

The Third Administrator? Perceptions of School Resource Officers in Predominantly White Elementary Schools

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## **Abstract**

### **Purpose**

While studies of collective leadership tend to focus on administrators and teachers, schools have other staff present that contribute to leadership in ways that affect the students. We focus on school resource officers (SROs) which have become increasingly common in suburban, predominately White schools and elementary schools because, absent law enforcement responsibilities, little is known about SROs in these settings. We examine perceptions of SRO impacts while exploring differences across roles and between White and non-White participants.

### **Methods**

The study is mixed methods, drawing on interviews, focus groups, and surveys of SROs, administrators, teachers, students, and parents. The setting is a suburban county with SROs in all elementary schools.

### **Findings**

We describe seven domains of SRO impacts ranging from school climate to learning environments. SROs are often seen as providing general assistance similar to a vice principal, with some describing SROs as an auxiliary “third administrator.” In addition, SROs tend to overestimate their positive effects compared to school-based stakeholders and underestimate their role in student discipline compared to non-White stakeholders.

### **Implications for Research and Practice**

Understanding that SROs in elementary schools can be seen as part of schools’ collective leadership helps us to understand the influence they have on students and the school environment. We question the appropriateness of SROs inclusion in collective leadership, suggesting school leaders not rely on SROs for non-law enforcement duties, if at all. The results have implications for future collective leadership studies and understanding why efforts to remove police from schools have often stalled.

**KEYWORDS:** school safety, elementary schools, law enforcement, mixed methods research, school resource officers

**SHORT TITLE:** SRO Impacts in Predominately White Elementary Schools

Schools are bustling ecosystems with a diverse set of professionals managing students' academic and behavioral growth, but the vast majority of research on distributed or collective leadership focuses on administrators (i.e., principals, vice principals) and teachers. While some prior work has examined leadership responsibilities shared with administrative assistants and other staff (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Pounder et al., 1995), few have considered how police in schools, most commonly referred to as school resource officers (SROs), could influence collective leadership and, thereby, students and the school environment.

At the same time, the placement of SROs in schools is increasingly controversial. The murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer on May 25, 2020, prompted widespread protests against law enforcement, including law enforcement in schools (Camera, 2020). Several school districts, many of which are large, diverse, and urban, quickly ended contracts with local law enforcement over the next several months (Balingit et al., 2020). Similarly, in Toronto, Canada, the school board removed police from schools in 2017 in response to pressure from Toronto's Black Lives Matter chapter (Belsha, 2020). However, many of these conversations have stalled with some school districts narrowly voting to continue contracts with law enforcement (e.g., Natanson, 2020), and school police programs remaining despite pressure to remove law enforcement from schools (Lott-Lavigna, 2020; McLachlan, 2018). These debates often take into consideration the overwhelmingly critical research on the effects of school-based law enforcement on students (e.g., Boyd, 2020; Byers, 2020). However, many educational leaders are aware of potential negative effects of SROs but continue to support school district contracts with law enforcement (e.g., Byers, 2020; Turner & Beneke, 2020).

These commitments to maintaining SRO programs come after a period of growing presence of law enforcement in schools. Much of this growth was in elementary schools. As of

2018, 34% of elementary schools had an SRO, an 11-fold increase over the 3% of elementary schools with some law enforcement presence in 1997 (Diliberti et al., 2019; Heaviside et al., 1998). Although in 1997 SROs were more likely to be in city schools with a majority of students of color, majority White schools in non-urban areas are now more likely to have an SRO than schools in cities or majority non-White schools (Diliberti et al., 2019; Heaviside et al., 1998).

We have little understanding of how SROs interact with staff and students and how these interactions shape predominately White environments and/or elementary schools. Secondary school SROs usually have law enforcement responsibilities, policing law violations while preventing and managing threats of violence (Finn et al., 2005), potentially leaving little time for other types of leadership tasks. This has led the literature on SRO impacts to focus on arrests and suspensions (Javdani, 2019). In elementary schools, SROs are less likely to spend their time on law enforcement, since the young age of the children means fewer criminal acts are committed with typically lower rates of exclusionary discipline (Losen et al., 2015). SROs in primarily White schools might also interact differently with students and staff, and assume different roles, than SROs in majority non-White settings (Fisher et al., 2022). SROs in primarily White schools may be more likely to act in inclusionary ways that support the educational mission of the school, thereby taking on leadership roles unrelated or only tangentially related to their role as SROs (Hirschfield, 2010). Whereas prior work and theory help us to understand the roles and impacts of SROs in their more traditional environment (i.e., city schools with primarily students of color), the extent to which SROs are part of the school's collective leadership and the impacts of SROs in primarily White elementary schools is unclear.

This context might have specific implications for collective leadership structure. These schools are, in the words of Diamond & Lewis (2022), *White educational spaces* because of their

majority White student bodies, SROs, administrators, and teachers. However, being a White educational space is not solely determined by demographics. The concept that some schools are “White” is based on a social construction of race based on skin tone and cultural understandings of what it means to be White. “Whiteness” is a discourse: a set of practices and cultural interactions associated with the socially constructed identity of White people (Leonardo, 2002). White spaces are not exclusively inhabited by White bodies but represent the role of Whiteness in an uneven power structure oriented around White supremacy (Ahmed, 2007; Diamond & Lewis, 2022; Lewis, 2004). The suburbs have often been conflated with Whiteness, even as they become increasingly racially diverse (Diamond et al., 2021). As suburban educational settings have, historically, been engineered to be dominated by Whiteness (Rothstein, 2017), they remain White educational spaces due to *hegemonic Whiteness*, “a shifting configuration of practices and meanings that occupy the dominant position in a particular racial formation and that successfully manage to occupy the empty space of ‘normality’ in our culture” (Lewis, 2004, p. 634). While prior research on SROs was in schools that were likely subject to hegemonic Whiteness despite having majority students of color, we explore a setting that is not only culturally influenced by Whiteness but is also majority White. Our data thus offer a unique opportunity to extend our understanding of SROs’ impacts in schools in new directions.

This study uses a mixed methods approach to assess school stakeholder perspectives of the impacts of SROs on students and schools focusing on an understudied, yet increasingly common, SRO site—White-dominated elementary schools in suburban settings. We explore perceptions of SROs within environments that are not only occupied by majority-White student bodies but also can be categorized as White educational spaces (Castagno, 2014; Diamond & Lewis, 2022). Using case study data from a majority-White, Southern county, we assess the ways

SROs, administrators, teachers, parents, and students describe the impact of SROs in interviews and focus groups and probe how these responses differ from one another using survey data. We advance the literature by (a) examining impacts of SROs in a novel setting (predominately White, suburban, elementary schools), (b) integrating perspectives from multiple stakeholders including SROs, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students, and (c) using a mixed methods approach to parse out information gathered qualitatively by examining quantitative differences in beliefs on SRO impacts between stakeholder groups and those who identify as White and non-White. The findings have implications for future research assessing the impact of SROs across different types of spaces, stakeholder groups, and by racial identity. This study encourages future research conceptualizing SROs not as foreign entities but as part of a shared leadership structure, especially in schools where SROs have few law enforcement responsibilities. Results can also help to lift voices of additional stakeholders in ongoing conversations on whether SROs should be in schools and, if so, the roles they play in schools.

### **Collective Leadership with Non-Instructional Staff**

Of the diverse conceptualizations of shared leadership structures in schools, we typically use the term *collective leadership* to signify how SROs are not necessarily given specific roles and tasks beyond their established job responsibilities (i.e., because their contracts would not allow official task assignment), but instead might work collaboratively with school administrators to develop a conceptualization of how they seek to influence the school (Eckert, 2019; Leithwood & Mascal, 2008; Ni et al., 2018). With the dual goals of minimizing disruptions to learning and maximizing students' ability to engage in school, SROs might be conceived as part of a collective, as opposed to distributive, leadership structure.

Collective leadership is characterized by commitment to a common goal, where the total influence of collective efforts is greater than one group's individual contribution (Eckert, 2019; Ni et al., 2018). Principals are the greatest contributor to leadership, but schools are complex organizations that necessitate distributing tasks and co-developing understanding of the school's goals in order to cohesively complete related tasks to maximize achievement (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Collective leadership studies most often include school administrators and teachers with others integrating school district personnel, state education agency staff, parents, and community members into collective leadership models (Grooms & Childs, 2021; Gu et al., 2018; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Ni et al., 2018; Pounder et al., 1995). Our conceptualization of collective leadership might be most similar to that of Pounder et al. (1995) which included school secretaries in models linking different sources of leadership to school performance through organizational performance. While school secretaries having more leadership responsibilities was associated with lower student achievement, the authors hypothesized this was because secretaries with more responsibilities were covering for negligent administrators.

Our goal is not to test a specific model that assesses SROs' collective leadership responsibilities or its effect on student achievement; instead we start with the more basic question seeking to understand if SROs are seen as part of a collective leadership team and, if so, how they contribute to schools' environments and are perceived as affecting students. The collective leadership perspective suggests that SROs' leadership potentially provides avenues through which their presence may influence broader aspects of schooling, beyond safety or security. This broader influence resulting from SRO involvement in collective leadership could manifest both through SROs adopting priorities and goals of school leaders and other personnel (e.g. an SRO taking on more teaching roles to advance academic performance or assisting

teachers with classroom lessons to reduce their burden) and may also involve school personnel adopting priorities and goals of SROs (e.g. a principal limiting parental involvement in the school due to safety concerns about visitors). Viewing SROs as part of collective leadership then prompts an examination of a wider range of potential impacts of SROs presence in schools for a wider range of stakeholders, which our next section further discusses.

### **Potential Impact of SROs as Part of a Collective Leadership Based on Prior Research**

Most research has considered SROs as separate entities from other school staff, so SRO impact studies typically test what we refer to as a “criminalization hypothesis”: whether SROs’ presence in schools results in increased risk that students – particularly students of color – are punished in school or arrested. This research thus focuses on whether SROs have impacts such as increased safety, increased arrests, greater use of school discipline, and/or increased risks of arrest particularly for students of color (Javdani, 2019). This body of research suggests the placement of SROs does not increase school safety (Curran, 2020; Curran et al., 2021; Gottfredson et al., 2020; Na & Gottfredson, 2013; Samuels-Wortley, 2021), but it is associated with more student arrests (Homer & Fisher, 2020), particularly for minor offenses (Theriot, 2009). These trends have generally held true even when considering different roles that SROs might play (Devlin & Gottfredson, 2018; Fisher & Devlin, 2020), with some evidence suggesting that, even when crime decreases in conjunction with SRO implementation, reporting crimes to the police increases (Fisher & Devlin, 2020; Owens, 2017).

Research also suggests the presence of SROs influences school discipline by increasing exclusionary punishments like suspension (Fisher & Hennessy, 2016; Gottfredson et al., 2020; Na & Gottfredson, 2013; Weisburst, 2019), with Black students most likely to experience suspension with the presence of an SRO (Weisburst, 2019). Qualitative studies of SROs help



illustrate how SROs can lead to higher rates of exclusionary discipline, finding SROs can escalate situations with students that might have otherwise not resulted in a suspension or arrest and can shift schools to more punitive approaches to discipline, potentially as a result of SRO involvement in collective leadership (Gray et al., 2016; Kupchik, 2010; Mukherjee, 2007; Nolan, 2015).

Likely because of the growing controversy of SRO programs, it has become relatively common for local education agencies to have independent evaluations of their SRO program. For instance, a series of evaluations focused on the SRO program in Peel District School Board outside of Toronto. Each of the reports addressed similar questions as research studies on whether SROs help students feel safer as well as whether they criminalize students. These evaluations had a range of findings from overwhelmingly positive to accusations of anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism (Duxbury & Bennell, 2020; Gray et al., 2016; Samuels-Wortley, 2021) and culminated in the Peel Regional Police dissolving their SRO program (Westoll, 2020). Along with the increase in scrutiny of SRO programs following the murder of George Floyd, critical reports and research such as these have led to the ending or restructuring some SRO programs across Canada and the United States (Balingit et al., 2020; Samuels-Wortley, 2021).

### **Non-Criminalization SRO Impacts**

Viewing SROs as part of a school's collective leadership suggests, however, that their influence may extend beyond safety/discipline. A few studies have addressed how SROs impact other aspects of the school, finding both benefits and harms of SROs. Some have noted how SROs may connect students to resources in and out of school (Broll & Howells, 2021; Duxbury & Bennell, 2020; McKenna et al., 2016). Other work has found SROs make school climates less inclusive (Kupchik, 2010; Samuels-Wortley, 2021; Theriot, 2016). Ethnographic research found

that when police were added to schools, teachers yielded much of their responsibility for managing student behavior to the police (Devine, 1996; see also Shedd, 2015).

### **Variation Across Race, Racial Context, and Position in the School**

Perceived impacts of SROs, through a collective leadership perspective, is likely dependent on context and whose perceptions are being measured. Hirschfield (2010) hypothesized SROs take on different functions across school contexts, with greater engagement in law enforcement tasks in schools with more disadvantaged students, and greater engagement with education-related tasks in schools with more advantaged students. Recent work shows that negative impacts of SROs, such as increased arrests rates, are particularly felt by Black students (Homer & Fisher, 2020; Weisburst, 2019), and Black students are less likely than White students to perceive SROs as beneficial (Pentek & Eisenberg, 2018). This is complemented by qualitative studies in urban settings by Bell (2021), Mukherjee (2007), Nolan (2011), and Shedd (2015) that offer powerful accounts of how Black and Latino/a students feel over-policed in school.

SROs' presence may have varying impacts for school personnel such that position within the school might shape perceptions of SROs' impacts. This is the implication of prior work finding that, though students can be negatively impacted by SROs, these SROs facilitate the work done by teachers and administrators (Broll & Howells, 2021; Kupchik, 2010). To our knowledge, no prior studies have explored this result further or used quantitative data to analyze how perceptions of SROs' impacts vary across stakeholders.

### **Contribution**

Given the lack of empirical studies that situate SROs as part of collective school leadership as well as explore SROs' impact in elementary schools and White educational spaces, we take an exploratory approach in our research. Prior research suggests several potential effects

SROs might have on schools, including student safety, student behavior, school connectedness, relationships, and other school climate indicators. We use mixed methods data to understand the variety of effects SROs can have on elementary schools from the perspective of school stakeholders. We hypothesize that SROs' contribution to schools' collective leadership creates a path through which they may have these potential impacts. We ask the following questions:

1. How do various stakeholders (SROs, administrators, teachers, students, and parents) in a majority White, suburban county report that SROs affect students and their schools?
2. Do views of the impacts of SROs differ between school-based stakeholders and SROs? If so, then how do their views on impact differ?
3. Do non-White school-based stakeholders have different interpretations of the impact of SROs compared to White stakeholders? If so, how do their views of impact differ?

In answering these questions, this study makes several contributions. By considering SROs as potentially part of collective leadership, we expand the breadth of SROs' potential impacts. Further, when we examine traditional SRO outcomes, we offer an extra sensitive examination of SRO criminalization hypotheses to explore how SROs may lead to increased risk of student discipline even in settings where this criminalization would, theoretically, be unlikely to occur: suburban, elementary schools, a novel setting where SROs have become increasingly common.

### **Methods**

This study was part of a larger data collection effort in a county located in the southeast. The county includes two school districts: one covering the local county seat and the other covering the remainder of the county. We discuss them as a single county as the decision to place SROs in schools was made collectively (as a response to the Sandy Hook shooting, see Viano et al., 2021), and SROs for both districts were staffed by the same law enforcement agency.

Though broadly described as suburban, individual schools ranged from rural to small city. The schools were demographically White with, on average, 80% (rounded) White students, and reflective of a White educational space. The Hispanic and Black student populations were as high as 40% and 30% in schools, respectively. Around a fifth of schools qualified for school-wide Title I funding (federal funding for schools with at least 40% low-income students as defined by subsidized lunch eligibility).

### **Study Design**

Our study leveraged qualitative interview/focus group and quantitative survey data in a mixed-methods design. We broadly categorize the research design as convergent mixed-methods with convergence occurring in exploratory sequential analysis. We collected both data sources simultaneously but analysis was sequential, with the qualitative data analysis occurring first, motivating and informing choices in the quantitative analysis. The two sets of results were merged as in a convergent design, with each data source serving to triangulate findings from the other because comparing findings from different analyses for converging implications results in more valid conclusions. This approach provided nuance and rich description of phenomena from the qualitative data complemented by quantifiable evidence on relationships from the quantitative data (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2017).

### **Researcher Positionality**

The authors of this study all identify as White, include multiple genders, and several come from relatively affluent contexts with similarities to the context under study. The authors work in institutions of higher education. Several of the authors previously worked in schools, a fact that was sometimes shared with participants. None of the authors have worked in law enforcement. Qualitative data collection was facilitated by a number of research assistants

among whom there was variation in racial/ethnic, socio-economic, and previous professional backgrounds, though most had prior experience in schools and a majority were White. In many cases, alignment between authors' and research subjects' positions was likely an asset, but we acknowledge there may have been instances where our positionality shaped responses in other ways, particularly among respondents that did not share certain characteristics with the research team. We recognize the results are filtered through our collective experiences and perspectives.

## **Data**

### *Qualitative Data from Interviews and Focus Groups*

The authors and research assistants conducted individual interviews with SROs and administrators and conducted focus groups with students, teachers, and parents from approximately 25 elementary schools (in this study, schools serving kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade). Around half of schools provided data for all stakeholders (all in the city-based school district) and the others only had data from SROs. The semi-structured interview and focus group protocols included questions that asked specifically about the perceived impacts of SROs. For example, students were asked, "what are the good parts and not so good parts about having an SRO in this school?" and fieldworkers were instructed to probe for responses with regard to student behavior, feelings of safety, teaching and learning, school discipline, sense of connectedness, and sense of freedom/autonomy. Participants gave their views of SROs' impacts through activities like teaching, talking to students, and acting in a law enforcement capacity. Given the semi-structured nature of the protocols, participants' views on SROs' impacts were allowed to organically emerge from the discussion. All protocols are available by request.

### *Quantitative Data from Surveys*

Quantitative data came from surveys conducted among stakeholders regarding their views on school safety, discipline, and SROs. Our sampling strategy included all schools in the city school district and a purposeful sample of schools in the county district. We stratified county schools by urbanicity and selected four high schools, each with a different urbanicity (one rural, one town, one suburban, and one city). We included all elementary schools that fed into each high school in the survey sample, yielding 20 elementary schools (rounded) for this analysis.

Sampling of stakeholders within schools varied depending on the group. For students, we used a clustered sampling approach in which we sampled a minimum of three classrooms each for fourth and fifth grade. For smaller schools, this resulted in inclusion of all classrooms. For larger schools, we requested school leaders sort classrooms alphabetically by teachers' names and select the top or bottom three names. In some cases, we sampled more than three classrooms by request, and it is possible that in other cases principals may have exercised some discretion in choice of classrooms. Students with consent/assent completed paper surveys in class. All non-student surveys were electronic. For parents, principals sent the request to participate to parent email listservs. All teachers and administrators in the sampled schools were invited to participate in the survey. We invited all SROs in the two districts to complete the survey.

**Survey Instrument and Key Dependent Variables.** While the survey instruments varied slightly between stakeholders, each generally contained a common set of questions about the roles and impacts of SROs in schools (see online appendices B and C for example interview and survey protocols). In this analysis, we focus on five items and five measures derived from factor analysis. The five individual items asked respondents to indicate their agreement with the following, "SRO presence makes students feel safer", "Main part of SRO's job is to enforce school rules", "SROs play a major role in deciding punishments for breaking minor roles",

“SROs are someone students can talk to”, and “SROs participate in maintaining school discipline”. Options for the first four included “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “neutral”, “agree”, and “strongly agree,” and the last was binary (0 = *No*, 1 = *Yes*). For the five composite measures, we conducted exploratory factor analysis as a data reduction exercise to identify common themes in the data that would relate to SRO impact. We identified factors using principal-component factor analysis followed by orthogonal varimax rotation. We related the factors identified in this exercise to the overall themes from the qualitative data analysis. See appendix Table A1 for the full list of variables with the largest contributions to each factor and factor loadings. Average values on these variables by stakeholder group are available on request.

**Covariates.** Our models included several demographic and contextual variables. Stakeholders reported their race/ethnicity. Given the small number of non-White respondents ( $n = 160$  with less than 60 identifying as Black, Hispanic, or other race each), we collapsed our measures of race/ethnicity into a single indicator of self-reporting as non-White. We included sex (indicator if identify as male). We merged in a number of school-wide covariates such as discipline rates (in school and out of school suspension rates), per-pupil expenditures, attendance rate, urbanicity indicators, enrollment, and school racial composition from the Department of Education’s Common Core of Data (CCD) and the state’s Department of Education.

### **Analytic Approach**

We applied a grounded theory, iterative approach to the analysis of the qualitative data, allowing for identification of both anticipated and unanticipated themes in the data (Charmaz, 2006). In our initial round of qualitative coding, we used NVivo qualitative analysis software to code transcripts using the constant comparative method, coding from a set of predetermined themes but also noting emergent themes from the data. Each transcript was coded by at least two

team members. The full set of themes identified through the coding process is available on request. From this initial round of coding, we identified seven themes for further analysis specific to perceived impacts of SROs (see Table 1). Each of these themes was re-read by two team members to identify the domains of the perceived SRO impacts, how SROs were perceived as affecting these domains, and how these perceived impacts varied across stakeholders. Each team member wrote a memo on their sections and filled in a matrix documenting the intersection between domains and stakeholders. The lead author consolidated the findings that were validated by the team.

Consistent with the exploratory sequential nature of our analysis, our quantitative component followed and was informed by our qualitative analysis. We analyzed how characteristics of survey respondents relate to the seven domains of SROs' impacts found in the qualitative analysis. We used a multi-level regression framework, allowing us to explore relationships between stakeholder type, racial identity, and the outcomes of the following form:

$$\text{Level 1: } Y_{is} = \beta_{0s} + \beta_{1s}Teacher_{is} + \beta_{2s}Admin_{is} + \beta_{3s}Parent_{is} + \beta_{4s}Student_{is} + \beta_{5s}NonWhite_{is} + \beta_{6s}Male_{is} + \varepsilon_{is}$$

$$\text{Level 2: } \beta_{0s} = \gamma_{00} + \lambda_{0s} + \mu_{0s}$$

Where outcome  $Y_{is}$  is each of the ten outcomes of interest (five individual measures and five factors) for individual  $i$  in school  $s$ ; Teacher, Admin, Parent, and Student are individual-level binary indicators for each of the respective stakeholder types (where SROs are the comparison group); and Non-White is an indicator of whether the individual identifies with a racial identity other than White. At the school-level (level 2),  $\lambda$  is a vector of school covariates from the CCD and state's Department of Education as previously described,  $\varepsilon_{is}$  is the error term, and  $\mu_{0s}$  is the school-level random effect. The coefficients of interest are  $\beta_{1s}$  through  $\beta_{5s}$  which represent



whether individual stakeholders' views on each outcome differ from those of SROs ( $\beta_{1s}$ -  $\beta_{4s}$ ) and White ( $\beta_{5s}$ ) respondents (all SRO respondents identified as White), conditional on covariates.

### **Results**

On the outset, many administrators viewed the SROs as a kind of shadow member of the leadership team. As a principal said, "The benefits [of SROs] is that, it's almost like having a third administrator. You know I make the decisions but as far as having to deal with the discipline of students or trying to be the mediator between parents, he kind of helps calm the situation." We lean on this conceptualization of SROs as third administrators throughout.

In the following review of our results, we describe the various ways SROs impacted the school and students in this third administrator role with SROs being seen as more part of the leadership structure than a separate entity. We organize our discussion on the impacts of SROs in this setting by the various domains where stakeholders believed SROs had an impact. The themes in each paragraph are presented in italics. We begin with a review of our qualitative findings and note throughout which stakeholder group mentioned each perceived impact followed by analysis of the survey data, more explicitly comparing the differences in perceived impacts between stakeholders and SROs and between White and non-White respondents. Doing so allows for triangulation of qualitative results by demonstrating how the themes in the interviews/focus groups extend to the broader set of survey respondents, and also allows us to compare responses on survey items across respondents more precisely.

#### **SROs and School Safety**

Two themes related to SROs' impacts on school safety include feelings of safety in the school and threat deterrence. Beginning with *Feelings of Safety*, stakeholders overwhelmingly indicated their school felt safe and that their SRO's presence made them feel safer (see Table 1).

For instance, a parent said, “just the presence [of the SRO] makes the kids feel safer and probably is safer.” A student similarly noted “[The SRO] makes me feel safe because, I know that like, they're making sure that the school is safe, every section is safe and I just know that I'm safe around here because of that.” The positive orientation towards law enforcement might be expected since trust in police tends to be higher among White people and in communities with higher populations of White residents (Weitzer & Tuch, 2005). This means that the perceptions of SROs in this mostly White area are likely to be quite positive, and that stakeholders are likely to believe that the SROs do what they say they are doing: making schools safer.

On the survey, stakeholders, on average, agreed or strongly agreed that SROs make students feel safer. This perception was strongest among SROs (who all strongly agreed) while parents and students averaged closer to agree. This is reflected in the results from the multi-level models, Table 2, column (1), with all other school-based stakeholder groups less likely to agree that SROs make student feel safer than SROs, especially students, who were predicted to have  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a level on a Likert scale lower agreement on this statement than SROs ( $-0.75, p < .001$ ).

All types of respondents consistently reported the belief that SROs deterred *Potential Threats* from occurring. Some discussed the visibility of a police car or the SRO's possession of a semi-automatic assault rifle as a deterrent to would-be armed intruders, while others discussed the SRO's presence more generally as a deterrent. As one vice principal stated, “I think it is a deterrent to have a police car out front and an armed officer right by our front counter.” Respondents also discussed how SROs were helpful at responding to more common threats to school safety such as the presence of angry parents and dangerous drivers on school property. Administrators often saw this as the SRO's primary leadership role in the school.

Stakeholder responses to the factor variable “SROs protect students” were consistent with this narrative of SROs as protectors in this predominantly White context. Across the items composing this factor, stakeholders tended to have responses that averaged between neutral and strongly agree. In the multi-level model, administrators were predicted to be 2.5 standard deviations lower on the “SROs protect students” factor than SROs ( $-2.44, p < .001$ ). “SROs enforce laws” was another factor that is related to SRO impacts on safety and threat deterrence. Survey respondents tended to have neutral responses on the items with the largest loadings on this factor, tending to agree that SROs were there to enforce laws but were more neutral on the specifics of investigating, searching, and arresting on campus. Results in Table 2, column (3) showed how there was wider agreement between SROs and school-based stakeholders on the extent to which SROs take on law enforcement activities, with the exception of administrators, who reported that SROs enforced laws less often than SROs reported ( $-0.84, p = .002$ ). This could indicate that administrators see SROs less as law enforcers and more as a member of the school’s leadership team. White and non-White respondents were no different, on average, in their responses to each of these measures (see Table 2, columns (1), (2), and (3)).

### **SROs and Student Behavior**

Regarding *Student Behavior*, some, but not all, SROs believed that building positive relationships with students led to improved behaviors. One SRO stated, “I think that I’ve had really positive impacts. I’ve had a couple that were having some issues with taking items that didn’t belong to them, and going down and talking to them and talking to the classes, I’ve been told that stuff has stopped.” Administrators perceived that SROs acted as a deterrent for some minor student misbehaviors and were effective at deescalating potential conflicts involving both students and parents. Some parents and teachers agreed with these assessments, although others

believed there was no real impact on student behavior. For instance, one teacher focus group discussed how the SRO helped students to stop specific problem behaviors like trying to run away from school, “But that’s not been the issue this year ...he [realized when he would] run people were going to stop him, behavior was nipped in the bud,” also mentioning the SRO helped increase positive behavior by acting as a reward where students would get time with the SRO for positive behavior, “you could go and you could have lunch with <SRO’s name> or just go read with him for fifteen minutes or [the SRO] would take [the students] out on the track or something...we did build it in as a reward.” The students in focus groups reported SROs made them more aware of the importance of drills and consequences for negative behaviors.

As it was somewhat unanticipated that SROs would impact student behavior independent of SRO involvement in student discipline, the survey items tended to focus on student discipline. SROs and administrators averaged between disagree and strongly disagree that SROs’ main job is to enforce school rules. Teachers and parents averaged responses between neutral and agree on this statement (students were not given items on discipline), a difference that was significant in the multi-level models (Table 2, column (4)). Teachers and parents were predicted to respond almost two levels higher on the Likert scale than SROs (1.91,  $p < .001$ ; 1.75,  $p < .001$ , respectively), perhaps indicating that teachers and parents viewed SROs as part of the leadership team given that school administrators are charged with enforcement of student discipline.

On average, all groups strongly disagreed to disagreed on the survey that SROs played a major role in deciding punishments for minor infractions. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the school districts and Sheriff’s Department<sup>1</sup> stated that “SROs shall not act as

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<sup>1</sup> We are unable to share the MOU because of confidentiality concerns, but a recent Fact Sheet (Memorandum of Understanding Fact Sheet, 2017) on how to write a MOU between school districts and law enforcement agencies provides a general overview of what the MOU contains.

disciplinarians...The SRO shall not be involved in the enforcement of disciplinary infractions.”

Correspondingly, all SROs disagreed or strongly disagreed with the survey item on whether they played a role in deciding punishments. As before, teachers and parents were more likely to agree that SROs took part in punishments than SROs and administrators, and these differences were statistically significant in the multi-level models. Non-White school-based respondents were more likely to agree that SROs decide on punishments than White respondents (0.52,  $p=.013$ ).

When asked about SROs' participation in maintaining school discipline, all participants averaged between neutral and agree. In Table 2, column (6), teachers and parents were predicted to be more likely to agree that SROs maintain school discipline by about half a Likert scale level (0.54,  $p<.001$ ; 0.64,  $p<.001$ , respectively). Non-White participants were more likely than White-identifying participants to believe SROs played a role in discipline (0.16,  $p=.046$ ).

### **SROs and Connections to School**

We review two domains from the qualitative data on how well students connect to school (School Engagement and Connectedness to School), and the results for related survey items on whether SROs support students' connections to school. A few respondents spoke about the impact of SROs on *School Engagement*. Although SROs, students, and parents did not speak to this dynamic and principals generally believed that SROs had no effect on school engagement, some teachers and vice principals perceived that SROs benefitted school engagement. For instance, one teacher said, “The SRO helps build a sense of community because they are friendly, and the kids respond well.” In a similar vein, a vice principal stated, “A good SRO can help build student engagement and sense of belonging.” Only positive benefits (or no effects) of SROs on school engagement were mentioned.

Stakeholders, for the most part, indicated SROs positively contributed to various aspects of students' *Connectedness to the School*. For instance, one SRO felt he contributed to the school pride the students had, even stating he wished he could “play a bit more of a role” in fostering this connection. Similarly, teachers indicated that SROs helped student connectedness to school as SROs helped students to comfortably approach authority figures in school with sensitive information. As one teacher said, SROs “nurture that connection.” Students, principals, teachers, and parents also frequently mentioned the effort of their SROs to establish relationships with students was, arguably, the most positive effect of SROs. Parents mentioned how impactful it was on their children that their SRO greeted and hugged the student every day upon arrival. Principals agreed that SROs “connected in this way” through relationships. This exemplifies how SROs are not solely part of school safety but take on more traditional leadership roles.

Our survey results generally confirmed that stakeholders believed SROs fostered connections to school. The average response to the statement “SROs are someone students can talk to” was between agree and strongly agree for all stakeholders. In the multi-level models (Table 2, column (7)), students are predicted to agree half a level on the Likert scale lower than SROs that SROs are someone they can talk to ( $-0.50, p < .001$ ). The factor “SROs mentor” did not see such uniform agreement. On average, SROs tended to respond they engaged in activities like giving advice and mentoring students from a few times per year to monthly. As shown in Table 2, column (8), administrators had a much lower estimate for the frequency SROs engaged in these activities,  $-2.58 (p < .001)$  standard deviations lower than SROs. There were no significant differences between White and non-White respondents on these survey items.

### **SROs as Educators**

The school district and Sheriff's Department's MOU specified that SROs' educational responsibilities would not involve formal classroom teaching beyond occasional guest lectures. However, some stakeholders believed that SROs made a positive impact on the schools' *Teaching and Learning*. Some SROs reported their presence allowed teachers to focus more on instruction. One SRO described the following interaction: "I try to get them as cheerful and as, like, school-oriented as possible...I try to be involved with what they're learning about so that they see the positives with it." One student also described how SROs emphasize the importance of teaching and learning, "since this is <testing> week, she's been saying like 'how are you going to do on your test? Do you think you're going to do great? Good luck on this test.'" Other stakeholders did not address SROs' impact on teaching and learning.

Survey responses indicated that SROs also played informal roles as educators. We explored two factors related to SROs' impacts as educators – one that focused on SROs' academic impacts and one that focused on a training role and support to administrators. Respondents tended to report that SROs "never" or "a few times per year" met with students and faculty for academic reasons with responses by teachers, students, and parents not significantly different from SROs'. Administrators reported significantly less perception that "SROs have academic impacts," about two standard deviations lower than SROs' responses. The second factor, "SROs train, assist admin," primarily included two items on whether SROs train staff on school safety or assist staff in problem solving. As shown in Table 2, column (10), all school-based stakeholders, especially administrators (-2.50,  $p < .001$ ), had significantly lower scores on this factor than SROs. While this might indicate that SROs are not seen as part of collective leadership, the average values of these two items show that over 90% of administrators agreed that SROs assist school staff (100% SROs agreed) with the primary disagreement being on

training staff (87% of SROs agreed compared to 51% of administrators). We observe no significant differences on either factor between White and non-White respondents.

### **SROs As Helpers**

Most stakeholder groups noted that SROs benefitted the school by being an *Additional Source of Help* in a variety of areas. The SROs believed that they relieved some of the burden of maintaining school safety that would ordinarily fall on teachers and staff. These micro-level tasks often included closing open doors and monitoring traffic during dismissal. They could also be an additional resource for students, for instance, one student explained that they would be willing to tell their SRO, but not an unfamiliar police officer, if they were victimized. Some administrators believed SROs were particularly well equipped to address law-related issues. SROs also sometimes took on roles unrelated to their law enforcement training like delivering messages to classrooms and helping with office-related tasks. These micro-level tasks are important to the school functioning, but seemingly tangential to what SROs are traditionally thought of contributing. For instance, we observed an elementary school SRO who was tasked with turning off the cafeteria lights to signal to students when the noise level was too loud during lunch. Whether the SRO was someone who could give advice or provide support, many stakeholders agreed that the SRO had an impact on how the school functioned. As this was not an anticipated area of SRO impact, the surveys did not include any related items.

### **Discussion**

We document the implications of having a full-time SRO in elementary schools, including how their actions are perceived to affect students, teachers, administrators, and parents sometimes acting as a “third administrator” in a collective leadership capacity. Their potential impacts are not limited to school safety but reflect the many roles SROs fill and interactions they



have with school stakeholder groups on a daily basis. These findings show why examining SROs' effects on criminality in this type of setting might not be a true test of SROs' impacts since they are unlikely to engage in law enforcement activities in elementary schools and might even be considered part of the school's collective leadership team. While prior work has mostly focused on SROs' impacts on outcomes such as suspension and arrest, we found SROs were perceived to impact school functioning in subtle ways that are not accounted for in prior studies.

### **Implications of SROs in Collective Leadership**

SROs are often employees of the law enforcement agency (as they were in our setting), but we found evidence school leaders might consider SROs to be more like a member of the school administration than an outsider. This perception of SROs contrasted with expectations on the MOU which focused on SROs' law enforcement authority, limiting their involvement in student discipline, and established that SROs' duties are determined by the Sheriff, not school administrators. It also mirrors concerns about the inappropriate overreach of the criminal justice system into schools, potentially leading to disproportionately negative impacts on already marginalized students (Hirschfield, 2008). Given these findings, school districts that choose to or are required to have SROs should consider approaches that limit these negative impacts. Guidelines from Alberta, Canada suggest centering the lived experiences of marginalized students and families in a process that continuously evaluates the purpose, function, and outcomes of SRO programs (Cameron et al., 2020). Providing other prevention-oriented services that fall outside the realm of law enforcement such as mental health initiatives may also help foster student well-being and limit the potential for school violence (Abela & Donlevy, 2020). Also, instead of having an MOU that does not consider SROs' roles outside of law enforcement, decisions about these roles can be community-driven through a collaborative process integrating

perspective of school leaders, parents, and SROs (Abela & Donlevy, 2020). This process can help limit the encroachment of the criminal justice system into school leadership teams.

At the same time, we question whether or not SROs should even act as third administrators. The National Association of School Resource Officers suggest SROs' activities follow a triad model of law enforcement, teacher/educator, and counselor/mentor (Canady et al., 2012). The administrators might argue that much of their reliance on the SRO could fall within the SROs' mentorship capacity, although being a general source of help does not clearly fit within this triad model. The triad model is helpful in that it links traditional law enforcement roles/training with school-based functions although it is difficult to adhere to this model in settings where school administrators welcome SRO involvement, and SROs are willing to help.

Beyond the discussion on whether these kinds of activities fall within the scope of SROs' intended roles is the consideration of whether law enforcement officers should be placed in schools in any capacity. The Police-Free Schools movement (The Advancement Project, n.d.) advocates for removing all SROs from schools because of evidence that SROs negatively impact racially minoritized students. Including SROs so broadly across the elementary schools we studied assumed that these SROs' presence was neutral to students, that they were a positive force regardless of students' identity. Youth voices in the Police-Free Schools movement question these assumptions with powerful testimony from youth of color in addition to causal evidence from published research on these negative effects (e.g., Weisburst, 2019). We discuss next how the broad integration of SROs into collective leadership and perceived positive impacts of their presence may have implications that extend beyond settings similar to that of this study, particularly for decisions made in settings serving more diverse student bodies.

### **SROs in White Educational Spaces**

The participants in our study mostly framed SRO impacts very positively with reports of SROs helping to improve behavior, engagement, and connectedness to school. These results likely reflect the context in which this study took place, a White educational space with predominately White student bodies and faculties. This finding fits in with similar work in secondary schools in affluent areas, showing that school leaders believe police in schools promote safety, even if they have not had police in their school (Madfis, 2016). Recent polling suggests educators support having law enforcement in schools because of fear of outside threats (e.g., a school shooting) as well as strong denial of the potential disproportionate impact of SROs on students of color (Kurtz, 2020). Such research may explain why, in settings such as that of this study, SROs are integrated into leadership decisions and influence broader sets of outcomes.

This positivity about SROs, however, diverges from findings in secondary schools in different settings where SROs were associated with less connectedness, a negative social climate, and weaker relationships (Kupchik, 2010; Nolan, 2011; Theriot, 2016). Specifically, Theriot (2016) found students who engaged more with SROs were less likely to feel a sense of connection to the school. These conflicting findings may be because the students in this prior study were all in secondary schools or because they interacted with SROs more because of their behavior problems, which also made them feel less connected to the school. Another explanation comes from the school context: there may also be something particular about the role of SROs in White educational spaces that fosters a sense of school engagement that is less present in other contexts. Specifically, it is possible that SROs in White spaces are more likely to be part of the school's collective leadership while SROs' roles in other settings might be more limited.

Our results consistently demonstrate how school officials overlook the negative, systemic inequalities in relationships between law enforcement and people of color, implying that SROs

were viewed almost exclusively as racially neutral. The concept of *social amnesia* seems to apply here – this concept refers to when policies that privilege Whiteness are pitched as race-neutral despite evidence to the contrary (McLaren, 1998). Social amnesia allows those who occupy White spaces to claim the mantle of *White innocence* whereby they believe they are disconnected from White supremacy. This often involves believing White supremacy lives in the past, ignoring ways in which White supremacy is enacted within schools today (Applebaum, 2010; Gillborn, 2005; Lewis, 2004).

At the same time, SROs were placed in these schools to protect students from danger. These concerns about the looming threats to this White educational space echo previous discussions on how arguments rooted in racial capitalism prioritize White safety under the assumption that violence is inevitable (Applebaum, 2010; Nolan, 2015; Turner & Beneke, 2020). Prior work has demonstrated how SROs in predominantly White contexts view students and schools as in need of protection from external threats rather than posing threats themselves (Fisher et al., 2022). This may be a possible example of social amnesia, since most high-profile shooters are White males (Turner & Beneke, 2020) and prior work has found White students to be just as likely to bring weapons to schools as non-White students (Jewett, et al., 2021). In other words, social amnesia may work here by leading to the assumption of innocence and vulnerability of students in White contexts.

When examining differences in survey responses by stakeholder group and race, we found SROs often over-emphasized their positive effects with few differences between White and non-White respondents. The lack of differences between White and non-White respondents does not necessarily mean that White and non-White school-based stakeholders do not have different experiences with SROs, but it could indicate that the hegemonic Whiteness of their

setting influences their perceptions of SROs as being more positively intentioned than those in other types of settings (Lewis, 2004).

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

Our findings in a demographically and culturally White educational space are informative not only for our understanding of policing in this context but also for our understanding of how the experiences in this White educational space could influence the creation of White spaces in societal structures that in turn are applied in more racially diverse settings. In other words, if school policing is generally viewed in a positive light by stakeholders in a White educational space, this could create public support for policing in schools more generally, perhaps in ways that overshadow the research base that suggests school policing harms students of color.

In conversations about the role of SROs in schools, our findings can help to contextualize the voices of SROs. SROs tend to exaggerate their positive impacts relative to other stakeholders while deemphasizing their impacts in areas like school discipline. As noted in prior work on SRO adoption and removal (Koon, 2020; Jenkins, 2022; Turner & Beneke, 2020), proponents of law enforcement in schools, including SROs, are often given a platform in conversations about SROs, and our research suggests the views of these advocates should be viewed skeptically.

These implications for policy and practice should take into account our setting – not only that these schools enrolled majority White student populations but also the location of the suburban southeast. This study also only included elementary schools and did not leverage differences across urbanicity within the study. It is possible that the implications might not be applicable to other school levels and that this configuration of urbanicities led to different findings than, say, a study of a large city would.

### **Implications for Future Research**

While the valence of these results might only apply to similar White educational spaces, the overall findings that SROs have a wide range of impacts on schools and stakeholder groups likely extends beyond this specific context. Future research could productively investigate whether SROs are part of a school's collective leadership as well as whether the direction of the effects of SROs within these domains varies in different settings. Such an exploration might consider different types of schools and student populations served, and temporal differences that may have emerged over the past several years as a result of changes in the school environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in policing practices following the murder of George Floyd. Furthermore, we encourage future researchers to return to our finding of variation in perceptions among stakeholders; this result should be explored in greater depth, with analyses that delve deeper into the magnitude and sources of differences in perceptions of SROs across race/ethnicity as well as role within schools. Our findings could be indicative of the setting since prior research has found a suburban and rural school had higher levels of collective leadership than an urban school (Eckert, 2019), but this can be examined more explicitly in future research.

At the same time, an underlying theme is the question of the costs of having SROs versus their benefits. In this case, the benefits are usually framed in terms of preventing major incidents like a school shooting. Due to the extreme rarity of shootings in elementary schools (Riedman & O'Neill, 2019), the true benefits are more likely to be these marginal changes that might be more wishful thinking than measurable improvements since students, nationally, tend to feel safe in school (Irwin et al., 2022). While SROs might be seen as a third administrator, it is possible that the funds might be more appropriately spent on hiring an actual school administrator. Recent calls to eliminate law enforcement in schools have highlighted many other potential costs of SROs in schools including exposure of students to potential legal liability/criminalization and

disconnection from school due to negative relationships with law enforcement, with these effects most pronounced for Black and Brown students (Kupchik et al., 2020; Owens, 2017; Pentek & Eisenberg, 2018; Weisburst, 2019). Future research could productively explore the costs versus benefits of SROs using our broad interpretation of SRO impacts.

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**Table 1**

*Definitions of key domains that SROs are believed to affect.*

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>School Admin</b>	<b>SROs</b>
Feelings of Safety	How the stakeholder perceives the safety of the environment but is not tied to any particular threat or real risk of crime.					
Potential Threats	The extent to which SROs are addressing actual threats to safety including how SROs act as a deterrent for potential criminal acts that would have occurred in the absence of SROs.					
Student Behavior	The extent to which students' behavior has changed in response to SRO presence. Whether students are less likely to misbehave or act out in school. Also includes general behavioral change patterns like how students are acting or responding differently in school because of the SRO.					
School Engagement	The effect of the SRO on the overall engagement with the school. How the presence of the SRO does or does not change what the school is like on a daily basis.					

Domain	Definition	Students	Parents	Teachers	School Admin	SROs
Connectedness to the School	The extent to which the stakeholder saw the SRO as helping students feel more welcome, encouraging them to come to school. If and the extent to which SROs are part of what brings students to school and helps students to feel attached to school.	[Colored]	[Colored]	[Colored]	[Colored]	[Colored]
Teaching and Learning	The effect of the SRO on the general learning environment. How the SRO is or is not helping to foster higher quality learning environments.	[Colored]	[White]	[White]	[White]	[Colored]
Additional Source of Help	If and the extent to which SROs act as an additional person to help staff and administration perform daily tasks. How SROs go beyond their assigned security tasks to help others in the school with other tasks and functions of the school. SROs as the “third administrator”	[Colored]	[White]	[Colored]	[Colored]	[Colored]

*Note.* A box being colored in indicates the stakeholder believes that SROs have an effect on that domain.

**Table 2***Results from multi-level models with covariates.*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
	Item: SRO presence makes students feel safer.	Factor: SROs protect students	Factor: SROs enforce laws	Item: Main part of SRO's job is to enforce school rules.	Item: SROs play a major role in deciding punishment for breaking minor rules.	Item: SROs participate in maintaining school discipline.	Item: SROs are someone students can talk to.	Factor: SROs mentor	Factor: SROs have academic impacts	Factor: SROs train, assist admin
<i>Comparison is to</i>										
<i>SROs</i>										
Teacher	-0.42*** (0.078)	-0.93*** (0.25)	-0.60+ (0.32)	1.91*** (0.18)	1.18*** (0.13)	0.54*** (0.12)	-0.035 (0.11)	0.46 (0.41)	0.25 (0.43)	-0.89** (0.31)
Admin	-0.26* (0.11)	-2.44*** (0.40)	-0.84** (0.28)	0.20 (0.13)	0.15 (0.16)	-0.056 (0.11)	-0.079 (0.15)	-2.58*** (0.63)	-2.03*** (0.47)	-2.50*** (0.47)
Parent	-0.64*** (0.072)	-1.04*** (0.16)	-0.18 (0.25)	1.75*** (0.18)	1.01*** (0.12)	0.64*** (0.11)	-0.28* (0.11)	0.54+ (0.30)	0.34 (0.33)	-0.70** (0.24)
Student	-0.75*** (0.072)	-0.79*** (0.20)	-0.13 (0.25)				-0.50*** (0.12)	0.55+ (0.33)	0.30 (0.35)	-0.78** (0.25)
<i>Comparison is to</i>										
<i>White</i>										
<i>respondents</i>										
Non-White	-0.098 (0.073)	-0.0071 (0.086)	0.062 (0.057)	0.18 (0.18)	0.52* (0.21)	0.16* (0.078)	-0.024 (0.07)	0.010 (0.051)	0.010 (0.045)	0.051 (0.088)
Observations	1,204	1,251	1,251	674	603	426	1,168	1,251	1,251	1,251

*Note.* Robust standard errors in parentheses clustered at the school level. Covariates and constant omitted for brevity.

\*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.10

**Table A1*****Factor loadings for variables with factor loadings above 0.50 for each factor.***

Variable Label	SROs protect students	SROs enforce laws	SROs mentor	SROs have academic impacts	SROs train, assist admin
SROs help keep students from being bullied.	0.7292				
SROs help keep weapons out of school.	0.7673				
SROs help keep students from fighting.	0.7032				
SRO help keep students from bringing drugs/alcohol in school.	0.7213				
One of the main jobs of SROs is to protect from outside threats.	0.588				
One of the main jobs of SROs is to investigate criminal activity.		0.8043			
One of the main jobs of SROs is to help with school searches.		0.826			
One of the main jobs of SROs is to make arrests when students break the law.		0.8189			
One of the main jobs of SROs is to enforce the law.		0.6972			
Students are better able to solve problems because of the SRO's presence.	0.6085				
SROs meet with students regarding academic concerns.				0.5379	
SRO provides advice to students in informal settings about consequences of illegal behavior.			0.7477		
SRO meets with students regarding behavioral or law-related concerns.			0.7789		
SRO aids faculty/staff in identifying students in need of non-academic counseling.				0.6033	
SRO meets with students to discuss family problems or concerns.			0.5985	0.5789	
SRO acts as a clearinghouse of information and direct students/staff to resources.			0.6076		
SRO serves as a law-related counselor to students, staff, community.			0.6429		
SRO provides law-related information to faculty.				0.7021	
SRO teaches/provides peer mediation or conflict resolution programs.				0.8197	
SRO teaches students about drug laws.				0.8831	
SRO teaches law-related topics in traditional classrooms.				0.8683	
SRO teaches students about traffic laws.				0.8488	
SROs participate in mentoring students.			0.5739		
SROs participate in identifying problems in school and seeking solutions.					0.5282
SRO participates in teaching a law-related course or training students.				0.6362	
SROs participates in training teachers and staff in school safety or crime prevention.					0.7802

*Note.* Note that all variables contributed to the factors, but this table only shows factor loadings above 0.50.