may shed insight into the amount of discretion available and alternative responses to misbehavior.

This study sought to showcase how Pennsylvania SROs respond to incidents of misbehaviors and crimes in order to defend that SROs are not out to criminalize juvenile behavior; however, the sample size in the survey was limited in respondents. The electronic survey was diverted to spam mailboxes for some recipients while others had difficulty with the survey using their preferred internet browser. Finally, a flaw in the early demographic questions of the survey instrument created frustration among participants, and they subsequently abandoned the survey. The estimated number of Pennsylvania SROs is 300, and while partial surveys were submitted by 79 respondents, competed surveys were submitted by 36.

Hearing from SROs

As a function of community policing, police agencies function cooperatively with the school community to counteract disorder and crime. Barnes (2016) surveyed SROs in North Carolina to find out what they wanted school administrators to know. The SROs expressed some

conflict when teachers used the SRO for tasks viewed as the responsibility of the teacher. An SRO called into a classroom to maintain order when grades were handed out undermined the positive relationships forged throughout the year. The SRO was not stationed in a building to discipline students for wearing hats or chewing gum and thus felt these tasks detracted from their official duties and responsibilities (Barnes). Instead, SROs wanted to convey the message that their goals were to build positive relationships with students and staff. SROs recognize that successful policing is based on the relationships they have with their communities, so they reported that much of the school day is used to interact with students. These interactions were reported to be very positive by reducing fears that students may have of police officers. In addition, these relationships allowed students to seek the SRO when they had problems or if they found themselves at a crossroads in behavior, utilizing the SRO as a counselor. Another benefit of SRO-student interaction was the information SROs learned about crimes occurring away from school but within the community. After building relationships with the SRO, students were more inclined to share information about drugs or crimes occurring outside of school, enabling patrol officers and detectives to solve open cases (Barnes, 2016).

Ivey (2012) focused on South Carolina's SROs and their perceptions on the prongs of the SRO triad versus the perceptions of supervisors and school principals. In this study, SROs believed that their service-oriented tasks were almost as important as their law enforcement related tasks. The majority of SROs surveyed believed they focused most frequently on the mentoring/counseling prong of the triad, and all participants agreed that the education prong of the triad received the least attention. The inconsistencies in perception on the amount of time spent on each prong could be attributed to role confusion as well as to role expectations. Despite that SROs reported focusing on their counseling role, principals believed the SRO's focus was

on law enforcement. Principals reported students viewing the SRO as “individuals who carried them to jail if they misbehaved.” SROs responded back that they could gain the trust of young individuals if high school principals allowed school resource officers to counsel more and arrest less (Ivey, 2012). In a timeline breakdown, SROs perceived they spent 14.5% of their time focusing on the teaching prong, 41.4% on the mentoring/counseling prong, and 44% on the law enforcement prong (Ivey, 2012).

Daniels, et. al. (2011) researched SROs who had been involved in armed, barricaded subject incidents inside schools where someone was taken hostage. In this study, the safe resolution to each incident was explained by the SROs and fifteen conditions were indicated explaining why. Some of the fifteen included rapport established with students, knowledge based on previous investigations, SROs awareness of their environment, SROs emotional preparedness, and administrative communication and support (Daniels, et. al., 2011). Each of the SROs reported taking preemptive steps prior to the incident to ensure safety in their buildings. Included were training for multiple types of crises, enhancing awareness of the people and environment within and surrounding the school, using knowledge gained from previous experiences to improve security, and developing and using rapport with students to break the code of silence (Daniels, et. al., 2011). The aftermath of these incidents was viewed as positive among the communities, administrations, and police departments because the resolutions were positive; however, the SROs reported suffering internal conflicts. They worried about the safety risks to the student body and captives, the realization they may have to harm a student they know, and, finally, the guilt one SRO reported at the prospect of having to kill a student (Daniels, et. al., 2011). While SROs are trained in the mindset that they must neutralize a threat should one arise,

they are aware that there will be emotional repercussions to victims, secondary victims, and the greater community.

SRO as the Researcher

This researcher has spent the last four (4) years as an SRO, and prior to that as a uniformed patrol officer for 18 years. Through professional experience, as well as being active within the SRO community, this researcher was able to confirm current literature and create research questions which were then rigorously tested. To establish a new SRO program, a collaborative agreement was reached between the police and school district, solidified by a comprehensive memorandum of understanding. Introducing an SRO to a high school mid-year was no easy task. Students were wary, parents surmised that the school was so dangerous a police officer was integrated, and staff were confused. It took extraordinary measures for the SRO to be visible and express the philosophy that she was introduced as a positive resource, not someone to be feared in the building.

To cultivate relationships with parents, the SRO attended various after-school events and competitions to meet parents and to be accessible to talk. Conversations began so misconceptions could be negated. This researcher was able to express to parents the advantages of the position as well as to explain the benefits and resources available to their children. Their SRO was there to help and regularly offered her cell phone to parents for use if they had concerns or needed to talk. To cultivate relationships with teachers and staff, the SRO was visible during the day and greeted colleagues with a genuine smile and friendly disposition. The SRO assisted when staff members needed advice with personal problems and was able to guide staff to the proper resource when needed. With students, relationship building began at introductory assemblies and where large groups assembled. The SRO introduced herself and requested students program her

school district issued cell phone number into their phones. They were instructed to call or text if they needed to talk or needed help for themselves or someone else. Knowing that relationship building occurs over time and not as a single encounter, the SRO stocked her office with candy, granola bars, and snacks for students to enjoy. Given the SRO's 18 years of experience as a patrol officer, many students recognized her as having responded to their houses or having helped them with problems over the years. Those experiences assisted in relationship building and establishing trust.

The SRO's office is decorated in a manner to encourage calm and peaceful interactions. The goal is to connect with students using a trauma-informed approach. The office includes fidget and sensory toys to encourage focus, as well as plants and crystals to create a cozy environment (Schecter, Shah, Fruitman, & Milanaik, 2017). Sensory pillows sit on chairs to create a soft room to ease trauma and calm stressors (Gill, Gottfredson, & Hutzell, 2016; Thompson & Raisor, 2013). Music plays to drown out conversations so students or staff are unable to eavesdrop. The office is arranged to accommodate tactile, visual, and audible stimuli to appeal to the greatest number of students. Conversations are typically casual and involve asking about school and classes, extra-curricular activities, and weekend plans. As the school years progress, the SRO office has become a popular place to stop for a visit between classes, during lunch, and when students need a break from instruction - provided they bring a hall pass.

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Appendix A

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs | West Chester University | Filano Hall
West Chester, PA 19383 | 610-436-3557 | www.wcupa.edu

Protocol ID # 20170621
This Protocol ID number must be used in all communications about this project with the IRB.

TO: Beth Sanborn and Jeremy Philips

FROM: Melissa A. Reed, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, WCU Institutional Review Board (IRB)

DATE: 6/21/2017

Project Title: An Examination of Pennsylvania School Resource Officer's Chosen Level of Intervention
Date of Approval: 6/21/2017

☒**Expedited Approval**

This protocol has been approved for a period of one year. Approximately two months prior to the approval end date, you will receive a Continuing Review of Research form. Per Federal regulations, this form must then be completed as soon as possible and returned to the IRB at irb@wcupa.edu , even if the project has been completed or discontinued. Any revisions to this protocol that are needed before that time will require approval by the WCU IRB. Please see www.wcupa.edu/research/irb.aspx for more information.

Any adverse reaction by a research subject is to be reported immediately through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs via email at irb@wcupa.edu.

Signature:

Melissa A. Reed

Co-Chair of WCU IRB

Consent Form

Consent

You are invited to take part in a research survey about School Resource Officers and School Police Officers. This survey will take approximately 6 minutes and is completed online. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this survey. The benefits include uncovering the tasks associated with school-based police officers. Taking part in this study is strictly voluntary. If you choose to be in the study, you can withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with anyone. Your responses will remain strictly confidential, and digital data will be stored in secure computer files. Any report of this research made available to the public will not include your name or any other individual information by which would reveal your identity. If you have questions or want a copy of this study's results, you can contact the researcher at bs876999@wcupa.edu. If you have any concerns that you have been treated in an illegal or unethical way, contact the West Chester University Institutional Research Board at 610-436-3557 or irb@wcupa.edu.

Clicking the "I AGREE" button below indicates that you are 18 years of age or older, and indicates your consent to participate in this survey.

- ○ I AGREE (1)
- ○ I do not wish to participate (2)

Are you a School Resource Officer (SRO) or a School Police Officer (SPO)?

- ○ School Resource Officer (SRO) (1)
- ○ School Police Officer (SPO) (2)

How many years have you been an SRO/SPO?

- ○ Less than 4 (1)
- ○ 5-9 (2)
- ○ 10 or more (3)

What grade levels are you responsible for? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Elementary School (1)
- ☐ Middle School/Junior High School (2)
- ☐ High School (3)

What is the geographic region of your school district?

- ○ Rural (1)
- ○ Suburban (2)
- ○ Urban (3)

Have you received any formal SRO training?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ I am an SPO (3)

For SROs, rank the triad prongs 1-3 in the order you associate with **most** to **least.** Drag and drop the answers in the correct order. **(SPOs please skip)**

1= The prong you most strongly identify
3= The prong you least identify

_____ Law Enforcement (1)
_____ Mentor/Counselor (2)
_____ Teacher (3)

For SROs, do your daily tasks prevent you from operating as your desired prong of association?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No, my daily tasks correspond with my prong of association (2)
- ○ I am an SPO (4)

Approximately what percentage of your arrests are made: based upon crimes you observe, from incidents referred to you by school staff, or another way? (answer should total 100)

Observed crimes: _____ (1)
Referrals by school staff: _____ (2)
Other: _____ (3)
Total: _____

For the below listed chart, examine the incidents and select how you would respond. Assume there are no extenuating or other aggravating circumstances. Since each incident may be reasonably addressed in numerous ways, please answer with **up to 3** preferred choices.
1= Your first choice of response
2= Your second choice of response
3= Your third choice of response

	Do Nothing (1)	Counsel or Mentor (2)	Refer to School Administrators (3)	Official Warning (written or verbal) (4)	Refer to Diversionary Program (5)	Issue Citation (6)	Arrest for a Lesser Charge (7)	Juvenile Petition or Criminal Complaint (8)
Mutual fight, no injuries (1)								
Mutual fight, injuries sustained (2)								
Assault, no injuries (3)								
Assault, injuries sustained (4)								
Sexting (6)								
Marijuana possession (12)								
Other drug possession (13)								
Tobacco possession (14)								
Vandalism (19)								
Hallway/Classroom disruption (20)								
Student drama (21)								

For the below listed chart, examine the incidents and select how you would respond. Assume there are no extenuating or other aggravating circumstances. Since each incident may be reasonably addressed in numerous ways, please answer with **up to 3** preferred choices. 1= Your first choice of response, 2= Your second choice of response, 3= Your third choice of response

	Do Nothing (1)	Counsel or Mentor (2)	Refer to School Administrators (3)	Official Warning (written or verbal) (4)	Refer to Diversionary Program (5)	Issue Citation (6)	Arrest for a Lesser Charge (7)	Juvenile Petition or Criminal Complaint (8)
Cyber bullying (5)								
Theft, value under $10 (7)								
Theft, value between $11-$49 (8)								
Theft, value over $50 (9)								
Underage Drinking (10)								
Gambling (11)								
Truancy (15)								
Parking violations (16)								
Driving violations (17)								
Cheating (18)								
Other: (22)								

For the below listed chart, look at the tasks commonly encountered by SROs/SPOs and choose how frequently you participate in the activity.

	Most days	Every week	Every month	Rarely	Never
Wear a formal police uniform (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Investigate crimes (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Cite, arrest, attend related court hearings (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Work with guidance counselors, school nurse, or social workers (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Refer students/families to community services (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Spark interest in law enforcement (6)	○	○	○	○	○
Teach D.A.R.E, GREAT, or other lesson to students/staff (7)	○	○	○	○	○
Give presentations on sexting, bullying, or other teen activities (8)	○	○	○	○	○
Meet with Parent Teacher Association (PTA) (9)	○	○	○	○	○
Meet with Parent Teacher Association (PTA) (9)	○	○	○	○	○
Meet with school administrators (10)	○	○	○	○	○
Walk through hallways to be visible and approachable to staff/students (11)	○	○	○	○	○
Offer positive reinforcement (12)	○	○	○	○	○
Make ChildLine referrals (13)	○	○	○	○	○
Feed students (14)	○	○	○	○	○
Donate food, money, supplies to students (15)	○	○	○	○	○
Attend extracurricular activities (16)	○	○	○	○	○
Other: (17)	○	○	○	○	○

When presented with an incident or crime occurring at school, which of the following variables may affect your decision to make an arrest? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Attitude of offender (1)
- ☐ Attitude of victim (2)
- ☐ Desire of school administrators (3)
- ☐ Desire of victim's family (4)
- ☐ Seriousness of the offense (5)
- ☐ Student's prior discipline or criminal history (6)
- ☐ SRO's/SPO's knowledge of offender or victim (7)
- ☐ Circumstances around the incident (8)
- ☐ Your mood (9)
- ☐ Anticipated publicity (10)
- ☐ Time of the day or day of the week (11)
- ☐ Reliability of witnesses (12)
- ☐ Availability of video footage (13)
- ☐ Other: (14) _____

What would you tell people who are unfamiliar with SROs/SPOs about your job that might surprise them?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How important is it to you to divert a student from the Juvenile Justice system?

- ○ Extremely important
- ○ Very important
- ○ Moderately important
- ○ Slightly important
- ○ Not at all important

What is your gender?

- ○ Male (1)
- ○ Female (2)

What is your age?

- ○ 21-29 (1)
- ○ 30-39 (2)
- ○ 40-49 (3)
- ○ 50 or above (4)

How many years have you been a police officer?

- ○ Less than 5 (1)
- ○ 5-9 (2)
- ○ 10-14 (3)
- ○ 15-19 (4)
- ○ 20 or more (5)

Appendix B

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West Chester, PA 19383 | 610-436-3557 | www.wcupa.edu

Protocol ID # 20180709-B
This Protocol ID number must be used in all communications about this project with the IRB.

TO: Beth Sanborn & Jeremy Phillips

FROM: Nicole M. Cattano, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, WCU Institutional Review Board (IRB)

DATE: 7/6/2018

Project Title: Mock Teen Room Program Evaluation
Date of Approval: 7/6/2018

☒**Exempt From Further Review**

This protocol has been approved. Any revisions for this protocol must be submitted to the WCU IRB for approval, using the IRB application form (check off I.G. Revision). Please see www.wcupa.edu/research/irb.aspx for more information.

Any adverse reaction by a research subject is to be reported immediately through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs via email at irb@wcupa.edu.

Signature:

Co-Chair of WCU IRB

Example of the Teaching Prong

Mock Teen Room Program Evaluation

Introduction

This program evaluation illustrates the origination, planning, preparation, implementation, and data analysis of an innovative instructional event, hereinafter referred to as the *Mock Team Room*. The Mock Team Room is of specific interest to parents of teens and preteens, teachers and school support staff, social services providers, and anyone interested in the well-being of teens within the community. Teaching skills to identify teens making poor lifestyle choices was the initial goal of the event, with the primary goal of providing intervention before a crisis is reached. Participants in the event included various social services providers within Montgomery County and the Center for Humanistic Change, a 501(c)(3) company based in Allentown, Pennsylvania. The collaboration among Lower Gwynedd Police, the Wissahickon School District, the Kiwanis Club of Ambler, and the Montgomery County Drug and Alcohol Prevention Program provided the foundation for the event. The successes as well as the limitations of the event, the data collected from the attendees, and the suggestions for replicating the event will be addressed in this program evaluation. Written permission from the district Superintendent was obtained to identify the specific school.

A program originating in Copely, Ohio called *Hidden in Plain Sight* is a collaborative partnership between the Copely (OH) and Bath (PA) Police Departments and is recognized by the Attorney General's Office in Ohio. Hidden in Plain Sight is an awareness program tailored for adults that showcases items which may be indicative of dangerous and risky behavior among adolescents. The topics discussed in the program include substance abuse, violence, eating disorders, juvenile crime, technology, risky challenges, and more (HIPS promotional flyer,

2016). Items that may be indicative of risky behavior are staged in a mock-up of a teenager's bedroom, and parents are encouraged to walk through and explore the staged set.

The opportunity to implement a similar program in a local township in Montgomery County PA arose in January 2018, when a Kiwanis club approached the Lower Gwynedd Police Department with the goal of helping to solve the opioid epidemic. Kiwanis is a non-profit service club comprised of business people and professionals who work to maintain professional ethics through charitable activities (Kiwanis.org, 2018). The Kiwanis representatives expressed concern about the children in the community and wanted to be proactive in the fight against addiction. A School Resource Office (SRO) participated in the meeting and was able to provide a lens into the issues and challenges facing the children in the local community. Heroin addiction is not directly affecting the children in the school district; there is no chatter about heroin, no overdoses, and no use of naloxone (Narcan) stored in both the nurse's and SRO's offices. According to the Montgomery County (PA) Department of Public Safety Law Enforcement Opioid Antidote Program Report, from January 1, 2017 through March 31, 2018 there were 441 doses of Narcan administered throughout Montgomery County (2018). The jurisdictions that comprise the Wissahickon School District are Ambler Borough, Lower Gwynedd Township, and Whitpain Township. Of the 441 doses administered during that period, one (1) was in Ambler Borough, two (2) were in Lower Gwynedd Township, and seven (7) were in Whitpain Township. The ten (10) doses of Narcan accounted for 0.02% of the applications administered in Montgomery County.

However, the Kiwanis representatives were shocked to learn that students were regularly using marijuana and vaping. Due to the decriminalization and legalization of marijuana in various regions of the country, combined with the legalization of medical marijuana, adolescents

are receiving mixed messages and believe marijuana to be “not such a big deal” (Pearson, Liese, & Dvorak, 2017). Vaping involves inhaling aerosol created by heating glycerin oils with added flavoring (some containing nicotine and marijuana) and is equally as dangerous as smoking cigarettes (centeronaddiction.org, 2016). Vapes and electronic cigarette manufacturers are aiming their advertising toward young people and encouraging a new generation of smokers by using new technology and flavorings to minimize any perceived health risks. The Kiwanis representatives were concerned about these activities and their frequency in the school district, so they welcomed the opportunity to be a part of Hidden in Plain Sight in order to educate parents on the new and unhealthy lifestyle choices teens are embracing.

Preparation

Implementing a project of this size and scope requires a significant amount of planning and preparation from venue and materials to funding and advertising. The Wissahickon School District supported the project and provided the site at no cost. A potentially costly need was materials: furniture to stage the teenager’s room, a trailer to house the furniture, accessories, and the paraphernalia and educational tools to make the project a worthwhile educational endeavor. The Montgomery County Office for Children and Youth suggested a not-for-profit agency, The Center for Humanistic Change (CHC), based in Allentown, Pennsylvania. The CHC will set up a mock teen room containing up to 100 items which may be indicative of drug and alcohol use or abuse and poor lifestyle choices (Programs, thechc.org, 2018). The fee was underwritten by the Kiwanis Club, thus greatly facilitating the project.

Change in Scope

On December 3, 2013, a student at Arapahoe High School in Centennial Colorado charged into his high school and shot and killed a fellow student, Claire Davis. In the ensuing investigation, behaviors of the shooter were shared among the shooter's mother, his treating doctor, the school, and the police, and thus a clear picture of the psychopathic psychology of the shooter emerged (Langman, 1995). Research into school shooters indicate that shooters often experience a combination of mental illness, drug experimentation and use, and poor lifestyle choices (Langman, 2009; Langman, 2013). Recognizing that communication between stakeholders in teen's lives is critical in identifying a teen before a crisis is reached, the SRO began creating a visual representation for the event.

On February 14, 2018 a former student entered Marjory Stoneman Douglass High School in Parkland, Florida, shot and killed 17, while wounding 17 more (Langman, 2018). School safety dominated the news, citizens demanded gun reform, arming teachers was discussed, and student-led walk-outs and protests against gun violence gained national attention (Malcolm, 2018; Mallin & Flaherty, 2018; Yee & Blinder, 2018). Local concern provided the catalyst to change the scope of the planned event and it morphed into something more all-encompassing. Drug and alcohol prevention resources, drug and alcohol treatment resources, mental health crisis workers, student assistance programs, and the Montgomery County (PA) Intermediate Unit were invited to participate in the Mock Teen Room Event. All the organizations gratefully participated.

Grants and Donations

Kiwanis paid for the CHC to set up the Mock Teen Room and for signs to advertise the event's location. Additional sources of revenue were needed to properly fund the event. The

Montgomery County Drug and Alcohol Prevention Program had grants available in 2018 for educational programs, and they provided $900 for educational brochures and refreshments. Additional refreshments including cakes, pastries, cookies, and potato chips were donated by Panera Breads, Costco, Herr's and George's Shop N Bag in Dresher, PA.

The Wissahickon Educational Opportunities Foundation (WEOF) provided a grant of $625 to pay for more educational brochures as well as stash devices and drug paraphernalia for the event. Ambler Flower Shop donated flower arrangements for the tables and balloon bouquets throughout the venue. Pennsylvania State Representative Todd Stephens donated bags which were distributed at the reception table for attendees to hold educational material collected during the event.

Advertising

Advertising proved to be the most time intensive portion of the event. The Mock Teen Room was scheduled for Thursday evening, April 19, 2018 from 6:00PM-8:00PM at the Wissahickon High School Auditorium, 521 Houston Road, Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002. It was advertised as a hands-on, interactive, drop-in event. There was no formal presentation, and attendees could spend as much or as little time at the event as they pleased. It was advertised as an "adults only" event and discouraged children from attending; however, if children attended, they were simply prohibited from viewing the Mock Teen Room portion of the program. Flyers with the pertinent information were created and distributed (see flyer included at the conclusion).

Further advertising became a collaborative event with participation by the Lower Gwynedd Police Department, the Wissahickon School District, and the Kiwanis Club of Ambler. Each had the ability to activate different resources with the goal of attracting as many adults as

possible. Wissahickon High School and Middle School principals advertised the event to their staffs, Home and School Associations (HSA), and within their principal networks. The event was shared with the Upper Dublin, Hatboro Horsham, Springfield, Lower Moreland, and North Penn School Districts. The Wissahickon superintendent shared the event through the superintendent network and directed the Wissahickon Media Relations Director to promote it as well. Lower Gwynedd Police began advertising through the Parks and Recreation Department and spread the flyer to other local Parks and Recreations departments. Police Chiefs from 11 local police departments were also informed and requested to promote the event in print, on social media, and via invitations to their school district parents.

Advertising became even more widespread. Invitations and contacts were made with private and alternative schools, social services groups, local religious organizations, elected officials, charitable foundations, print media and news media, and Facebook. The flyers and information reached as many people through as many organizations as possible.

The Montgomery News Media conducted an interview with the SRO and the article appeared on the front page of the April 6, 2018 issue of the Ambler Gazette. It included a picture of the Mock Teen Room that had also been printed on the flyer. Philadelphia radio station 93.3 WMMR posted the event of their "Community Events" page. NBC 10, the Philadelphia television affiliate granted a 2:30 live interview on April 17, two days leading up to the event. Live television provided a venue to share the message and promote attendance for the welfare of teens and the broader community. The Executive News Director was anxious to promote the event and brainstormed turning the promotion into "something bigger." A second in-depth interview ensued on the following day and it became a week-long story line. Meanwhile, personal invitations and emails continued to be distributed to any interested party.

Night of the Event

All event participants set up and prepared for visitors by 5:30 PM to allow a dignitary showing to Kiwanis, Wissahickon School District, and the local police chiefs before the 6:00PM starting time. Parking and vehicular traffic signs helped to direct traffic.

At the entrance, guests found themselves presented with multiple tables of coffee and beverages, cakes and pastries, flowers and balloons, and comment cards. The open auditorium doors in front of the guests were clearly marked as the entrance to the Mock Teen Room event. Upon entering the auditorium, a hostess greeted the guests and tracked attendance. Guests were given a bag to collect any educational materials distributed throughout the evening; they were then directed in a counter-clockwise circle through the auditorium.

The diverse agencies participating allowed the attendees to obtain a wide variety of information and materials. The first table encountered was the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit who provided instructional materials on resources available to parents and families in the county. The second table was represented by Aldersgate Youth Service Bureau: Drug and Alcohol Counseling Services. The third table encountered was staffed by a Wissahickon Guidance Counselor in charge of the Student Assistance Program (SAP). After passing a six-foot tall stand-up banner on the dangers of prescription medications, guests were directed onto the auditorium stage where they “entered” the Mock Teen Room. The room was complete with a bed, furniture, rugs, accessories and laundry. Volunteers from CHC exhibited some of the trends in devices meant to conceal drugs and paraphernalia. They also explained indicators of alcohol use, common drug paraphernalia items, and distributed dozens of informational pamphlets alongside displays on the dangerous effects of drugs and poor lifestyle choices.

As guests exited the auditorium stage, they encountered the SRO's table set up with 42 items manufactured and used by teens to potentially hide or disguise drugs and alcohol. Each item was exhibited so it could be manipulated and examined. Guests were encouraged to handle items and learn how they were used to hide "stashes". Also exhibited on the table was a display of vape devices and their accessories, as well as Cannabidiol (CBD) products. Cannabidiol is a cannabis compound that does not produce the same high as marijuana because of the absence of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which is the psychoactive chemical in marijuana. CBD is currently legal in Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania Crimes Code, 2018). This table held guests for an extended time as they read through information and asked numerous questions while manipulating the devices.

The penultimate table encountered was staffed by Access Services, a 24- hour mobile crisis unit, which services children and their families experiencing crises. They also organized a "teen-talk-line" for teens who need to talk with a peer about their troubles. Finally, Ambler Kiwanis was available to provide information on their charitable endeavors. Periodically throughout the event, guests were encouraged to complete comment cards spread throughout the venue.

As guests exited the auditorium, they encountered a table stocked with Lower Gwynedd Police Department giveaways, comment cards, and information if guests wanted to get more involved with teens. To get more involved, a display offering information on the local Youth Aid Panel was highlighted. The Youth Aid Panel is a diversionary program that averts youth from the Juvenile Justice System and is run by the District Attorney's Office. As guests exited the auditorium, they again found themselves surrounded by refreshments to enjoy before departing.

The visual depiction to encourage communication was printed on 11x17 laminated stand-alone posters throughout the event. The poster featured the caption, “By combining our knowledge, we can complete the puzzle. Let’s work together to identify a teen before a crisis is reached. Keeping our teens safe starts with YOU!” The graphic is a drawing of a teenager which has been dissected into six (6) puzzle pieces. Each puzzle piece is labeled with a stakeholder. The stakeholders included are: guardians, school staff, peers, police, therapists, and the piece containing the face is labeled YOU (see poster included at the conclusion).

Comment Cards

The event attracted 203 attendees, not including the volunteers and dignitaries. Of the 203 attendees, comment cards were collected from 87 respondents. Comment cards were located on a table where attendees entered and exited the auditorium and on two (2) of the refreshment tables. Pencils and baskets accompanied the cards. Volunteers staffing the tables requested that attendees fill out the cards to offer feedback on the program.

The comment card consisted of five (5) questions. The first asked respondents to select their role. Their choices were: parent; a combined group of teacher, school staff, and/or school administrator; social services provider; or the option to write in an “other” response. The second question asked if respondents had a better understanding of what to look for in risky behavior. Their response choices were yes or no. The third question asked if respondents felt more comfortable talking with teens about their choices, again offering the answers yes or no. The fourth question asked if the respondent had children in the Wissahickon School District, yes or no. A final question asked if this was an informative event, yes or no, then offered space to answer why or why not. If respondents wanted to discuss any topic from the event further, they

were instructed to write their name and preferred method of contact at the bottom of the card for follow up communication.

Results

A total of 87 participants completed comment cards. Approximately 74% participants identified as a parent (*n* = 64), 8% identified as school staff (*n* = 7), 3% identified as a social services provider (*n* = 3), 8% identified as multiple roles (*n* = 7), and 7% identified as another role (*n* = 6).

When asked if participants felt as if they had a better understanding of what to look for in risky behavior 1% responded no (*n* = 1) and 99% responded yes (*n* = 86). When asked if participants felt more comfortable talking with teens about their choices approximately 5% responded no (*n* = 4), 93% responded yes (*n* =81) and 2% did not respond (*n* = 2). Approximately 36% of respondents do not have children in the Wissahickon School District (*n* = 31) whereas 64% do have children in the Wissahickon School District (*n* = 56). All respondents unanimously agreed Mock Teen Room was an informative event (*n* = 87). Approximately 37% of respondents were parents or grandparents who did not have children in the Wissahickon School District (*n* = 32), and 63% identified as parents or grandparents who have children in the Wissahickon School District (*n* = 55).

Approximately 5% of respondents left their names and contact information to speak about the event further (*n* = 4) and 77% (*n* = 67) of respondents left written comments on the cards including requests to hold this event annually as well as requests to bring the event to neighboring school districts. The overwhelming majority of the comments included how “eye

opening" this event was to learn how devious teens can be when they want to hide something. Attendees were thankful for having access to the Mock Teen Room event.

Limitations

After examining the comment cards and learning the demographics of the attendees, the biggest limitation was the advertising from police departments and school districts other than those involved in hosting the event. It appears as if school districts are hesitant to recommend a program unless they are the ones hosting it. The same can be said for police departments. Despite having a personal connection to those requested to promote the event, when the SRO requested the event be promoted through social media, it failed to be posted. School districts seemed reluctant to recommend their parents attend an education opportunity offered by a neighboring school district, despite the anticipated benefit to the community.

Suggestions for Future Events

For a successful event, it is recommended that those invested in the planning and implementation stay current on drug trends, language, and paraphernalia. Enlisting the assistance of other participating agencies will also prove beneficial. Another recommendation is that the event be filmed and edited into a reasonable video for those unable to attend, although permission to be filmed from the participants would be required. While those watching on video lose the ability to manipulate the devices and observe hiding spots in person, the message and information will still prove worthwhile.

The SRO in conjunction with the local police department and school district anticipates to continue to build the collection of items to share with parents. It is expected that programs similar to "Hidden in Plain Sight" will continue and will include offshoots like "High in Plain

Sight," to educate parents specifically on the evolution of marijuana culture despite trends toward legalization. Not only addressing risky behavior, but also focusing on mental health and wellness, in conjunction with communication between the stakeholders in our children's lives needs to be emphasized to fulfill the goal of an all-encompassing educational endeavor.

Rationale

Acting as a law-related teacher is one of the three prongs of the SRO triad. In literature as well as in practice, the law enforcement and mentor/counselor prongs receive more attention from SROs. While the role of teacher may be portrayed formally or informally, sharing information is crucial. The Mock Teen Room is an example of the SRO assuming the teaching role and spearheading this community-oriented educational opportunity. The opioid crisis is real and it is national; the fight to combat its effects is essential. Programs such as the Mock Teen Room spread awareness of the problem and provide parents and community members tools to help their children survive in today's world. Through regular offerings of this educational endeavor, the SRO expects to encourage conversations between parents and available service providers about the dangers our teens encounter, and offer tools to help avoid common pitfalls. Mock Teen Room is not intended to incite paranoia about drug use and abuse, rather its intent is to educate those who encounter teens to signs which may indicate a potential crisis. By learning what signs to look for and combining them with the knowledge of available services, Mock Teen Room can provide the knowledge of how and when to intervene before a crisis occurs.

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

AN AWARENESS PROGRAM

FOR PARENTS AND OTHER ADULTS

- ***Astonishing, interactive exhibit designed to resemble a teenager's bedroom***
- ***Contains 150+ items which may be indicative of dangerous risky behaviors***
- ***Topics include substance use, violence, eating disorders, juvenile crime, technology, risky games/challenges and more***
- ***Accompanied by PowerPoint presentation and discussion***

Since 2011, Bath and Copley Police Departments have joined forces to provide "Hidden In Plain Sight" to adults in Summit County and surrounding counties, school districts, school staff and agency professionals. More than 150 presentations have been made to 10,000 adults.

The audience typically has 30 minutes to "snoop and search" the unique display. A 2-½ hour informative and entertaining PowerPoint presentation follows. An audience size of 50 or more is preferred. Due to the nature of the materials presented, no youth are permitted to attend. Presenters include a combination of police officers and civilian employees with many years' experience working with young people.

The program is presented at no cost to hosts within a one hour drive of Copley, Ohio. Appearances at conferences and conventions further distances may also be considered. There is no fee, however donations are accepted. We are proud to share information with other police departments or agencies wishing to implement their own similar program.

For more information contact
Marcie Mason at mmason@copley.oh.us
or 330-620-5265.

For scheduled dates and locations of exhibits, please visit the "Hidden In Plain Sight" page on the Copley Police pages at www.copley.oh.us

Presented by

BATH POLICE

COPLEY POLICE

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SEAL OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF OHIO

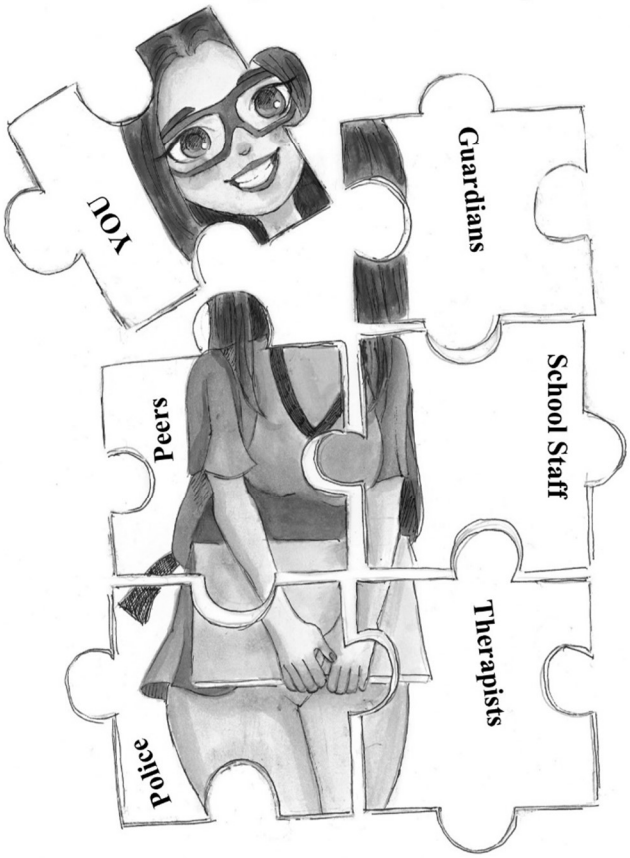
OCPA
Ohio Crime Prevention Association

D.A.R.E. AMERICA

Ohio PTA

10/16

By combining our knowledge, we can complete the puzzle.



Let's work together to identify a teen before a crisis is reached.

Keeping our teens safe starts with YOU!

Appendix C

Examples of the Law Enforcement Prong

As illustrated in the survey data, many respondents reported wearing traditional police uniforms on a daily basis. A police officer wearing a full complement of gear, including a gun, police radio, and handcuffs tends to stand out from the throngs of students wearing the popular, seasonal couture. Existing studies indicate that the presence of a police officer in a uniform support feelings of safety and are associated with competence and reliability (Balkin & Houlden, 1983; Durkin & Jeffery, 2000; Lawrence & Watson, 1991). Among the responsibilities associated with a police officer enforcing laws and maintaining order, School Resource Officers in Pennsylvania are mandatory reporters. Mandatory reporters include, but are not limited to, school employees, religious leaders, social services providers, and others who encounter juveniles during work or volunteerism (PA Child Protective Service Law, 2018). Mandatory reporters are obligated to report suspicions of abuse or neglect of a child in Pennsylvania to Childline either via phone or online referral. The presence of a School Resource Officer allows for easier identification of a child who may be victimized and may otherwise go undetected. By working with school nurses and guidance counselors, the SRO has access to learn about students self-reporting abuse and can make Childline referrals. These referrals allow for investigation and social services to be implemented through the office of children and youth. Family advocates may become involved and children can be rescued from traumatic environments.

A child living in a traumatic or violent household may not immediately report to police. Bosick, Rennison, Gover & Dodge (2012) recognize a factor in the lack of reporting may lie in the shortcomings of relationships between victims and police. However, the SRO, as a regular member of the school community has the ability to forge those relationships with students. These

regular and repeated encounters in the school building may therefore encourage students to report their concerns. This SRO has had occasions to meet with students in a casual manner to discuss innocuous topics, like their extra-curricular activities. During the course of one such conversation, a student disclosed details of their horrific living environment. This student reported feeling depressed and suicidal due to living in conditions that the student felt uncomfortable with. It was later uncovered that there was no food in the home and the floors were covered in feces and urine from various animals in the home. This student did not have a bed, nor any way to shower or wash clothes. This student reported that the mother was a drug addict and cared more for her addiction and animals than her own child. Through law enforcement intervention, social services agencies were able to compel the mother to surrender the animals so they could have a suitable home; require the mother to attend drug/alcohol treatment and submit to random drug/alcohol testing; a professional cleanup crew was brought in make the house habitable; various donations were procured for furniture; and a connection was made through the local community cupboard so proper food staples could be provided. To address the student's mental health concerns, crisis intervention was implemented. To supplement crisis support, the student began meeting with the school crisis counselor and was included in the school's Student Assistance Program (SAP). Now that student is regularly monitored and self-reported to be in a better state of mind.

Relationship building and establishing trust occurs over time and with repeated recurrences. Students can count on this SRO to greet them with a smile and express genuine concern for their wellbeing. As a result, students have felt comfortable sharing information which may pose a hazard to the community. One evening, early in the school year, a student posted a picture and comment on a popular social media platform directing students not to go to

school the next day due to a threat that was to be carried out. Students panicked and took screen shots to preserve the post and texted the images to the SRO's phone. Messages included "I'm scared", "I don't know if this is real or not", "I don't know if you know what's going on but". As a result of the student's quick thinking and relationship with their SRO, law enforcement intervention occurred immediately. Communication to the community in the form of calls, texts, and emails let families know that the school was aware of the threat and that law enforcement were actively investigating. Interviews were conducted, evidence was collected, the threat was assessed and the threat was removed in the early morning hours. More communication followed that the threat had been handled, but no specific details were provided. Although absenteeism increased the following day, the SRO, along with an increased police presence reassured students and staff that their safety was of the utmost importance. The SRO was able to allay student's fears without divulging specific details that would violate confidentiality.

Research revealed instances where SROs experienced role conflict (Benigni, 2001; Coaston-Shelton, 2009). This SRO self-identifies with the mentor/counselor prong of the SRO triad, and up until recently, the daily activities have supported this identification. The law enforcement needs of this SRO's school district are overshadowed by the benefits of the mentoring activities and teaching aspects of the position. However, with vaping occurring at an alarming rate and the influx of THC oil, this SRO has had to impose more law enforcement interventions due to student's possession and use of a controlled substance on school property. Tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, is the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana that produces the feeling of getting high and is categorized as a misdemeanor offense (Bradford, 2017; PA Crimes Code, 2018). This role conflict interferes with the ability to devote time to students wanting to talk. The SRO must test the vape devices for THC, complete the associated paperwork and write

police reports on which law enforcement actions were taken. If an arrest is made, there will be subsequent court hearings, including both status and disposition hearings, requiring the presence of the arresting officer.

Appendix D

Examples of the Mentor/Counselor Prong

On a slower news day, or perhaps when social media discovers a police officer engaging with community youngsters, publicity will cover police officers displaying their "human side". While not to detract from positive publicity of police, these types of interactions occur daily with SROs, and it isn't for a viral post or 30 seconds of fame. SROs are invested in their communities, are self-deprecating and patient. SROs encounter students who are victims of trauma, they encounter students who have had negative interactions with police. A successful SRO will dedicate their time and exhibit patience to cultivate relationships.

Mentoring and counseling activities may be formally defined or informally encouraged throughout the school day. A smile and greeting while students pass in the hallways, or a friendly wave goodbye in the afternoon are repeated activities that build relationships. Examples of mentoring and counseling may take any the following shapes:

An elementary student with a history of trauma had difficulty controlling their behavior and was quite impulsive, raising to the level of disruptive. When teachers were able to identify that this student loved to play with Lego building blocks, the SRO was summoned to be a part of this student's team. The SRO, who also loved playing with Lego building blocks, met with the student so they could discuss their similar interest. From there it was scheduled that Thursday mornings from 10:00-10:30, the SRO would meet with this student and the two would play with Legos together as a reward for positive behavior in class. Initially, there was little talking, and the time consisted of mostly building structures side-by-side, then showing off our creations. Over the course of a few short weeks, teachers reported fewer disruptions from the student, and

allowed the student to bring in Legos from home to show the SRO. This student reportedly began to look forward to Thursdays at 10:00. Through conversations during Lego time, the SRO learned many of the student's preferences and regularly brought in treats, including the student's favorite Dum-Dum lollipop flavor (root beer). Telephone conversations with the student's mother were incredibly positive and allowed the SRO to learn more of the student's history and the positive impact of Lego time. Over time, the student's behavioral ticks subsided and the student spoke more openly about friends, school, and family. This scheduled mentoring occurred over the course of two school years. Although scheduled Lego time is no longer required as a behavioral reward, the two still chat when they encounter each other, and this student's development and behavior have improved substantially.

Although not directly involved in the application of school discipline, SROs are typically aware of students who attract negative attention from teachers and who regularly receive disciplinary write-ups. In one particular instance, the SRO observed a student who regularly got in trouble being scolded in the hallway by a teacher. The SRO knew this student had a chaotic family history, has been arrested in the past, and has explosive physical outbursts. The SRO checked in with the student's assistant principal later in the day to find out how the student reacted to being scolded. When the administrator reported the student neither became aggressive nor escalated the encounter, the SRO sought out the student and gave them a $5 convenience store gift card as a reward for a proper response to the teacher. This student was unaccustomed to positive reinforcement and has since started coming to the SRO office just to check in or get a snack. This student has started bringing other students in and introducing them to the SRO as someone they can talk with when needed. This student has had a long history of negative interactions with police and social service agencies, but will routinely come to the SRO to vent

about frustrations in a controlled environment. This relationship is still in its embryonic state, but it shows signs of building and strengthening through trust and stability.

While walking the hallways of a school, SROs observe the students and their behaviors. Mentoring and counseling may involve long term plans, however oftentimes, a single intervention may be what is required in that moment. While walking through the hallways, this SRO observed a student in emotional distress, fighting off tears. The SRO diverted from their route and asked if the student wanted to come into the office to escape the crowd of students who could observe the interaction. The student gratefully accepted and the two entered the SRO office. The student accepted a tissue and spent a few moments crying. Once the student gained some composure, the SRO inquired as to what caused this reaction. The student revealed that their significant other just broke off their relationship due to the student's constant state of sadness. The significant other was no longer interested in being a romantic couple. Although the break-up was troublesome to the student, what occupied their thoughts more, was the acknowledgement of the persistent sadness. This student had not divulged to anyone their feelings of sadness and thought they had been hiding it well. This student was afraid to tell their parents, in an effort to avoid them worrying. The SRO spoke with the student and requested permission to introduce them to their guidance counselor. The SRO provided her cell phone number so the student could store it in their phone, to be used whenever the needed to talk. The SRO also provided information for the teen-talk-line, a support line for teenagers, staffed by trained teenagers, before bringing the student to the guidance counselor.

When a student came in to the SRO office and asked to charge their cell phone for a few moments, the SRO was unprepared for what the student reported next. This student reported having difficulty with friends this school year and felt it was "too late" to make new friends, so

they resigned themselves to being alone. This student disclosed eating lunch in the bathroom while sitting on the floor, since it was the only place to eat without feeling ostracized by others. The SRO thanked the student for having the courage to divulge such a vulnerability, then playfully chastised the student for waiting so long to share this information. The SRO invited the student to have lunch in her office so the two could talk and the student could have a comfortable and enjoyable lunchtime. The SRO had heard similar stories of students who felt as if they were friendless, which in the life of a teenager, makes lunchtime painfully stressful. As a result, the SRO brainstormed with guidance counselors how best to reach these students and form a lunch group in the SRO office.

A successful interaction may be defined as a student making eye contact with the SRO. While such as innocuous action may not sound like a victory, consider that the SRO crosses the path of this student most days at the same time. This student typically walks with their gaze down, looking at the ground. When the SRO repeated greeted the student by saying “good morning”, and the student repeated ignores the greeting, some may give up. However the SRO continued, and the two now make eye contact during the morning greeting. This is a work in progress, but the SRO is patient and willing to devote the time to start a relationship.

Mentoring and counseling activities take many different shapes and forms. Some require long-term time investments, others are short term interventions. It’s providing students with what they need, when they need it; it’s about being a positive role model and being genuine. Students have had their own experiences, coupled with the values they have been raised with, which then form their lenses they use to view the world. Relationship building does not occur the same way with each student, it is up to the SRO to determine the best way to reach students and then how best to support them.