SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (SROs) AND THE ARMING OF SCHOOL TEACHERS OR ADMINISTRATORS AS RESPONSES TO SCHOOL SHOOTINGS:

RESULTS FROM A STATE CENSUS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT EXECUTIVES AND PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

South Carolina Law Enforcement Census 2013

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April 2014

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Abstract:

The recent events of the Sandy Hook (CT) school shooting, along with other similar events, have prompted calls for various strategies to prevent these incidents in the future. One such strategy is the placement of school resource officers in every elementary, middle, and high school in the United States. Given that many schools do not have resource officers assigned on a permanent basis, particularly at the elementary level, this strategy would require considerable investment from state and local governments. In addition, it requires support from law enforcement and the K though 12 educational community. The present study examines issues related to school safety in South Carolina through a statewide survey of law enforcement leaders and school principals at the K through 12 levels. Both groups were asked about the issues of school safety, support for resource officers in every school, and their perception of potential effectiveness in prevention. In addition, both groups were asked about this strategy in relation to the more controversial call for arming school teachers and/or administrators.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the current study is to capture the perspective of South Carolina law enforcement executives and public school principals regarding the use of SROs, and arming teachers and/or administrators as a means to improve school safety. In the summer and early fall of 2013, members of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of South Carolina conducted two surveys regarding the use of SROs and other school safety measures as a part of the department's annual census. One survey was sent to executives of all 228 county and municipal law enforcement agencies in South Carolina and the other was sent to principals of 1086 public schools across the state of South Carolina. While the surveys were similar, each was tailored to be specific to the respondents such that law enforcement executives' questions focused on their jurisdiction and the principals' survey focused on their school as well as their district. There were a total of 141 law enforcement executives (62.7%) and 487 public school officials (44.8%) who responded to the survey.

Over half of law enforcement executives report employing SROs and nearly 60% of principals report having an SRO stationed in their school and an overwhelming majority agree an SRO should be placed in every school in their jurisdiction/district. Primarily, law enforcement executives and principals expect SROs to serve as law enforcement in schools, while notably less expect them to act as mentors/counselors or as teachers. A majority of both groups of respondents agree that an SRO would improve overall safety in a school and reduce the number of victims if a school shooting were to occur. However, only about half of the respondents agree that an SRO would prevent a school shooting from occurring.

Law enforcement and principal respondents were also asked about alternative measures to school safety, specifically arming teachers and/or administrators. A small portion of law enforcement executives and public school principals report that they would agree with a policy that arms teachers in their jurisdiction/district. Following this trend, a minority of respondents agree that an armed teacher would improve overall school safety. Slightly more of the law enforcement executives and principals agreed that an armed teacher would reduce the number of victims if a school shooting were to occur. However, only a minute fraction of respondents agreed that an armed teacher would prevent a school shooting from occurring.

Law enforcement executives and public school principals are slightly more supportive of a policy that arms school administrators than a policy that arms teachers. Nonetheless, only a minority of law enforcement executives and principals agree that an armed administrator would improve overall school safety and reduce the number of victims if a school shooting were to occur. Furthermore, even fewer respondents agree that an armed administrator would reduce the number of victims if a school shooting were to occur. Thus, the responses of law enforcement

executives and principals suggest they are more supportive of the use of SROs to maintain school safety than arming teachers and/or administrators.

Respondents were also asked how strongly they agree that school safety is law enforcement's responsibility. A majority of law enforcement executives agree that school safety is law enforcement's responsibility while only a minority of principals agrees with this statement. In sum, the proportion of law enforcement executives that agree school safety is law enforcement's responsibility is roughly equal to the proportion of principals that disagree with the same statement. This suggests that both parties feel responsible themselves for maintaining school safety. Perhaps law enforcement executives agree with this statement because they believe it is their duty to maintain safety, regardless of the specific location, while principals disagree because they feel as though the duty of school safety falls upon their own shoulders. Thus, although their answers conflict, it is possible that the responses of both the law enforcement executives and school principals were driven by similar sentiments.

INTRODUCTION

In response to recent school shootings, there has been a policy discussion regarding measures to increase school safety. The primary focus has been on increasing the presence of school resource officers (SROs) as seen in President Obama's executive actions announced in January 2013 which proposed a plan to put up to 1,000 more SROs and counselors in schools as well as a strategy for providing incentives to schools for hiring SROs (www.whitehouse.gov). However, there are a number of legislators, and policymakers involved in the nationwide debate about the best strategy for maintaining safe school environments. Among the proposed safety measures has been the idea of arming school teachers and/or administrators. Given the nature of the issue, this conversation has turned into a heated debate with proponents arguing armed teachers and/or administrators could better protect from active shooters while critics point to the dangers of bringing a weapon into the school environment. While both sides of the political debate argue their position, there appears to have been little effort to empirically consider the perspectives of those most directly impacted by school violence and the subsequent policy responses. Thus, the purpose of the current study is to capture the perspective of South Carolina law enforcement executives and public school principals regarding the use of SROs, and arming teachers and/or administrators as a means to improve school safety.

In the summer and early fall of 2013, members of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of South Carolina conducted two surveys regarding the use of SROs and other school safety measures as a part of the department's annual census. One survey was sent to executives of all South Carolina law enforcement agencies and the other was sent to principals of public schools across the state of South Carolina. While the surveys were similar, each was tailored to be specific to the respondents such that law enforcement executives' questions focused on their jurisdiction and the principals' survey focused on their school and

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their district. Also, because law enforcement employs SROs, they were also asked about the training provided to the SROs and other related issues. Principals, on the other hand, were asked about their experience with the SRO in their school and the impact of SROs from the perspective of those within the school.

The survey is broken into three primary sections. First, both surveys ask for general information about the agency or school (i.e., size, type, etc.) at which the respondent is employed. Next, the survey poses questions pertaining to perceptions of SROs including their role, impact, and effectiveness in maintaining school safety. Schools principals that report having at least one SRO stationed in their school are then asked about their perceptions of the SRO(s) in their school and the types of relationships that their SRO(s) have with teachers and students. Finally, both surveys inquire about perceptions of armed teachers and armed administrators as school safety measures. This last section also includes a few more general questions about school security issues such as the best method to maintain school safety and the most effective response to potential school shooting. Each survey concludes with an open-ended section which calls for any additional concerns on which the respondent may wish to comment.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The population used for this study included a total of 228 law enforcement agencies and 1086 public schools in South Carolina from which our sample was drawn. In order to encourage response, a modified Dillman method was used which relies on multiple contacts to increase the likelihood of survey participation[1]. First, both law enforcement agencies and public schools received an initial survey packet which included a cover letter that outlined the purpose and

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[1] Dillman, D. A. (2007). Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method (2nd Ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

relevance of the survey and also provided directions to access to a secure, online version of the survey. Because law enforcement agencies in South Carolina have participated in the annual census in the past, their questionnaire included questions that provided identifying information; however, the cover letter they received explained that any information provided by the respondents is not only voluntary, but would be kept anonymous. On the other hand, South Carolina schools have no past experience with the annual census and thus, their questionnaire involved only demographic information that cannot be used to identify them in any way. Given an appreciation of the controversial nature of the topic, the cover letter that was sent to the public schools explained this anonymity and the voluntary nature of the survey. Also included in the first survey packet that was mailed to the public schools was a letter from the Department of Education at the University of South Carolina that encouraged the principals' participation and also offered support for the merit of our study.

Approximately two weeks later, a follow-up letter was sent to each law enforcement agency and public school expressing appreciation to those who responded and requesting the participation of those who had not. Around three weeks after the follow-up letter was sent, another survey packet was sent to law enforcement agencies and public schools including a cover letter and questionnaire. Because there was no method by which those who already responded could be identified, all schools in the sample received a follow-up letter and a second survey, even if they had already responded to the first survey.

In the end, respondents include 141 law enforcement agencies comprising 61.8% of the original sample. Table 1 presents characteristics of the responding agencies in comparison to the total number of agencies sampled for this study. A majority of responding agencies are police departments (*N*=98, 69.5%) while there are considerably less respondents from sheriff's offices

(*N*=34, 24.1%), departments of public safety (*N*=8, 5.7%), and highway patrol (*N*=1, 0.7%).

This is consistent with the proportions of agencies comprising the sample. Sheriff's offices

(73.9%) and departments of public safety (66.7%), however, had higher response rates than

police departments (58.0%) as a result of our sampling strategy.

Table 1. Respondent and population characteristics of law enforcement executives.

	Respondent Characteristics (*N*=141)		Population Characteristics (*N*=228)		Response Rate
	Number of Agencies	%	Number of Agencies	%	
Agency Type					
Police Department	98	69.5	169	74.1	58.0%
Sheriff's Office	34	24.1	46	20.2	73.9%
Public Safety	8	5.7	12	5.3	66.7%
Highway Patrol	1	0.7	1	0.4	100.0%
Number of Sworn Officers					
1 – 9	52	36.9	--	--	--
10 – 24	17	12.1	--	--	--
25 – 49	30	21.3	--	--	--
50 – 99	19	13.5	--	--	--
100 – 249	16	11.3	--	--	--
250+	7	5.0	--	--	--
Total	141	100.0	228	100.0	61.8%

       South Carolina public school principals were surveyed with the same strategy used with

the law enforcement executives. Table 2 presents characteristics of the respondents in

comparison to the population of public schools from which they were drawn. Public school

respondents represent 44.8% (*N*=487) of the population. Elementary schools include students in

kindergarten through the fifth grade, middle schools include grades six through eight, and high

schools include grades nine through twelve. Intermediate schools include students in the fourth

grade through the sixth grade, and thus the students in attendance at intermediate schools are

generally slightly younger than those at a middle school. A majority of the respondents are at the

elementary level (*N*=229), followed by high schools (*N*=113) and middle schools (*N*=110).

Approximately 2% of the responding principals (*N*=10) identified their school as an

elementary/middle school, which means that their school includes students in the first grade

through the eighth grade. Likewise, approximately 3% of the responding principals (*N*=14)

identified their school as a middle/high school which includes students from the grade six

through twelve, thus encompassing students in both middle and high schools. Of the three

primary school levels (elementary, middle, and high) the response rate is the lowest for

elementary schools (39.8%) and highest for high schools (56.7%).

Table 2. Respondent and population characteristics of public school principals.

	Respondent Characteristics (*N*=487)		Population Characteristics (*N*=1086)		Response Rate
	Number of Schools	%	Number of Schools	%	
School Type					
Elementary	229	47.0	576	53.0	39.8%
Middle	110	22.6	238	21.9	46.2%
High	113	23.2	199	18.3	56.7%
Elementary/middle	10	2.1	21	1.9	47.6%
Middle/high	14	2.9	14	1.3	100.0%
Intermediate	3	0.6	17	1.6	11.7%
Other	5	0.8	21	1.9	23.8 %
Missing	3	0.6	--	--	--
School Size					
Less than 100	2	0.4	--	--	--
100-299	37	7.6	--	--	--
300-499	135	27.5	--	--	--
500-699	127	26.0	--	--	--
700-999	112	23.0	--	--	--
1000-1199	20	4.3	--	--	--
1200-1399	13	2.7	--	--	--
1400-1599	14	2.9	--	--	--
1600-1799	13	2.9	--	--	--
1800-1999	5	1.0	--	--	--
2000-2999	5	1.0	--	--	--
Missing	4	0.8	--	--	--
Total	487	100.0	1086	100.0	44.8%

SRO PREVALENCE

With respect to SRO prevalence, approximately 56.7% (*N*=80) of South Carolina law enforcement executive survey participants report currently employing SROs and 60.8% (*N*=295) of South Carolina schools report currently having an SRO stationed in their school. In other words, over half of both law enforcement agencies and public schools in our sample currently have experience with at least one SRO.

Figure 1. Percent of South Carolina law enforcement agencies that employ SROs.

Does your agency currently employ SROs?

44.2%

56.7%

■ No

■ Yes
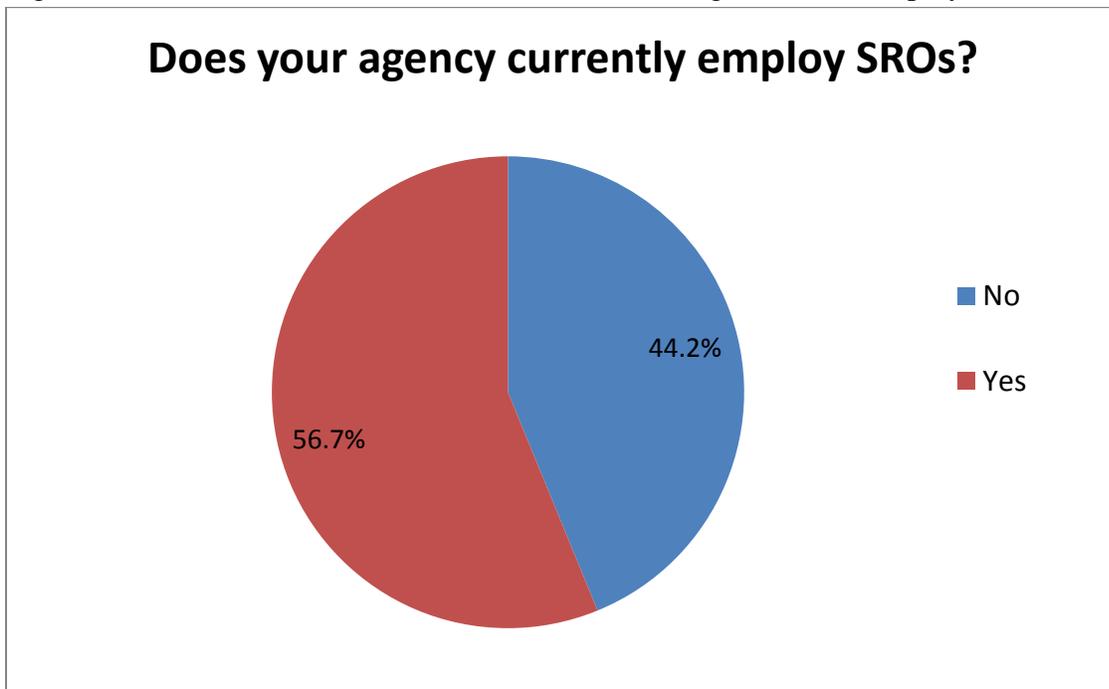
Figure 2. Percent of South Carolina public schools in which SROs are stationed.

Are there any SROs currently stationed in your school?

- ■ No — 39.2%
- ■ Yes — 60.8%
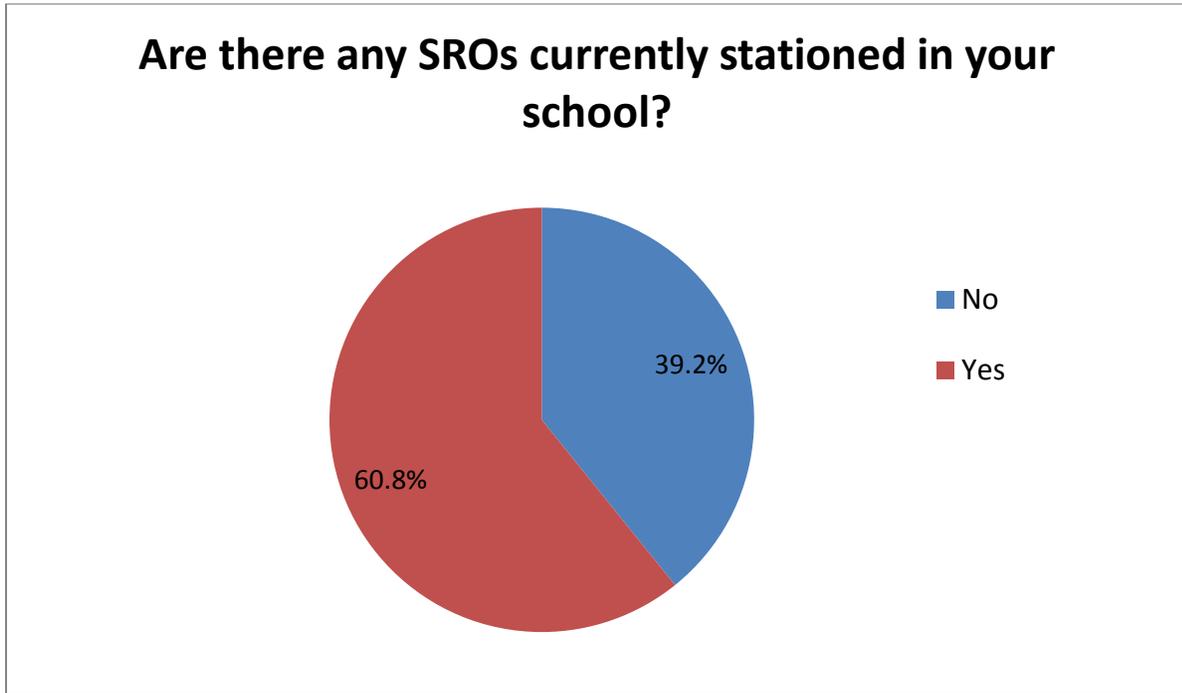
Table 3 presents the minimum, maximum, and average number of SROs employed by the agencies by agency size. Agency size is defined by the number of full-time sworn officers employed by the agency as reported by the law enforcement executive. There are a total of 80 agencies that report currently employing at least one SRO. The average number of SROs employed by these agencies is nine; however, larger agencies generally employ greater numbers of SROs than the smaller agencies. In fact, every agency that has nine or less full-time officers and currently employs SROs reports having only one full-time SRO position, while none of the agencies that employ over 100 full-time sworn officers employ only one SRO. Furthermore, none of the agencies that employ over 250 full-time sworn officers have less than four SRO positions and one of these large agencies employs as many as 73 SROs.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for number of SROs by agency size.

Size of agency	# of agencies in size category employing at least one SRO	Minimum[a]	Maximum[b]	Mean[c]
1-9 officers	4	1	1	1.0
10-24 officers	9	1	5	2.0
25-49 officers	26	1	5	3.1
50-99 officers	19	1	8	3.6
100-249 officers	16	2	16	6.8
250 or more officers	6	4	73	32.0
Total	80	1	73	9.4

[a] Minimum = the minimum number of SROs employed by at least one agency in each size category
[b] Maximum = the maximum number of SROs employed by at least one agency in each size category
[c] Mean = the average number of SROs employed by agencies in each size category

Table 4 presents the number of SROs presents the number of SROs currently stationed in the 225 surveyed public schools that reported having at least one SRO stationed in their school partitioned across each of the education levels. There are a total of 295 principals that report at least one SRO currently stationed in their school, including 225 full-time SRO positions and 73 part-time SRO positions. In general, the number of full-time SROs increases as education level increases such that full-time SROs are most common in high schools (N=102) and part-time SROs are most common in elementary schools (N=54). Both high school (N=6) and middle school (N=10) principals report very few part-time SROs stationed in their school. However, despite the predominance of part-time SROs in elementary schools, there are also 29 full-time SROs reportedly stationed in elementary schools.

Table 4. School type by SRO presence

School Type	# of schools that report having at least one SRO	Have at least one full-time SRO	Have at least one part-time SRO
Elementary	82	29	54
Middle	95	85	10
High	106	102	6
Elementary/Middle	2	1	1
Middle/High	8	8	0
Intermediate	0	0	0
Other	2	0	2
Total	295	225	73

Figure 3 depicts the number of years that the responding law enforcement agencies have employed SROs. A majority of law enforcement executives report employing SROs for 11 to 15 years (N=27, 33.8%), but a large number of agencies have also employed SROs for 16 to 20 years (N=22, 27.5%). In contrast, very few have employed SROs for less than five years (N=4, 5%) or more than 21 years (N=6, 7.5%). Thus, it follows that most law enforcement agencies in South Carolina have employed SROs for more than 10 years but less than 20 years.

Figure 3. Number of years that law enforcement agencies have employed SROs.
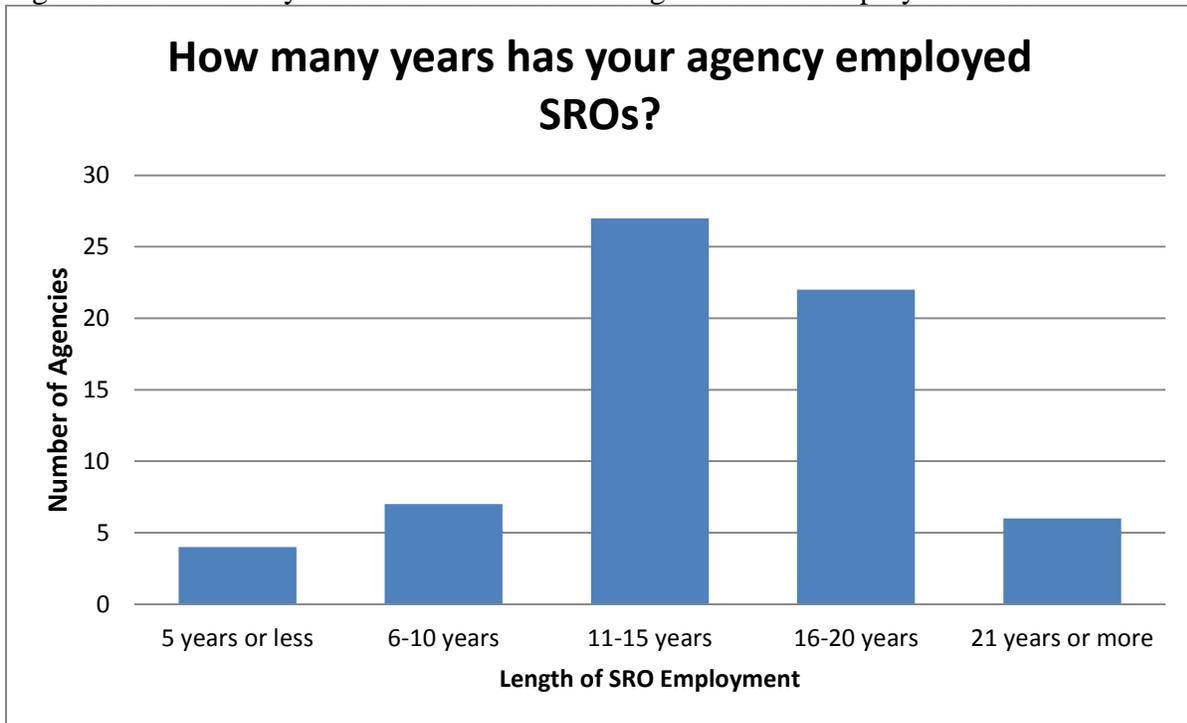
Figure 4 presents the number of years that public school principals report having at least one SRO stationed in his/her school. Unlike the law enforcement agencies, a majority of public school principals report having an SRO stationed in their school for six to ten years (N=101, 34.2%) and a nearly equal portion have had an SRO stationed in their school for five years or less (N=99, 33.6%).   However, only about 5% of principals report having an SRO stationed in their school for more than 16 to 20 years (N=15) and less than 1% of school principals (N=2) report having an SRO for more than 20 years. Thus, although most law enforcement agencies report employing SROs for approximately 10 to 20 years, most public schools have had an SRO stationed in their school for less than ten years (N=200, 67.8%).

Figure 4. Number of years that SROs have been stationed in public schools.

How many years have you had an SRO stationed in your school?

(Bar chart — Y-axis: "Number of Schools" ranging 0 to 120; X-axis: "Length of SRO presence" with categories "5 years or less" ≈ 99, "6-10 years" ≈ 101, "11-15 years" ≈ 56, "16-20 years" ≈ 15, "21 or more years" ≈ 2.)
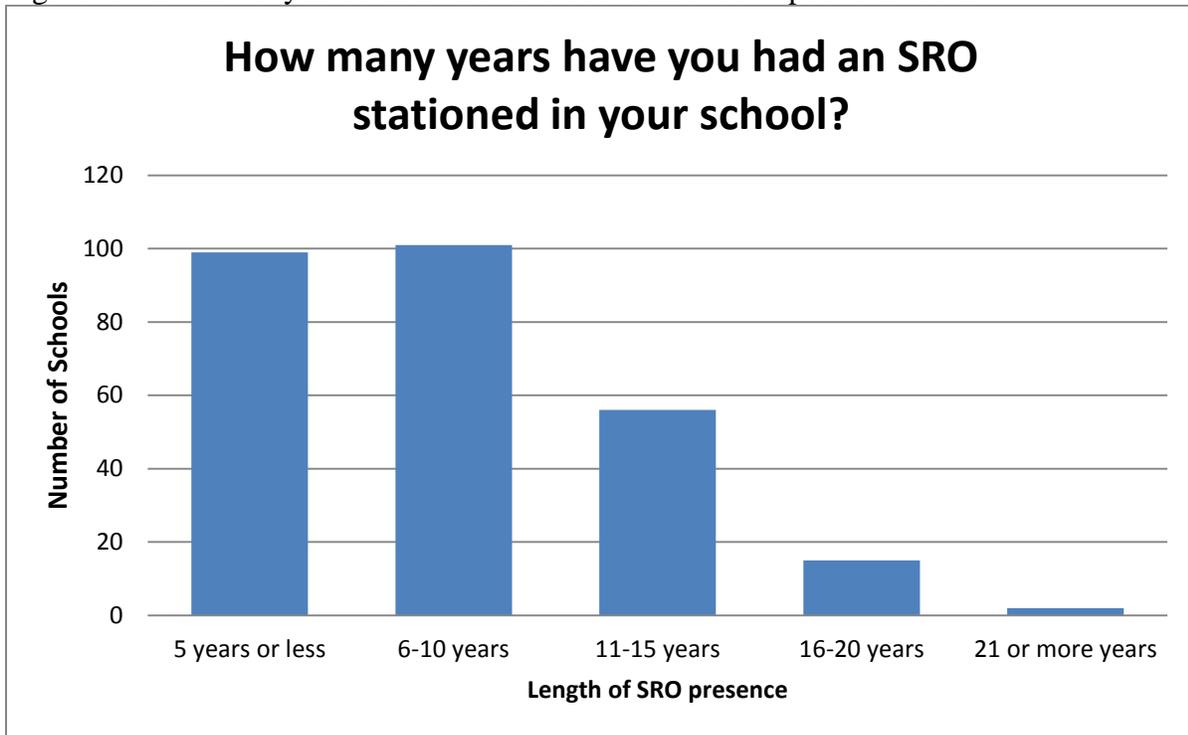
SURVEY FINDINGS

        Law enforcement and principal respondents were presented a series of statements regarding SROs, arming teachers and/or administrators, and other school safety measures. They were asked to respond how strongly they agree or disagree with each of the statements on a four point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *agree*, and 4 = *strongly agree*). For purposes of the following discussion, these categories were collapsed into "agree," which includes those who strongly agree and agree, and "disagree," which includes those who disagree and strongly disagree. These two categories are used for every question discussed in the following sections. If interested in the full breakdown of these categories for each question, please see Appendix A for the law enforcement responses and Appendix B for principals' responses.

Support for SROs

Both the law enforcement executives and school principals were asked about their feelings regarding the use of SROs to maintain school safety. Figure 5 indicates that more than 95% of both the law enforcement executives and school principals agree with the statement that "SROs should be placed in public schools in your jurisdiction/district." In fact, nearly 75% of law enforcement executives *strongly agree* that SROs should be placed in public schools in their jurisdiction while *none strongly disagree*. Although less dramatic, a similar trend is noted in the principals' responses, with almost 65% of principals who *strongly agree* SROs should be placed in public schools in his/her district while only eight principals *strongly disagree* (1.7%).

Figure 5. Do you agree or disagree that SROs should be placed in every school?
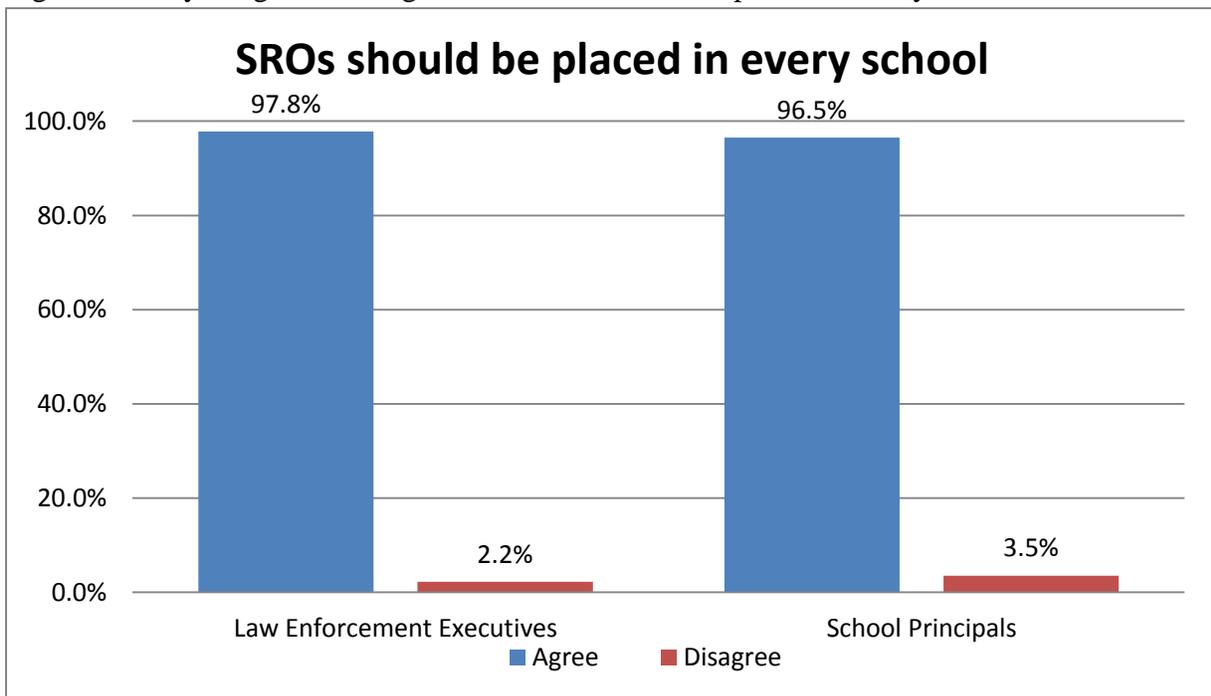
Support for a policy that requires at least one SRO in every public school seems to depend on the manner in which SROs are funded. In general, support for such a policy is greater if these SROs would be externally funded and this support waned if these SROs were to be entirely agency or district funded. As presented in Figure 6, nearly 75% of law enforcement executive respondents (*N*=99) indicated they would support a policy that required at least one SRO in every school if it were entirely externally funded, but this number decreases dramatically to only about 10% (*N*=13) if this practice were to be entirely agency funded. Although less distinctive, Figure 7 indicates that this trend is also reflected in the responses of the school principals with nearly 59% (*N*=287) supporting such a policy if it were to be entirely externally funded and 30.0% (*N*=146) supporting the policy if it were entirely district funded. However, this also suggests that school principals are generally more supportive of a policy that requires at least one SRO in every school. In fact, only 3.7% of principals would not support the policy regardless of how it would be funded.

Figure 6. Law enforcement support for SROs in every school by funding

Law enforcement support for policy which mandates an SRO in every school

Percent of Law Enforcement Executives

- Entirely internally funded: 9.8%
- Partially internally funded: 40.6%
- Entirely externally funded: 74.4%
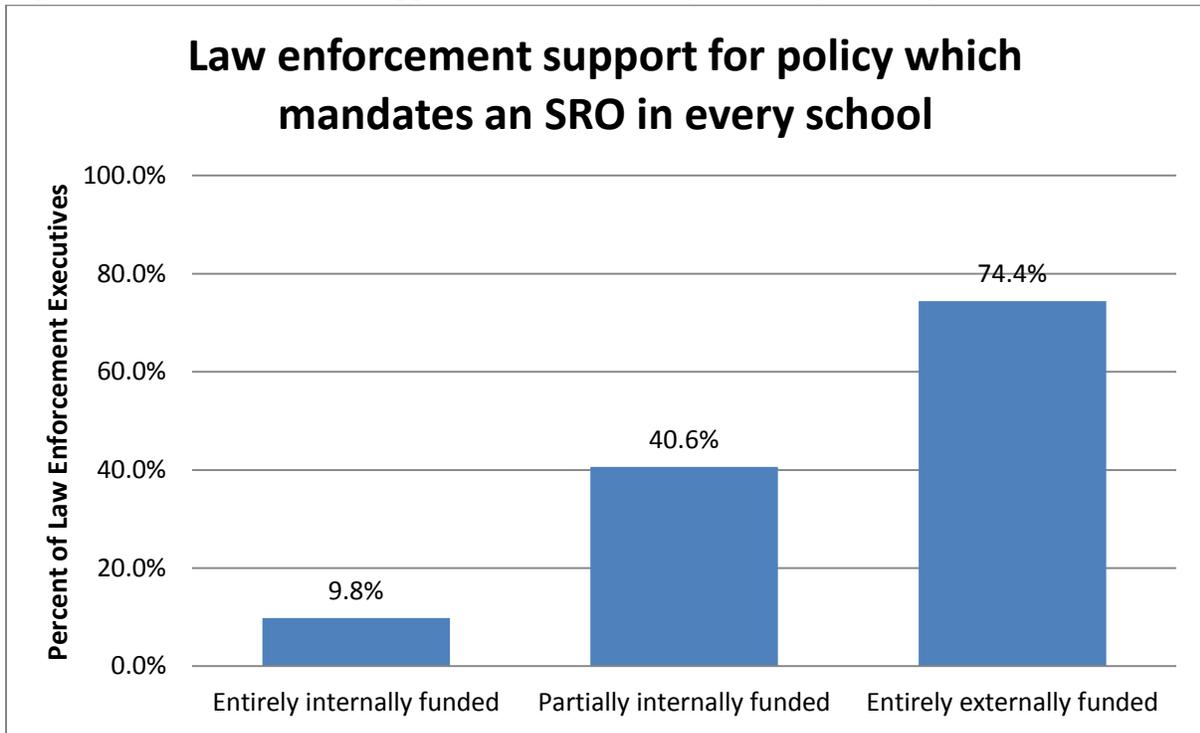
Figure 7. School principal support for SROs in every school by funding

Support for policy which mandates an SRO in every school

Percent of Principals

- Entirely internally funded: 30.0%
- Partially internally funded: 57.7%
- Entirely externally funded: 58.9%
- Would not support at all: 3.7%
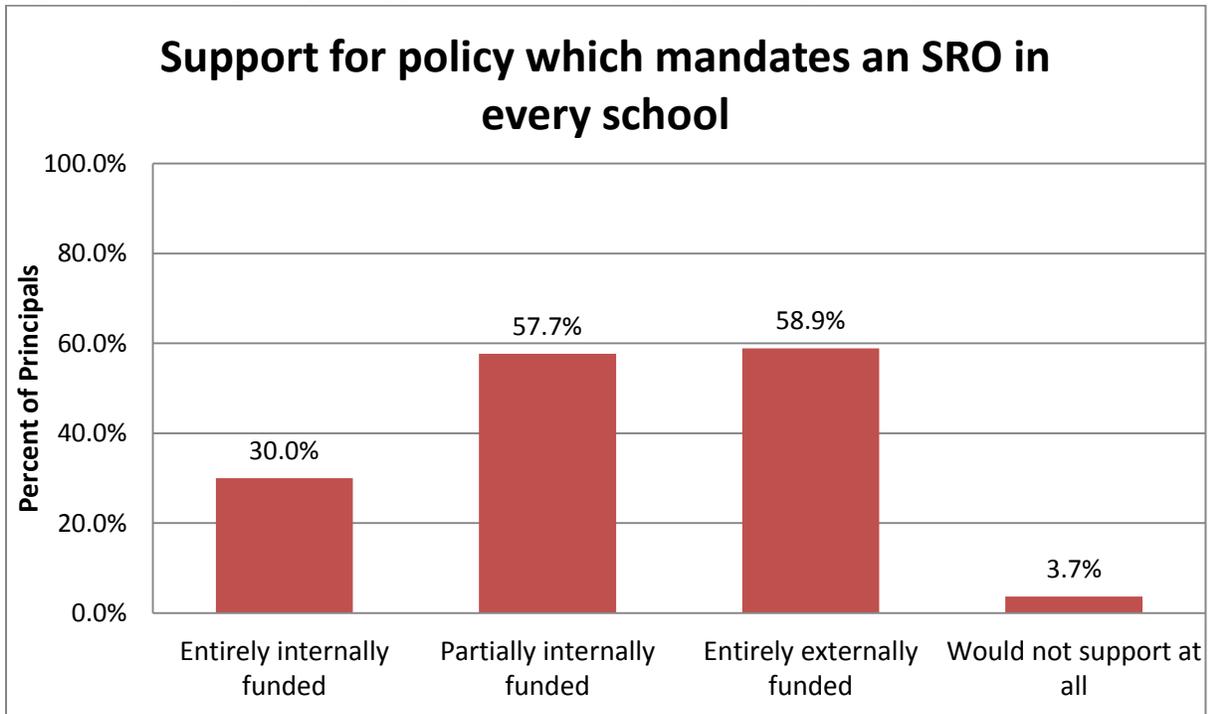
In order to better understand this trend, it is helpful to examine the roles that law enforcement and principals expect the SRO to fill in the school. This information is presented in Table 5. It is important to note that respondents were asked to select *at least one* role that they expected the SRO to fill and thus they could check all four boxes if they expected SROs to serve as law enforcement, a counselor/mentor, a teacher, and some other role. Over 94% of both law enforcement executives (*N*=132) and school principals (*N*=461) reported that they expect SROs to serve a "law enforcement" function in schools. Approximately 80% of law enforcement executives (*N*=120) and school principals (*N*=394) also selected "counselor/mentor" as a role they expected the SRO to fulfill. Notably fewer respondents identified the role of "teacher" as one that the SRO was expected to fill, with only 37% of law enforcement executives (*N*=50) and 24% (*N*=119) of principals including this role in their response.

Table 5. The expected role(s) of an SRO according to law enforcement executives and principals.

	Counselor/mentor *N* (%)	Teacher *N* (%)	Law Enforcement *N* (%)	Other *N* (%)
Law Enforcement Executives	109 (80.7%)	50 (37.0%)	132 (97.8%)	5 (3.7%)
School Principals	394 (80.9%)	119 (24.4%)	461 (94.7%)	65 (13.3%)

In addition to law enforcement, counselor/mentor, and teacher, about 4% of the law enforcement executives and approximately 14% of public school principals also named a number of "other" roles they expected SROs to fill in schools. "Other" roles identified by law enforcement executive include "security" (*N*=2) and "liaison" (*N*=2), and the most common "other" role identified by public school principals that they expected of SROs includes "role model" (*N*= 8), "community liaison" (*N*=6), "security-related positions" (*N*=5) and "safety-related positions" (*N*=5) (e.g., safety inspections and safety training). Additional expected roles that the public school principals identified include "traffic duties" and "maintaining a visual presence."

Along with the expected roles of SROs, law enforcement executives and school principals were asked to identify what they perceived to be the primary role of the SRO and these results are presented in Table 6. Nearly 96% of law enforcement executives (*N*=130) and over 82% of school principals (*N*=401) identify "law enforcement" as the primary role of an SRO while less than 25% of law enforcement executives (*N*=30) and principals (*N*=115) believe "counselor/mentor" to be the primary role of the SRO and approximately 5% of law enforcement (*N*=7) and principal (*N*=15) respondents identify "teacher" as the primary role of the SRO.

Table 6. The primary role of the SRO according to law enforcement executives and school principals.

	Counselor/mentor *N* (%)	Teacher *N* (%)	Law Enforcement *N* (%)	Other *N* (%)
Law Enforcement Executives	30 (22.1%)	7 (5.1%)	130 (95.6%)	2 (1.5%)
School Principals	115 (23.6%)	15 (3.1%)	401 (82.3%)	33 (6.8%)

* Note: Respondents were instructed to select one primary role of the SRO, but because a majority of respondents selected more than one role, this question was treated as though respondents could check all that apply.

Impact of SROs

Table 7 presents the perceptions of law enforcement executives and school principals regarding the impact SROs may have on school safety. Consistent with the sense of support for the placement of SROs in schools, over 99% of law enforcement executives (*N*=135) and over 95% of school principals (*N*=464) agree that SROs improve overall schools safety. The same pattern continued with respect to respondents' perspectives of SROs in active shooter situations. Approximately 92% of both law enforcement executives (*N*=124) and school principals (*N*=440) agreed that SROs would *reduce the number of victims* if a school shooting were to occur. On the other hand, about 55% of law enforcement executives (*N*=76) and 51% of school principals (*N*=238) agreed that an SRO would *prevent* a school shooting from occurring. Thus, both law enforcement executives and school principals in South Carolina support the use of SROs in

public schools and their responses suggest that, in general, they believe SROs can be an effective

measure in maintaining school safety.

Table 7. The impact of SROs on schools as reported by law enforcement executives and public school principals.

	Law Enforcement Agencies		Public School Principals	
	Agree N (%)	Disagree N (%)	Agree N (%)	Disagree N (%)
Improve school safety	135 (99.3%)	1 (0.7%)	464 (96.3%)	18 (3.7%)
Prevent school shootings	76 (56.3%)	59 (43.7%)	238 (51.0%)	229 (49.0%)
Reduce number of victims if school shooting were to occur	124 (91.9%)	11 (8.2%)	440 (92.2%)	37 (7.8%)

Support for arming teachers

Figure 7 presents law enforcement executives' and public school principals' level of

support for policies in their jurisdiction/district that would arm school teachers. Unlike the

overwhelming support for the placement of SROs in every school (approximately 95% of both

law enforcement and principals), only about 25% of law enforcement executives (*N*= 35) agree

with a policy that would arm teachers in their jurisdiction and less than 10% of school principals

(*N*=44) agree with such a policy. Overall, this finding suggests that law enforcement executive

and principal respondents are not supportive of arming teachers in an effort to improve school

safety.   This is evident when considering how strongly law enforcement and principals agree or

disagree with such a policy. Approximately 47% of law enforcement (*N*=64) *strongly disagree*

with a policy that would arm teachers in their district's schools, and more notably, about 65% of

principals also *strongly disagree* with a policy that would arm teachers. Conversely, only about

3% of respondent law enforcement executives (*N*=4) and principals (*N*=13) strongly agree with

such a policy.

Figure 7. Law enforcement executives' and public school principals' level of agreement with a policy that arms teachers in their jurisdiction/district.
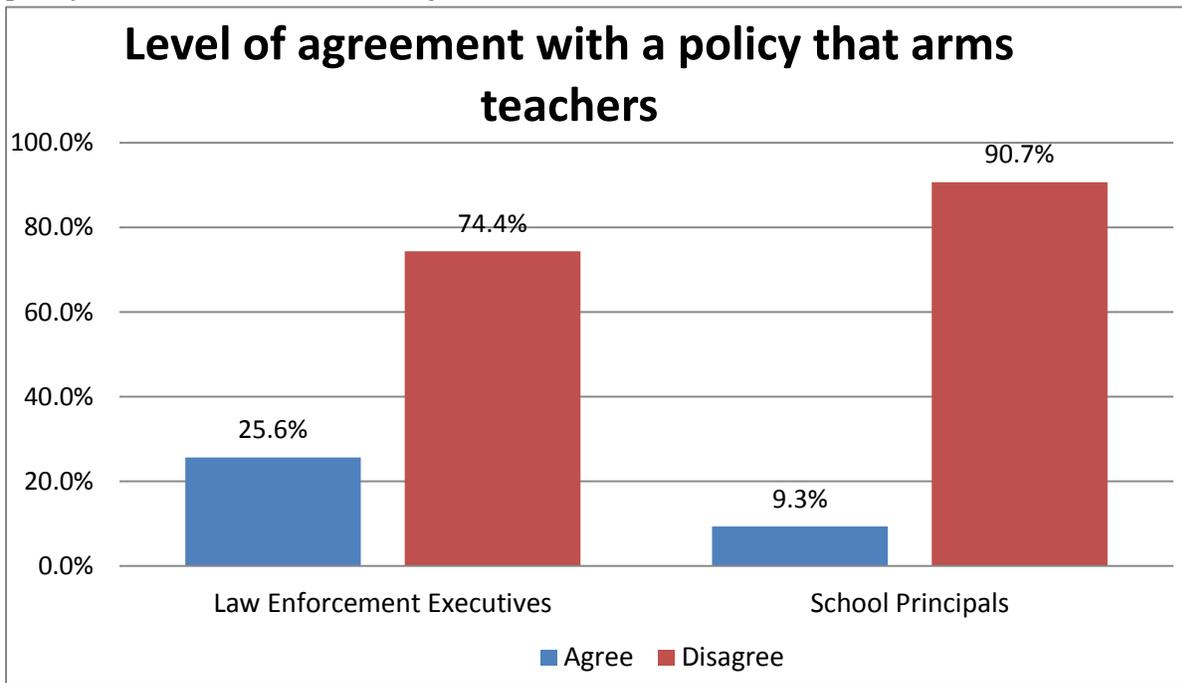
Table 8 presents the law enforcement executives' and public school principals' perceptions regarding how arming teachers in public schools may impact school safety. Consistent with respondents' attitudes toward such a policy, only 27% of law enforcement executives (*N*=38) and less than 10% of school principals (*N*=46) believe arming teachers would improve overall school safety. Although there is greater support for the role of armed teachers in reducing the number of victims if a school shooting were to occur, a majority of both law enforcement executives and school principals disagree. Less than half of law enforcement executives (*N*=65, 47.4%) and even fewer school principals (*N*=119, 25.3%) agree that armed teachers may help reduce the overall number of victims during an active shooter situation. Furthermore, only 11% of law enforcement executives (*N*=16) and 4% of school principals agree that armed teachers would prevent school shootings from occurring. Table 8 also suggests that law enforcement executives feel more favorably towards arming teachers than do the principals.

However, a majority of both law enforcement executives and public school principals disagree with all three statements that imply a positive impact of arming school teachers on school safety.

Table 8. Law enforcement executives and public school principals' perceptions of the impact of armed teachers.

	Law Enforcement Agencies		Public School Principals	
	Agree *N* (%)	Disagree *N* (%)	Agree *N* (%)	Disagree *N* (%)
Improve school safety	38 (27.5%)	100 (72.5%)	46 (9.7%)	430 (90.3%)
Prevent school shootings	16 (11.5%)	123 (88.5%)	19 (4.0%)	454 (96.0%)
Reduce number of victims if school shooting were to occur	65 (47.3%)	72 (52.6%)	119 (25.3%)	351 (74.7%)

Support for arming school administrators

Regarding a policy that would arm school administrators, Figure 8 suggests that law enforcement executives and principals are slightly more inclined to agree with such a policy in comparison to the policy of arming teachers. However, as was the trend with the arming of teachers, a majority of both law enforcement executives and public school principals report that they disagree with such a policy. Indeed, only 38% of law enforcement executives (*N*=52) and about 29% of school principals (*N*=138) agree with a policy would arm school administrators.

Figure 8. Law enforcement executives' and public school principals' perceptions of a policy that arms school administrators.
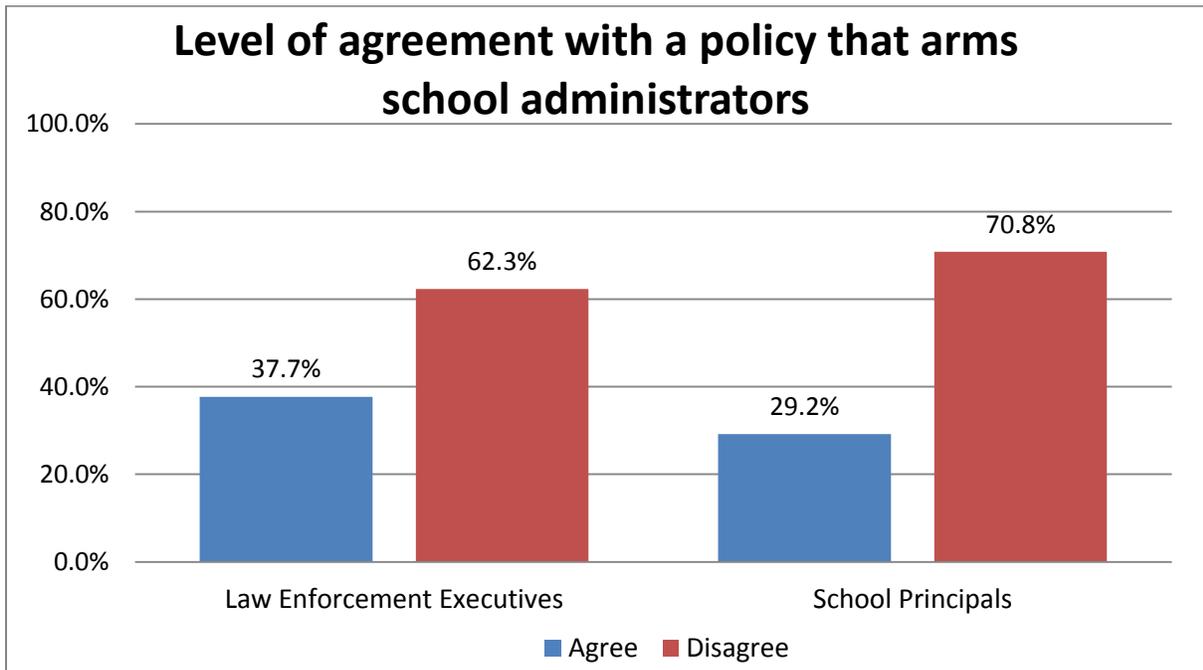
Table 9 presents the perceptions of law enforcement executives and school principals regarding the potential impact of arming administrators on school safety. Less than 40% of law enforcement executives (*N*=53) and less than 30% of school principals (*N*=134) agree that arming administrators at schools in their jurisdiction/district would improve overall school safety. Although there is more support for the idea that armed administrators *would reduce the number of victims* if a school shooting were to occur, less than half of law enforcement executives (46.8%, *N*=64) and about 40% of school principals (*N*=188) agree with this statement. Consistent with the trend observed in Table 9 regarding arming school teachers, a small minority of law enforcement executives (17.3%, *N*=24) and school principals (11.4%, *N*=54) agree that arming school administrators would *prevent* school shootings from occurring.

Table 9. Law enforcement executives and public school principals' perspectives of the impact of armed administrators.

	Law Enforcement Executives		Public School Principals	
	Agree *N* (%)	Disagree *N* (%)	Agree *N* (%)	Disagree *N* (%)
Improve school safety	53 (38.4%)	85 (61.6%)	134 (28.4%)	338 (71.6%)
Prevent school shootings	24 (17.3%)	115 (82.8%)	54 (11.4%)	418 (88.6%)
Reduce number of victims if school shooting were to occur	64 (46.8%)	73 (53.2%)	188 (40.2%)	280 (59.8%)

Responsibility for school safety

Law enforcement executives and public school principals were also asked how strongly they agree or disagree that school safety is law enforcement's responsibility. Figure 9 presents their responses and illustrates a point of differentiation between the two types of respondents. A majority of law enforcement executives (92.0%, *N*=127) agree that school safety is law enforcement's responsibility. In contrast, less than 20% of school principals (*N*=92) agree with this statement; that is, over 75% of principals *disagree* that school safety is law enforcement's responsibility. In sum, the proportion of law enforcement executives that agree school safety is law enforcement's responsibility is roughly equal to the proportion of principals that disagree with the same statement.

Figure 9. How strongly do you agree or disagree that school safety is law enforcement's responsibility?
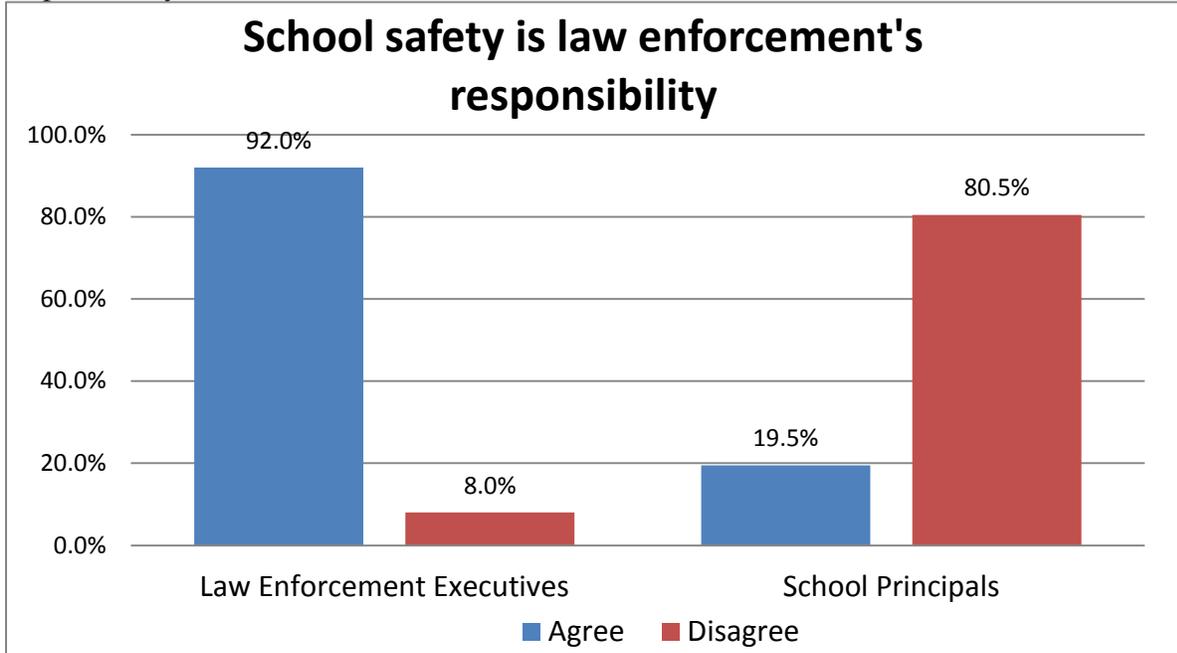
DISCUSSION

Based on the above findings, the following discussion will highlight a few key trends that emerged from the analyses. First, there is a large amount of support for SROs in general. An overwhelming majority of both law enforcement executives and school principals agree that SROs should be placed in every school with a slightly larger percent of law enforcement executives supporting this statement. However, when asked about supporting a policy that would place an SRO in every school, principals were more accepting of the policy if it were to be entirely district funded, while very few law enforcement executives would support the policy if it were entirely agency funded. This may be because law enforcement executives are more familiar with the costs of employing SROs and would prefer to share that burden. On the other hand, it may also reflect that those school principals who support the placement of SROs in their schools feel more strongly about the policy, despite what costs it may entail.

In addition, it appears that both law enforcement executives and public school principals are generally more supportive of SROs than the arming of either school teachers or administrators. Law enforcement executives demonstrate more support across the board for all dimensions of safety regarding SROs, armed teachers, and armed administrators. Law enforcement executives exhibited over twice as much support for a policy that arms teachers than principals, but they were only slightly more supportive of arming administrators than were principal respondents. Considering that principals are school administrators, this raises the point that principals are *less supportive* than law enforcement executives of a policy that would give administrators like themselves a firearm.

Another key trend that develops throughout this analysis deals with the sentiments of law enforcement executives and school principals about preventing school shootings. In contrast to the law enforcement executives' high level of agreement that SROs improve school safety and would reduce the number of victims if a school shooting were to occur, just over half agree that SROs would *prevent* a school shooting from occurring. The principals demonstrate a similar trend, although the level of support for these three statements is slightly less than that exhibited by the law enforcement executives. This suggests that although both law enforcement executives and school principals agree that SROs can be a useful tool in maintaining school safety, SROs are not perceived to be an effective measure to for preventing school shootings.

Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of law enforcement and principal respondents would support a policy that would place SROs in public schools in their jurisdiction/district and agree SROs are effective in maintaining school safety in general. In contrast, only about half of the respondents agree that SROs could *prevent* a school shooting from occurring. Considering the alternatives, the respondent law enforcement executives and public school principals are not,

in general, very supportive of armed teachers and/or administrators as school safety measures. However, only a small percentage of law enforcement and principal respondents agree that armed teachers and/or administrators would prevent school shootings from occurring. Thus, the above results indicate that law enforcement executives and school principals do not perceive arming teachers or administrators as an adequate alternative in attempting to prevent school shootings. Compared to their sentiments regarding the use of SROs, these findings suggest that law enforcement executives and principals prefer SROs as opposed to arming teachers and/or administrators as measures to maintain safety within schools, but that none of these approaches to schools safety are effective in preventing school shootings from occurring.

Finally, one major point of disagreement between the law enforcement executives and the public school principals was in regards to whether or not school safety is law enforcement's responsibility. While a majority of law enforcement executives agreed that school safety was their own responsibility, an equally large majority of principals *disagreed* with this same sentiment. This suggests that both parties feel responsible themselves for maintaining school safety. Perhaps law enforcement executives agree with this statement because they believe it is their duty to maintain safety, regardless of the specific location, while principals disagree because they feel as though the duty of school safety falls upon their own shoulders. Thus, although their answers conflict, it is possible that the responses of both the law enforcement executives and school principals were driven by similar sentiments.

CONCLUSION

Considering the current debate regarding the best strategy to maintain school safety, the perspectives of law enforcement and public school principals captured by this study can inform policy decisions. According to their responses, both law enforcement executives and principals

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support the use of SROs as tools to ensure a safe school environment. Conversely, this study also indicate that although arming teachers and/or administrators has found its way into policy discussions, South Carolina law enforcement and principals, in general, would not be supportive of such a practice. This suggests that rather than exhausting finances and resources to pass legislation that would arm teachers and/or administrators, the focus should be on continued funding of existing SROs and developing strategies to add SROs to those schools where one is not currently stationed. However, law enforcement executives expressed concern regarding the manner in which new SRO positions would be funded. Thus, considering their perspective, the responsibility of funding SROs should not fall solely on the shoulders of law enforcement, who already feel overburdened by financial constraints. In fact, the large number of principals who would support a policy that places an SRO in every school in their district even if it was entirely district funded suggests that perhaps SRO funding could be shared by law enforcement and school districts. Furthermore, given that this issue is of great concern for policymakers, it behooves state and federal governments to consider providing funding or other financial incentives to those agencies who employ SROs and those schools where SROs are stationed.

Despite the support demonstrated by law enforcement executives and principals for the use of SROs, they did not agree that SROs would prevent a school shooting from occurring and they were even less supportive of the idea that armed teachers and/or administrators would prevent a school shooting. The perspectives of the respondents indicate that SROs are an effective response to threats to school safety, but that SROs and armed teachers and/or administrator are not effective measures to prevent these problems in the first place. Thus, policymakers should be first concerned with creating and maintaining SRO positions in agencies and schools and secondly on identifying effective measures to preventing school shootings.

LAW ENFORCEMENT EXECUTIVES' RESPONSES TO ALL QUESTIONS

5. Which category below best describes your agency? (*N*=140)

	N	*%*
Municipal or County Police Department	102	72.9
Sheriff's Office – full service	36	25.7
Department of Public Safety	1	0.7
State Highway Patrol	1	0.7

6. How many *full-time* **sworn officers** does your agency currently employ? (*N*=141)

Minimum: 0

Maximum: 762

Mean: 66

Mode: 9

7. Does your agency currently employ school resource officers (SROs)? (N=141)

	N	%
Yes	80	56.7
No	61	43.3

   a. If yes, what year did your agency start placing school resource officers in schools? (*N*=67)

Minimum: 1982

Maximum: 2013

Mean: 1999

Mode: 1998, 1999

      i. How many *full-time* SRO positions do you currently have in your agency? (*N*=79)

Minimum: 1

Maximum: 73

Mean: 6

Mode: 2

      ii. Does your agency receive external funding to support your SRO position(s)? (*N*=79)

	N	%
Yes	69	87.3
No	10	12.7

iii.   In which of the following does your agency currently have SROs? (*N*=79)

	N	%
Elementary	20	25.3
Middle	65	82.3
High	70	88.6

iv.   Does your agency provide additional, SRO-specific training before placing them in a school? (*N*=80)

	N	%
Yes	66	82.5
No	14	17.5

       a. If yes, approximately how many additional hours of SRO training? (*N*=59)

Minimum: 20

Maximum: 80

Mean: 47

Mode: 40

8. In which type(s) of schools in your jurisdiction would you support the placement of SROs? (*N*=136)

	N	%
Elementary	98	72.1
Middle	106	77.9
High	101	74.3
None	5	3.7

9. Would you support a policy that required at least one SRO in every public school in your jurisdiction if it was? (*N*=133)

	N	%
Entirely agency funded	13	9.8
Partially agency funded	54	40.6
Entirely externally funded	99	74.4

10. What roles do you expect SROs to fulfill in schools? (*N*=135)

	N	%
Counselor/mentor	109	80.7
Teacher	50	37.0
Law enforcement	132	97.8
Other	5	3.7

Other: coach, information/security/resource, liaison for law enforcement

11. What is the *primary* role of SROs? (*N=137*)

	N	%
Counselor/mentor	30	22.1
Teacher	7	5.1
Law enforcement	130	95.6
Other	2	1.5
Security		

12. SROs should be placed in public schools in your jurisdiction. (*N=137*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	100	73.0
Agree	34	24.8
Disagree	3	2.2
Strongly disagree	0	0.0

13. AN SRO would improve overall safety within a school. (*N=136*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	102	75.0
Agree	33	24.3
Disagree	1	0.7
Strongly disagree	0	0.0

14. AN SRO would prevent a school shooting from occurring. (*N=135*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	29	21.5
Agree	47	34.8
Disagree	51	37.8
Strongly disagree	8	5.9

15. AN SRO would reduce the number of victims if a school shooting were to occur. (*N=135*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	74	54.8
Agree	50	37.0
Disagree	10	7.5
Strongly disagree	1	0.7

16. How strongly do you agree or disagree with a policy that arms *teachers* in your jurisdiction's schools? (*N=137*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	4	3.0
Agree	31	22.6
Disagree	38	27.7
Strongly disagree	64	46.7

17. An armed teacher would improve overall school safety. (*N*=138)

	N	%
Strongly agree	5	3.6
Agree	33	23.9
Disagree	49	35.5
Strongly disagree	51	37.0

18. An armed teacher would prevent a school shooting from occurring. (*N*=139).

	N	%
Strongly agree	1	0.7
Agree	15	10.8
Disagree	66	47.5
Strongly disagree	57	41.0

19. An armed teacher would reduce the number of victims if a school shooting were to occur. (*N*=137)

	N	%
Strongly agree	10	7.3
Agree	55	40.1
Disagree	36	26.3
Strongly disagree	36	26.3

20. How strongly do you agree or disagree with a policy that arms *administrators* in your jurisdiction's schools? (*N*=138)

	N	%
Strongly agree	12	8.7
Agree	40	29.0
Disagree	44	31.9
Strongly disagree	42	30.4

21. An armed administrator would improve overall school safety. (*N*=138)

	N	%
Strongly agree	10	7.2
Agree	43	31.2
Disagree	51	37.0
Strongly disagree	34	24.6

22. An armed administrator would prevent a school shooting from occurring. (*N*=139)

	N	%
Strongly agree	4	2.9
Agree	20	14.4
Disagree	75	54.0
Strongly disagree	40	28.8

23. An armed administrator would reduce the number of victims if a school shooting were to occur. (*N*=137)

	N	%
Strongly agree	12	8.8
Agree	52	38.0
Disagree	48	35.0
Strongly disagree	25	18.2

24. What is the most effective method for maintaining overall school safety? (*N*=134)

	N	%
SROs	121	91.0
Armed teachers	1	0.7
Armed administrators	0	0.0
Other	11	8.3

Other: Better physical security of campus; collaborative effort with all involved – law enforcement, community and school; combination of all three; development and enforcement of security plan both physical and operational; faculty design/security devices; planning, training, and security of school; proper physical security measures – alert teachers/administrators, law enforcement involvement in the school to include planning; SROs plus educating all school staff; trained tactical plans

25. Which of these school resources is the best response to school shootings? (*N*=136)

	N	%
SROs	130	95.6
Armed teachers	0	0.0
Armed administrators	0	0.0
Other	6	4.4

Other: A planned response in concert with teachers/admin; armed security; better physical security of campus; law enforcement; overall training; SROs and responding law enforcement resources; trained tactical teams

26. How strongly do you agree or disagree that school safety in your jurisdiction is law enforcement's responsibility? (*N*=138)

	N	%
Strongly agree	66	47.8
Agree	61	44.2
Disagree	10	7.3
Strongly disagree	1	0.7

27. What has been the level of concern your agency has received from parents or other community members regarding school shootings in the past years? It has: (*N*=139)

	N	%
Increased	82	59.0
Stayed about the same	54	38.8
Decreased	3	2.2

28. In the next year, do you believe the risk of school shootings in your jurisdiction will: (*N*=138)

	N	%
Increase	24	17.4
Stay about the same	109	79.0
Decrease	5	3.6

APPENDIX B

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES TO ALL QUESTIONS

1. What is your position in the school? (*N*=474)

	N	%
Principal/Executive Director	426	89.9
Assistant Principal	26	5.5
Interim Principal	4	0.7
Administrator/Asst. Admin	11	2.4
Other	7	1.5

2. How many years have you been in your current position? (*N*=484)

	N	%
Less than 2 years	94	19.4
2 – 4 years	122	25.2
5 – 9 years	156	32.2
10 – 14 years	63	13.0
15 – 19 years	35	7.2
20 or more years	14	2.9

3. How many years have you been in education-related employment? (*N*=464)

	N	%
2 – 4 years	3	0.6
5 – 9 years	5	1.1
10 – 14 years	57	12.3
15 – 19 years	113	24.4
20 or more years	285	61.6

4. Respondent Age (*N*=478)

	N	%
30 years or younger	4	0.8
31 – 35 years	25	5.1
36 – 40 years	78	16.0
41 – 45 years	109	22.4
46 – 50 years	78	16.0
51 – 55 years	75	15.4
56 – 60 years	66	13.6
61 years or older	43	8.8

5. What is your highest level of education? (*N*=478)

	N	%
Some college	3	0.6
Bachelor's degree	4	0.8
Master's degree	389	81.4
Doctoral degree	82	16.8

Please complete the following questions regarding the 2012-2013 school year:

6. Which category below best describes your school? (*N*=484)

	N	%
Elementary school	229	47.3
Middle school	110	22.7
High school	113	23.3
Online/virtual school	1	0.2
Other	4	0.8
Intermediate (4th & 5th)	2	0.4
4th-6th	1	0.2
Elementary/middle school	10	2.1
Middle/high school	14	2.9

7. Approximately how many students are enrolled in your school? (*N*=483)

	N	%
Less than 100	2	0.4
100-299	37	7.7
300-499	135	28.0
500-699	127	26.3
700-999	112	23.2
1000-1199	20	4.1
1200-1399	13	2.7
1400-1599	14	2.9
1600-1799	13	2.7
1800-1999	5	1.0
2000-2999	5	1.0

8. What was your school's approximate attendance rate? (*N*=436)

Minimum: 5.0%

Maximum: 100.0%

Average approximate attendance rate: 95.2%

9. Approximately what percentage of your students were eligible for the National School Lunch Program? (*N*=461)

Minimum: 4.0%
Maximum: 100.0%
Average approximate percent of students: 63.9%

10. Approximately what percentage of your students had a disability other than speech? (*N*=441)

Minimum: 0.0%
Maximum: 100.0%
Average approximate percent of students: 13.5%

11. Are any SROs currently assigned to your school? (*N*=485)

	N	%
Yes	295	60.8
No	190	39.2

a. If yes to #11, how many part time SROs are currently assigned to your school? (*N*=295)

	N	%
0	222	75.3
1	65	22.0
2	1	0.3
3	2	0.7
4	0	0.0
5 or more	5	1.7

N/A = 189

If yes to #11, how many full time SROs are currently assigned to your school? (*N*=294)

	N	%
0	69	23.5
1	209	71.1
2	16	5.4

N/A = 189

b. If yes to #11, about how long has your school had an SRO? (*N*=273)

	N	%
1 year or less	43	15.8
2-4 years	39	14.3
5-9 years	64	23.4
10-14 years	88	32.2
15-19 years	33	12.1
20 or more years	6	2.2

N/A = 189

c. If yes to #11, does your school have a Memorandum of Understanding with the SRO's agency? (*N*=267)

	N	%
Yes	237	88.8
No	30	11.2

N/A = 189

d. If yes to #11, how is the SRO funded? (*N*=275)

	N	%
Entirely district funded	67	24.4
Partially district funded	166	60.4
Entirely externally funded	42	15.3

N/A=189

Please answer the following questions regardless of whether you have an SRO in your schoolor not.

12. Would you support a policy that <u>required</u> at least one SRO in every public school in your district if it was (check all that apply): *N*=472)

	N	%
Entirely district funded	146	30.9
Partially district funded	281	59.5
Entirely externally funded	287	60.8
Would not support at all	18	3.8

13. What role(s) do you expect SROs to fulfill in schools? (check all that apply) (*N*=482)

	N	%
Counselor/mentor	394	81.7
Teacher	119	24.7
Law enforcement	461	95.6
Other	65	13.5

Other: a resource; administrative support; advise; advocacy for police, role model; advocate; age appropriate safety education – personal safety, stranger danger, water safety, bike safety; awareness class; behavior support; behaviorist; coach; community liaison; DARE; deterrent; drugs and law education; home visits/truancy; law enforcement/mentoring; mentor; mostly at front of building – safety; one who can explain certain laws to children; order; parent/community advocate; part of the administrative team; positive reinforcement; prevention; professional development; resource; resource to school reporting to principals; resource training awareness; role model (*N*=8); safety (*N*=3); safety inspections (door checks etc.), safety training; scaffold school/home/community resources; security (*N*=5); security specialist; student monitoring; student need; supervision; support; traffic; visible presence; work with administrative team

14. What is the primary role of an SRO? (*N*=477)

	N	%
Counselor/mentor	115	24.1
Teacher	15	3.1
Law enforcement	401	84.1
Other	33	6.9

Other: arrival, dismissal, attendance; behavior support; community liaison/member/support, deterrent; DARE; help maintain a safe environment; mentor (not counselor); order; parental support; prevention; prevention through education; resource; resource training awareness; role model; safety (*N*=7); safety/security; security; security specialist; supervisional; traffic; uphold district code of student conduct

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding SROS.

15. SROs should be placed in public school in your district? (*N*=481)

	N	%
Strongly agree	310	64.4
Agree	154	32.0
Disagree	9	1.9
Strongly disagree	8	1.7

16. AN SRO would improve overall safety within a school? (*N*=482)

	N	%
Strongly agree	307	63.7
Agree	157	32.6
Disagree	11	2.3
Strongly disagree	7	1.5

17. AN SRO would prevent a school shooting from occurring? (*N*=467)

	N	%
Strongly agree	66	14.1
Agree	172	36.8
Disagree	191	40.9
Strongly disagree	38	8.1

18. AN SRO would prevent a school shooting from occurring? (*N*=477)

	N	%
Strongly agree	222	46.5
Agree	218	45.7
Disagree	28	5.9
Strongly disagree	9	1.9

19. AN SRO's authority should override a school principal's authority (*N=472*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	23	4.9
Agree	50	10.6
Disagree	212	44.9
Strongly disagree	186	39.4

20. School safety in your district is law enforcement's responsibility (*N=471*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	22	4.5
Agree	70	14.9
Disagree	267	56.7
Strongly disagree	112	23.8

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following general statemetns regarding relationships and interactions between SROs and **STUDENTS**. Each question is important so please read them carefully and **please provide your best response even if your school does not currently have an SRO.** (We are interested in your general perception of SRO's, whether based on your experience working with them or general opinion if you do not have this experience):

21. When dealing with *students*, SROs make decisions based on facts, not their personal biases or opinions (*N=477*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	205	43.0
Agree	259	54.3
Disagree	11	2.3
Strongly disagree	2	0.4

22. SROs treat *students* with respect (*N=479*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	273	57.0
Agree	203	42.4
Disagree	1	0.2
Strongly disagree	2	0.4

23. SROs take time to listen to *students* (*N=479*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	261	54.5
Agree	216	45.1
Disagree	0	0.0
Strongly disagree	2	0.4

24. SROs treat *students* fairly (*N=478*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	266	55.6
Agree	210	43.9
Disagree	1	0.2
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

25. SROs clearly explain the reason for their actions with *students* they deal with (*N=478*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	245	51.3
Agree	222	46.4
Disagree	10	2.1
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

26. SROs use rules and procedures that are fair to *students* (*N=477*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	267	56.0
Agree	207	43.4
Disagree	2	0.4
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

27. SROs are neutral and fair when dealing with *students* (*N=478*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	248	51.9
Agree	221	46.2
Disagree	7	1.5
Strongly disagree	2	0.4

28. SROs consider *students'* views (*N=477*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	191	40.0
Agree	270	56.6
Disagree	15	3.1
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

29. SROs try to take *students'* needs into account (*N=479*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	210	43.8
Agree	253	52.8
Disagree	14	2.9
Strongly disagree	2	0.4

30. *Students* usually receive fair outcomes from SROs (*N=473*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	226	47.8
Agree	241	51.0
Disagree	5	1.1
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

31. *Students* usually receive the outcomes they deserve under the law from SROs (*N=467*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	208	44.5
Agree	247	52.9
Disagree	11	2.4
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

32. *Students* should obey SRO's decisions because it is the proper thing to do (*N=474*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	232	48.9
Agree	235	49.6
Disagree	6	1.3
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

33. *Students* have no choice but to obey the directives of SROs if they consider their actions lawful (*N=471*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	141	29.9
Agree	223	47.3
Disagree	104	22.1
Strongly disagree	3	0.6

34. *Students* should obey the directives of SROs if they consider their actions lawful (*N=470*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	215	45.7
Agree	227	48.3
Disagree	24	5.1
Strongly disagree	4	0.9

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following general statemetns regarding relationships and interactions between SROs and **STUDENTS**. Each question is important so please read them carefully and **please provide your best response even if your school does not currently have an SRO.** (We are interested in your general perception of SRO's, whether based on your experience working with them or general opinion if you do not have this experience):

35. When dealing with *teachers*, SROs make decisions based on facts, not their personal biases or opinions (*N*=473)

	N	%
Strongly agree	234	49.5
Agree	230	48.6
Disagree	8	1.7
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

36. SROs treat *teachers* with respect (*N*=473)

	N	%
Strongly agree	275	58.0
Agree	197	41.6
Disagree	1	0.2
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

37. ROs take time to listen to *teachers* (*N*=475)

	N	%
Strongly agree	262	55.2
Agree	210	44.2
Disagree	2	0.4
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

38. SROs treat *teachers* fairly (*N*=473)

	N	%
Strongly agree	265	56.0
Agree	206	43.6
Disagree	1	0.2
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

39. SROs clearly explain the reasons for their actions with *teachers* they deal with (*N*=475)

	N	%
Strongly agree	250	52.6
Agree	214	45.1
Disagree	10	2.1
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

40. SROs use rules and procedures that are fair to *teachers* (*N*=475)

	N	%
Strongly agree	259	54.4
Agree	215	45.3
Disagree	0	0.0
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

41. SROs are neutral and fair when dealing with *teachers* (*N*=475)

	N	%
Strongly agree	249	52.4
Agree	219	46.1
Disagree	6	1.3
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

42. SROs considers *teachers'* views (*N*=475)

	N	%
Strongly agree	218	45.9
Agree	247	52.0
Disagree	9	1.9
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

43. SROs try to take *teachers'* needs into account (*N*=474)

	N	%
Strongly agree	212	44.7
Agree	251	53.0
Disagree	10	2.1
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

44. *Teachers* often receive fair outcomes from SROs (*N*=470)

	N	%
Strongly agree	230	48.9
Agree	237	50.4
Disagree	2	0.4
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

45. *Teachers* usually receive the outcomes they deserve under the law from SROs (*N*=467)

	N	%
Strongly agree	222	47.5
Agree	238	51.0
Disagree	6	1.3
Strongly disagree	1	0.2

46. *Teachers* should obey SRO's decisions because it is the proper thing to do (*N*=465)

	N	%
Strongly agree	208	44.7
Agree	238	51.2
Disagree	17	3.7
Strongly disagree	2	0.4

47. *Teachers* have no choice but to obey the directives of SROs (*N*=465)

	N	%
Strongly agree	126	27.1
Agree	188	40.4
Disagree	138	29.7
Strongly disagree	13	2.8

48. *Teachers* should obey the directives of SROs if they consider their actions lawful (*N*=464)

	N	%
Strongly agree	205	44.2
Agree	230	49.6
Disagree	24	5.2
Strongly disagree	5	1.1

If your school currently has ***at least one SRO*** (either full or part time), please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. If you school does not currently have an SRO, please check "Not Applicable." (N/A = 185)

49. SRO(s) have a good relationship with ***students*** in my school (*N*=291)

	N	%
Strongly agree	190	65.3
Agree	91	31.3
Disagree	5	1.7
Strongly disagree	5	1.7

50. SRO(s) have a good relationship with ***teachers*** in my school (*N*=291)

	N	%
Strongly agree	192	66.0
Agree	91	31.3
Disagree	3	1.0
Strongly disagree	5	1.7

51. SRO(s) are doing a good job in my school (*N*=290)

	N	%
Strongly agree	180	62.1
Agree	98	33.8
Disagree	7	1.0
Strongly disagree	5	1.4

52. *Students* demonstrate respect for the SRO(s) in my school (*N*=293)

	N	%
Strongly agree	182	62.1
Agree	105	35.8
Disagree	2	0.7
Strongly disagree	4	1.4

53. *Teachers* demonstrate respect for the SRO(s) in my school (*N*=290)

	N	%
Strongly agree	192	66.2
Agree	93	32.1
Disagree	0	0.0
Strongly disagree	5	1.7

54. *Students* trust the SRO(s) in my school (*N*=289)

	N	%
Strongly agree	167	57.8
Agree	114	39.4
Disagree	4	1.4
Strongly disagree	4	1.4

55. *Teachers* trust the SRO(s) in my school (*N*=290)

	N	%
Strongly agree	181	62.4
Agree	100	34.5
Disagree	5	1.7
Strongly disagree	4	1.4

56. There is good communication between SRO(s) and my staff (*N*=290)

	N	%
Strongly agree	175	60.3
Agree	96	33.1
Disagree	12	4.1
Strongly disagree	7	2.4

As concerns for school safety have continued to grow, alternative measures have been proposed to protect students from active shooters. Please answer the following questions regarding the arming of teachers and school administrators with firearms.

57. How strongly would you agree or disagree with a policy that arms *teachers* in your district's schools? (*N=475*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	13	2.7
Agree	31	6.5
Disagree	119	25.1
Strongly disagree	312	65.7

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding *armed teachers.*

58. An *armed teacher* would improve overall school safety (*N=467*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	4	0.8
Agree	42	8.8
Disagree	150	31.5
Strongly disagree	280	58.8

59. An *armed teacher* would prevent a school shooting from occurring (*N=473*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	1	0.2
Agree	18	3.8
Disagree	163	34.5
Strongly disagree	291	61.5

60. An *armed teacher* would reduce the number of victims if a school shooting were to occur (*N=470*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	11	2.3
Agree	108	23.0
Disagree	137	29.1
Strongly disagree	214	45.5

61. How strongly would you agree or disagree with a policy that arms school administrators in your district's schools? (*N=473*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	42	8.9
Agree	96	20.3
Disagree	141	29.0
Strongly disagree	194	39.8

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding *armed teachers*:

62. An armed school administrator would improve overall school shooting (*N=472*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	29	6.1
Agree	105	22.2
Disagree	157	33.3
Strongly disagree	181	38.3

63. An armed school administrator would prevent a school shooting from occurring (*N=472*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	11	2.3
Agree	43	9.1
Disagree	203	43.0
Strongly disagree	215	45.6

64. An armed school administrator would reduce the number of victims if a school shooting were to occur (*N=468*)

	N	%
Strongly agree	35	7.5
Agree	153	32.6
Disagree	128	27.4
Strongly disagree	152	32.5

65. What is the most effective method for maintaining overall school safety (*N=467*)

	N	%
SROs	360	75.6
Armed teachers	1	0.2
Armed administrators	13	2.7
Other	143	30.0

66. What is the best response to school shootings? (*N*=470)

	N	%
SROs	393	83.6
Armed teachers	1	0.2
Armed administrators	14	3.0
Other	102	21.7

67. In general, how much parental involvement in school-related activities would you say there is at your school? (*N*=477)

	N	%
Almost none	13	2.7
A small amount	123	25.8
A good amount	231	48.4
A lot	110	23.1

68. What has been the level of concern your school has received from parents or other community members regarding school shootings in the past year? It has: (*N*=475)

	N	%
Increased	214	45.1
Stayed about the same	241	50.7
Decreased	20	4.2

69. If South Carolina allowed schools to enact policies that permit armed teachers on school grounds, the risk of school shootings will: (*N*=459)

	N	%
Increase	119	25.9
Stayed about the same	292	63.6
Decrease	48	10.5

70. If South Carolina allowed schools to enact policies that permit armed administrators on school grounds, the risk of school shootings will: (*N*=464)

	N	%
Increase	78	16.8
Stayed about the same	306	65.9
Decrease	80	17.2

71. How much of a problem is cyber-bullying (e.g., online or other electronic means)? (*N*=475)

	N	%
Not a problem	148	31.2
A slight problem	277	58.3
Serious problem	50	10.5

72. How much of a problem is in-person bullying? (*N*=477)

	N	%
Not a problem	60	12.6
A slight problem	382	80.1
Serious problem	35	7.3

73. How much of a problem is alcohol use? (*N*=476)

	N	%
Not a problem	366	76.9
A slight problem	91	19.1
Serious problem	19	4.0

74. How much of a problem is truancy? (*N*=477)

	N	%
Not a problem	142	29.8
A slight problem	256	53.8
Serious problem	70	14.8

75. How much of a problem is vandalism (e.g., graffiti, destruction of property, etc.)? (*N*=475)

	N	%
Not a problem	343	72.2
A slight problem	131	27.6
Serious problem	1	0.2

76. How much of a problem is drug use? (*N*=477)

	N	%
Not a problem	326	68.3
A slight problem	130	27.3
Serious problem	21	4.4

77. How much of a problem is drug sales? (*N*=477)

	N	%
Not a problem	363	76.1
A slight problem	105	22.0
Serious problem	9	1.9

78. How much of a problem is violence (e.g., fights between students and/or teachers) etc.)? (*N*=477)

	N	%
Not a problem	318	66.7
A slight problem	154	32.3
Serious problem	5	1.0

79. How much of a problem is theft (e.g., items stolen from students and/or teachers)? (N=476)

	N	%
Not a problem	241	50.6
A slight problem	220	46.2
Serious problem	15	3.2

80. How much of a problem are weapons? (N=476)

	N	%
Not a problem	424	89.0
A slight problem	52	11.0
Serious problem	0	0.0

81. How much of a problem are gangs? (N=478)

	N	%
Not a problem	386	80.8
A slight problem	87	18.2
Serious problem	5	1.0