

POLICE FREE SCHOOLS: INVESTING IN OUR YOUTH

Education Justice Alliance

July 22, 2020

Let's talk about the School-to-Prison Pipeline



Today's Agenda

Welcome

- Common Definitions
- History of Policing in Schools
- Looking at NC School Policing
- Student's Demands
- Across the country school districts are shifting
- Divestment from School Police and Investing in Alternative Models
- Q&A

Recommended Language/Definitions

Our Definitions

The School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP) - is a set of school policies and practices in which students are pushed out of schools into the juvenile and criminal justice system.

The School-to-Deportation Pipeline (STDP) - is a set of school policies and practices in which students are pushed out of schools into the juvenile and criminal justice system and eventually into immigration procedures (or at risk of) that led to deportation process.

School Push-out - is the practices that contribute to students dropping out. These include unwelcoming and uncaring school environments and over-reliance on zero tolerance school policies that push students out of school.

Recommended Language/Definitions

Law Enforcement - sworn police officers, sheriff's deputies, parole and probation officers, tribal officers, truancy officers, ICE officers or other immigration officials, armed security guards and any other law enforcement personnel who fit any of the criteria below:

- Have the power to arrest, detain, interrogate, question, fine or ticket students on municipal code, juvenile, criminal or immigration related matters, and/or have the power to punish youth for violations of probation or parole;
- Carry any type of weapon, including but not limited to a firearm, baton, Taser, rubber bullets, bean bags, and/or mace/pepper/OC spray, and/or carry handcuffs or other forms of restraint;
- Report to, are certified by, or receive training from a police department, including personnel who can report students to a gang database or other police databases.

School Resource Officers (SROs) – Any safety officers permanently assigned to work in a school or set of schools. Currently, in some localities, they are sworn, or certified law enforcement officers employed by city police departments, whereas in other localities they make up an independent school police department and are employed directly by the school district.

Recommended Language/Definitions

Security officers or security guards – Non-sworn personnel—either armed or unarmed—and hired or sub-contracted with individual schools or school districts to patrol in or around campuses.

Community Intervention Workers – Community members trained as peacebuilders working in schools, around schools and/or in the larger community. Intervention workers have trusted and deep relationships with local communities and both recognized and underground leaders. These trusted relationships are at the root of their effectiveness in identifying, resolving and preventing conflict, violence and crime. Their work includes mentoring youth, preventing and addressing bullying, preventing and resolving conflicts and connecting people to needed services.

Debunking the Myth

- School policing is inextricably linked to this country's long history of oppressing and criminalizing Black and Brown people and suppressing student organizing and movement building
- It represents a belief that people of color need to be controlled and intimidated
- It does not prevent mass shootings, but it does create toxic school climates for students of color

Suppressing Student Movements



1953

1953: First School Resource Officers

The first time law enforcement officers, known as School Resource Officers (SROs), were permanently assigned to schools was 1953 in Flint, Michigan. The SRO Program rapidly expanded throughout the 1960s and 1970s to other school districts, including Los Angeles, California, and Cincinnati, Ohio. Local police departments in Tucson, Chicago, Miami, Baltimore, New York and Washington, D.C. began placing police officers on school grounds, patrolling hallways, and performing random check-ins.



1967

1967-68: Student Resistance

Rise of Black and Chicano student walkouts from Philadelphia to Los Angeles, demanding culturally-relevant education, educators of color, and quality education. Students were confronted by buses or armed police officers, police violence, and arrests. 13 organizers of the L.A. Blowouts were arrested on felony conspiracy charges for "disturbing the peace" after the LAPD infiltrated their organizing efforts.



1970

1970-80s: War on Drugs

President Richard Nixon later President Ronald Reagan, declares the War On Drugs, funneling \$1.7 billion to police departments. The War on Drugs mandated minimum sentencing, even for low-level drug law violations, resulting in drastic racial disparities in the prison system.



Mass Incarceration & School Policing

1975 - 2014: Rise of School Policing

1975 - 1% of U.S. schools report having police stationed on campus to 2014 – 24% of elementary schools and 42% of secondary schools report having sworn law enforcement on campus.

1990: Federal 1033 Program

Through the National Defense Authorization Act, Congress authorized the transfer of excess Department of Defense personal property to federal and state agencies for use in counter-drug activities, creating the Federal 1033 Program. Congress later passed the National Defense Authorization Act of 1997, allowing all law enforcement agencies to acquire property for bona fide law enforcement purposes that assist in their arrest and apprehension mission.

1991: NASRO


The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) is founded. NASRO developed the “triad” concept, messaging school police as teachers, informal counselors and law enforcement officers.

1994

1994: Gun Free Schools Act

Congress passes the Gun Free Schools Act, imposing a federal requirement on school districts to adopt zero-tolerance policies for weapons, and the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, allocating over \$15 billion to prisons and prevention programs, creating 100,000 new police officers, and establishing the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants. It is the largest crime bill to date.






Training Courses

Train with THE world's leader in school-based policing


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NASRO Mission

Dedicated to providing the highest quality of training

[Learn More](#)



National Conference

2020 National School Safety Conference

[Learn More](#)

Superpredator Narrative to STPP Movement



1999



2010

1996

1996: Emergence of "Superpredator" Rhetoric

Hillary Clinton, at the time, the First Lady, used the term "superpredator" in a 1996 New Hampshire speech to build support for then-President Bill Clinton's 1994 crime bill.

April 1999: Columbine School Shooting

Two high school seniors murder 12 students and a teacher, and injure 24 additional students. The massacre was caught on the high school's security cameras in the cafeteria, forever altering societal views of law-enforcement in ensuring the safety of staff and students. The Federal Department of Education responds with a cry to push for zero-tolerance policies across the country. The Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program creates the 'COPS in Schools' (CIS) grant, awarding more than \$750 million in grants to more than 3,000 law-enforcement agencies, resulting in more than 6,500 newly hired school police officers. From 2010-2016 Department of Justice grants more than \$143 million through the COPS office for hiring school police officers.

December 2010: New York Student Safety Act

After nearly four years of organizing from the Urban Youth Collaborative, the Student Safety Act is passed in December 2010 and signed into law by Mayor Bloomberg in January 2011. The law mandates quarterly reporting of suspensions, arrests and summons by demographics.



Summer 2011: Federal Supportive School Discipline Initiative

Obama Administration launches the Supportive School Discipline Initiative and School Discipline Guidance. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Attorney General Eric Holder publically recognize the school-to-prison pipeline.

The Struggle Continues...

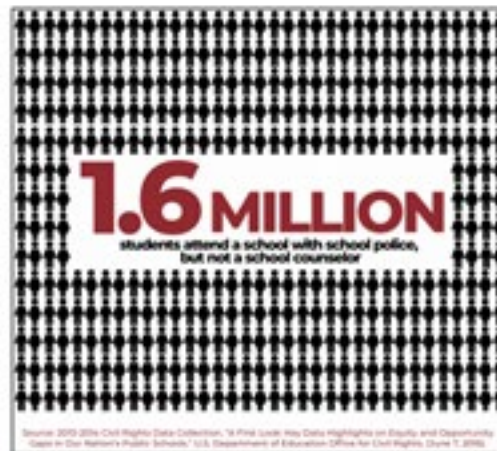
2013

2013: More School Police than Ever Before

Rapid increase of School Resource Officers on school campus across the country. The estimated number grows from 9,400 in 1997 to 20,000 SROs in 2013.

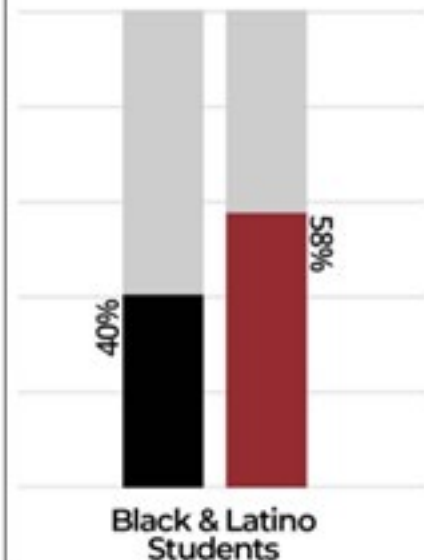
February 2013: Denver Schools & Police Intergovernmental Agreement

After years of organizing, Padres Y Jóvenes Unidos win the Denver Public Schools and Denver Police Department Intergovernmental Agreement significantly altering the roles of police officers in schools. The new contract redefines student offenses, separating behaviors suited for in-school discipline from those requiring police actions. The new model also urged de-escalation of conflict on campus, as well as a greater focus on restorative justice policies.

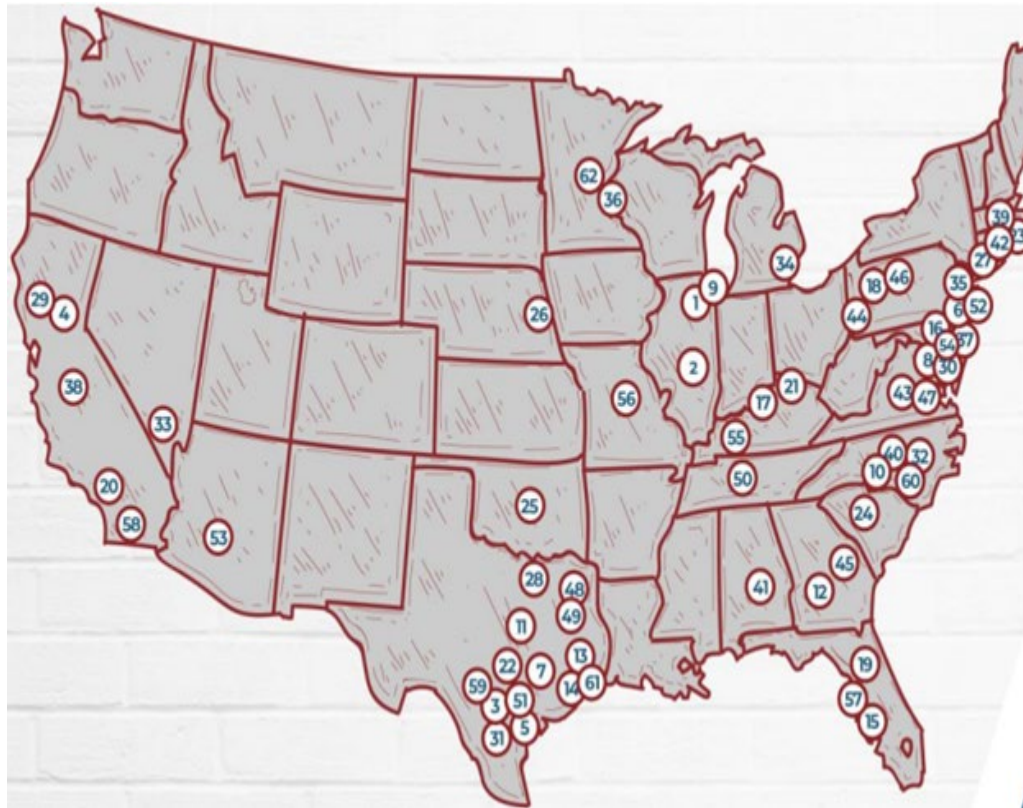


Black & Latino Youth in Schools

- % of school population
- % of school arrests



#AssaultAts and Police Violence Against Students



#AssaultAtRaleigh - Raleigh, North Carolina Jan 2014

Eight children, through their parents, filed a complaint in federal court alleging that school police have "violently tackled" students, pepper-sprayed teens and handcuffed, interrogated and arrested students on baseless accusations without informing them of their rights or calling parents.

#AssaultAtKnightdale - Knightdale, NC

After a scuffle between two students, a junior was pinned down by a school police tasered. The student was charged with conduct and resisting an officer.

#AssaultAtRolesville - Wake County, NC Jan 2017

A School Resource Police Officer was recorded body slamming a 15-year-old Black student, Jasmine Darwin, then jerking her limp body up by the arm and dragging her out of camera view. Jasmine had been trying to intervene and stop a fight between two other students. The officer was placed on paid administrative leave. The student was diagnosed with a concussion and forced to transfer schools.

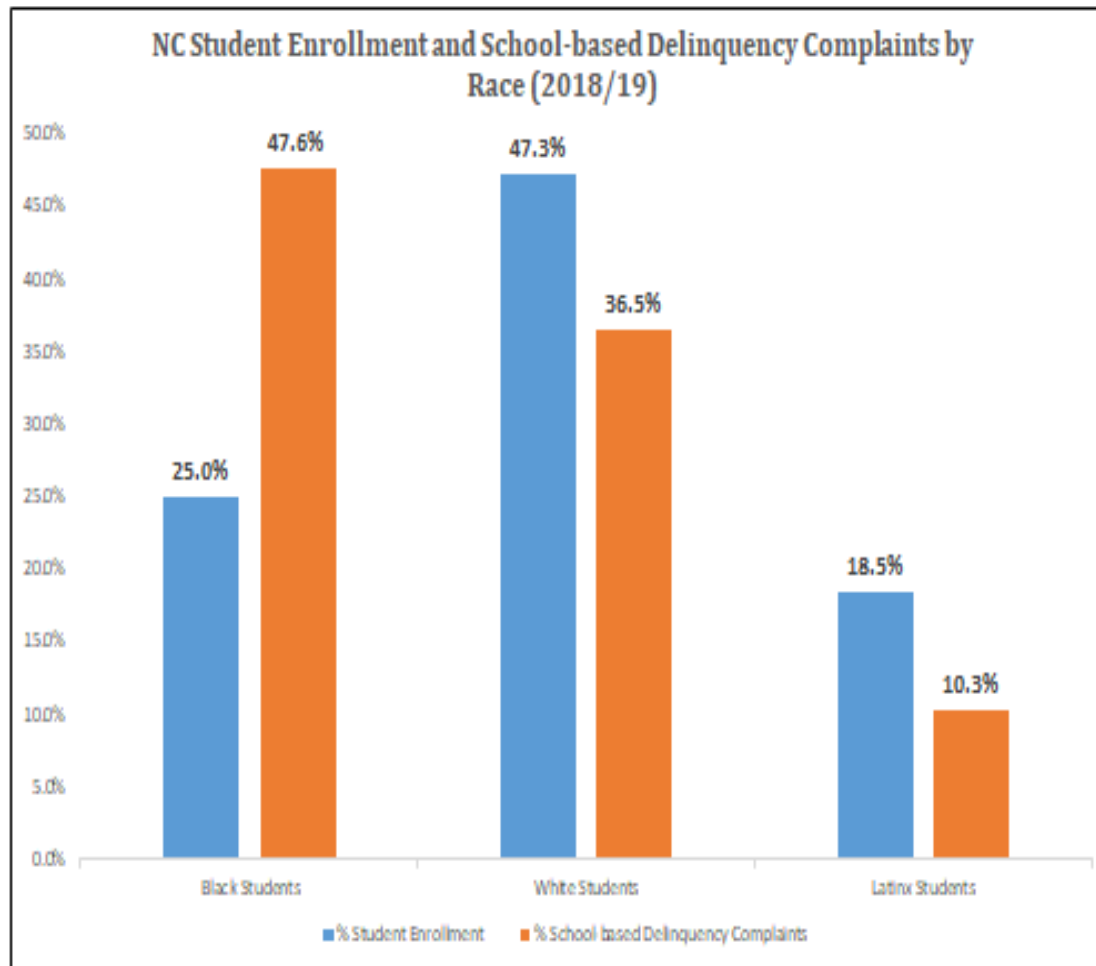
#AssaultAtSeventyFirstHigh - Fayetteville, NC Feb 2018

A 16-year-old Black male student was grabbed, held, and pepper sprayed in the face by a Cumberland County deputy and school police officer after the student intervened in a fight between two female students.

Looking at NC School Policing



School Policing Statewide



In 2017, there were 10 Black youth incarcerated for every 1 white youth incarcerated in NC.

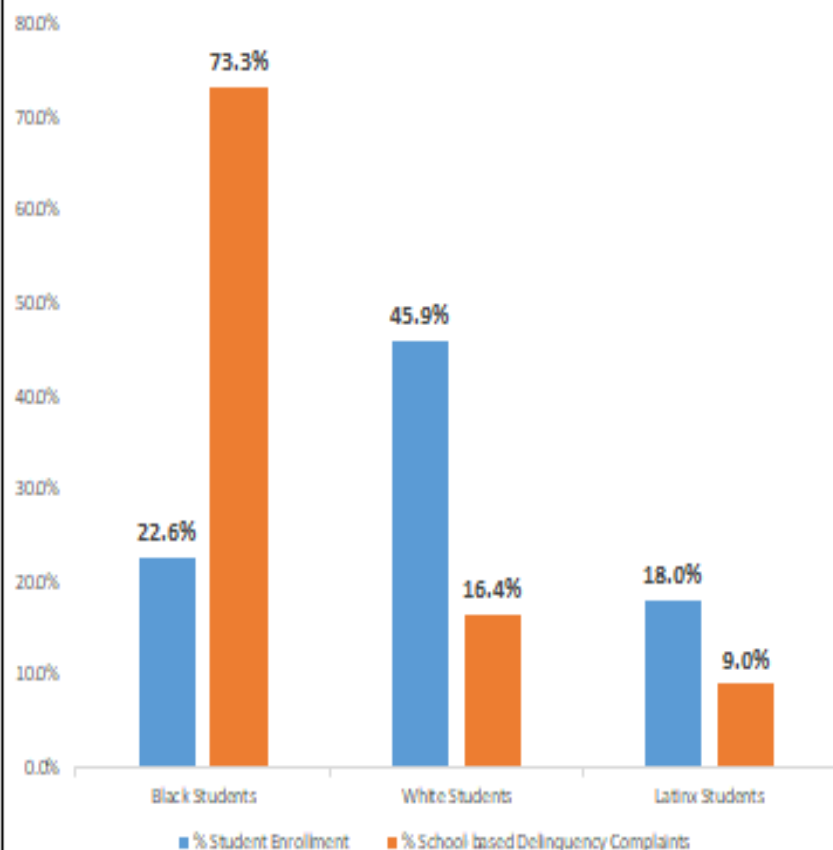
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Black:White Youth
Incarceration Ratio

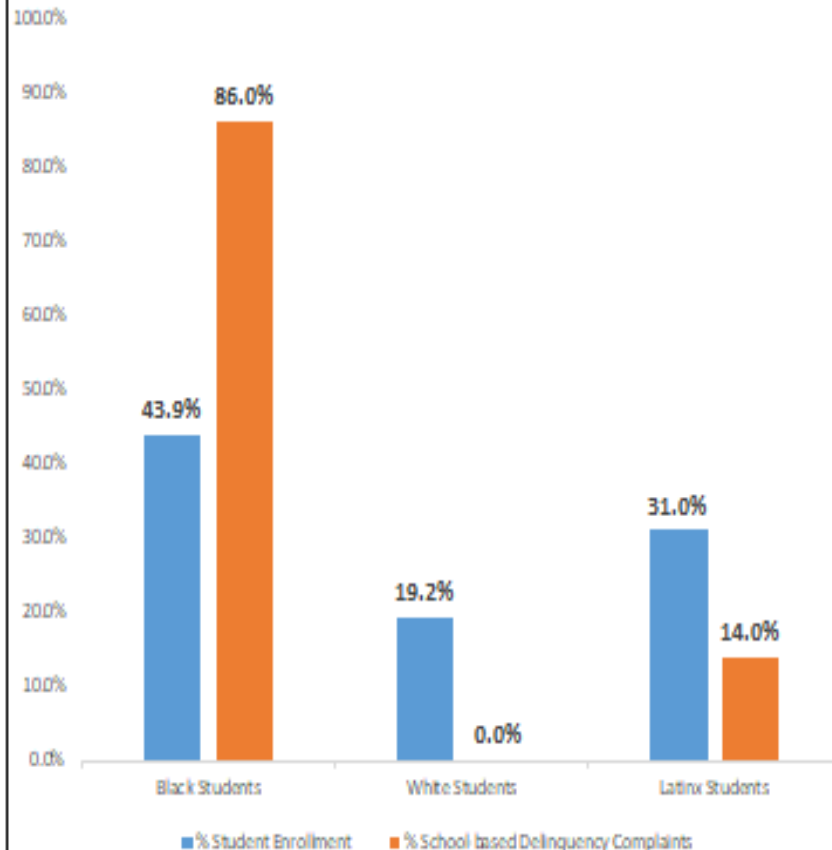
During the 2018/19 school year, 45% of all delinquency complaints in NC were school-related.

School Policing in Durham and Wake

Wake County Student Enrollment and School-based Delinquency Complaints by Race (2018/19)



Durham County Student Enrollment and School-based Delinquency Complaints by Race (2018/19)



Divestment from School Police and Investing in Alternative Models

6 D's for Police-free Schools

Divest/Invest	Divest from school policing and exclusionary discipline practices; and invest in support services and restorative practices that create safe, high-quality schools for all students.
Decriminalize	Decriminalize student behavior by eliminating laws and policies that place youth in contact with the justice system for school-related conduct
Deprioritize	Deprioritize the use of police in schools by demanding youth-driven policies that focus on prevention, require schools to use alternatives to criminalization, and use law enforcement only as a last resort
Demilitarize/ Disarm	Demilitarize schools serving students of color by disarming all school police officers and school personnel, including prohibiting all guns, electronic restraints, chemical restraints and batons
Delegitimize	Delegitimize the belief that the presence of police makes schools safer and advancing the narrative that school policing creates a toxic school climate that places students of color students at risk of physical harm and contact with the justice system
Dismantle	End the relationship between school districts and law enforcement (including ICE); and create "sanctuary schools" where all Brown, Black, Indigenous, LGBTQ, non-binary and immigrant students feel safe from the threat of school-based arrests and physical harm

WAKE COUNTY BLACK STUDENT
COALITION PRESENTS:

The Big Five Demands

For WCPSS Principals and WCBOE



Abolition of School Resource Officers

- Remove police from schools and invest in student-driven alternatives to policing
- Hold teachers and administrators accountable for calling the police on students

Additional Demands

2. **Staff Accountability.** Hold staff accountable for racist, sexist, homophobic and demeaning acts and statements. Students need these records to be public.
3. **Having a place for POC students to speak.** Provide students of color with decision-making authority over policies that impact their education. We demand a Student Advisory Board.
4. **A safe and organized system to report Sexual Harassment of any kind.** Create a safe, transparent and accessible way for students to report sexual harassment of any kind.
5. **Integrate Black and Indigenous History into all curriculums.** Although America was built on the backs of Black people, our history did not start or end with slavery. Teach the truth! This land was taken from Indigenous people, it is only right that we teach all the history.

Divestment from School Police and Investing in Alternative Models

Community Peacebuilders

- There are obvious, less discriminatory and less punitive methods of addressing school safety than policing and surveillance. Safety is found in schools that have positive school climates and support students' needs through guidance counselors, health care professionals and Community Peacebuilders who are trained to identify and address concerns without criminalization.
- WCPSS should divest all funds for school policing and invest in Community Peacebuilders, who intentionally build positive relationships with students and parents and provide intervention support to teachers and administrators. Their positive relationships and regular interactions with students allow them to identify conflicts before they become disruptive, and their de-escalation skills allow them to intervene nonviolently when conflicts arise.

Divestment from School Police and Investing in Alternative Models



Differences between a Peacebuilder and a Law-Enforcement Officer

Peacebuilder	Law Enforcement Officer or SRO
View/Perspective of Students and Families	
A peacebuilder is an interventionist that identifies the <u>strengths and potential</u> of young people and their families.	Police officers are trained to see people as victims and perpetrators and seek outcomes that enforce the law, not consider the best interest of the student. Profiling is a key aspect of their ongoing training.
Listening with Compassion and Empathy	
Listening practices are necessary skills for peacebuilders. This includes controlling rumors, preventing retaliation, hearing and addressing youth and family concerns, mediating conflicts and building trust.	Police officers follow a military-like hierarchy. Listening to superior officers and following orders are essential skills for an officer, not listening compassionately to better understand students' needs.
Tools for the Job	
Peacebuilders only need a cellphone with access to email and text messages and a laptop to keep track of data and connect students and families to resources	Officers carry a loaded gun while on and off duty, chemical spray, a taser, a baton, a bullet proof vest, a radio and handcuffs – all in plain sight of students and parents.
Uniform	
Comfortable and casual, the peacebuilder wears regular clothes, often with positive messages aimed at stopping the violence or to motivate students. Comfortable shoes enable them to quickly reach stop fights and/or get students to a safer space.	The same standard-issue uniform, badge and boots worn by other officers, which separates the SRO from the civilian community.
Success	
Peacebuilders success is measured by the number of positive relationships established, conflicts solved, lives saved and students kept out of the justice system.	The success of SRO programs is often measured by how many arrests have been made or how many citations have been given, not by an actual reduction in crime.

* Chart provided by the Youth Justice Coalition of California (<https://youthjusticela.org/>)

Our Recommendations for Improving School Climate

- Ensure that all schools adopt school-wide, preventive and positive discipline policies, such as Restorative Practices and school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports.
- Revise codes of conduct to limit suspensions, expulsions and other removals to be used only for the most serious behaviors and only as a last resort.
- End the regular presence of any law enforcement personnel in schools to ensure they are not involved in school disciplinary matters and invest instead in counselors and other support staff in schools.
- Ensure that students and parents have a right to participate in decision-making affecting school policies.
- Provide regular training and supports on positive approaches to discipline for all school personnel –including teachers, principals, support staff.

Across the US school districts are shifting

School Districts who have voted to remove SRO's from schools

- Minneapolis, MN
- Portland, OR
- Denver, CO
- Madison, WI
- Oakland, CA



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