

## Download: How do police officers impact school?

- **A positive school climate is crucial to creating safe and supportive schools. Schools do not need regular police presence in order to be safe.**

Teachers and students report feeling safer in schools that have consistent and positive cultures, invest in training and supporting teachers, provide counselors and mental health professionals to students in need, and implement policies that treat student behavior as an opportunity to teach, rather than punish or criminalize.<sup>1</sup>

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service on school policing, there is no empirical evidence to establish that police presence reduces school violence or deters or prevents school shootings.<sup>2</sup>

- **Schools with regular police presence are more likely to refer children for prosecution in the juvenile courts.**

One review of a national data set found that the presence of a police officer on campus doubles the rate of referral for lower-level offenses (such as fighting) even controlling for other factors such as school demographics and neighborhood safety.<sup>3</sup>

One study showed that after officers were regularly assigned to schools, arrest rates for disorderly conduct dramatically increased.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bradshaw, C., Koth, C.W., Thornton, L.A., & Leaf, P.J. *Altering school climate through school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports: findings from a group-randomized effectiveness trial*. *Prevention Science* 10(2), 100-115 (2009); Skiba, R.J. et. al. *Beyond Guns, Drugs, and Gangs: The Structure of Student Perceptions of School Safety*. *Journal of School Violence* 3: 149-171 (2004). Council of State Governments, *The School Discipline Consensus Report: Strategies from the Field to Keep Students Engaged in School and Out of the Juvenile Justice System*, 29 (2014); Cornell (2018). *The Prevention of Gun Violence in Schools and Communities*, Statement for the Forum on School Safety, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce

<sup>2</sup> James and McCallion, *School Resource Officers: Law Enforcement Officers in Schools*. Congressional Research Service (June 26, 2013)

<sup>3</sup> Nance, J. *Students, Police and the school to Prison Pipeline*, 93 Wash. U. L. Rev 919 (2015).

<sup>4</sup> Theriot, M. *School Resource Officers and the Criminalization of Student Behavior*. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 37: 280–87, 280 (2009).

Another study showed that when police were assigned to schools, arrest rates for low-level assault (such as fighting) more than doubled.<sup>5</sup>

- **Arrests make it more likely that students will drop out of school, earn less money as adults, and end up in the criminal justice system.**

A first-time arrest doubles the odds that a student will drop out of high school, and a first-time court appearance quadruples the odds.<sup>6</sup>

One study found that only 26 percent of students who were arrested graduated from high school, as opposed to 64 percent of their peers; arrested students were also half as likely to enroll in a four-year college.<sup>7</sup>

Young people who drop out of school in turn have lower income and lifetime earnings than their peers.<sup>8</sup>

Juvenile arrest also increases students' chances of future imprisonment: young people with an arrest record are subject to greater surveillance and harsher discipline from police and other adults that significantly increases their chances of future arrest and incarceration.<sup>9</sup>

- **When police are in schools, students can feel less connected with school, less trusting of adults, and less safe.**

Highly restrictive efforts to control students by involving police in school disciplinary matters can lead to lower levels of student connection to school and lower levels of trust in adults.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Na, C. and Gottfredson, D. *Police Officers in Schools: Effects on School Crime and the Processing of Offending Behaviors*. Justice Quarterly, pp 1-32 (2011).

<sup>6</sup> Sweeten, G., *Who Will Graduate? Disruption of High School Education by Arrest and Court Involvement*. Justice Quarterly, 23(4) (2006).

<sup>7</sup> Kirk, D. and Sampson, R. *Juvenile Arrest and Collateral Educational Damage in the Transition to Adulthood*. Sociology of Education, 86(1): 36-62 (2013)

<sup>8</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Earning and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment* (2015), at [http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_chart\\_001.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm)

<sup>9</sup> Liberman, A., Kirk, D., and Kim, K. *Labeling Effects of First Juvenile Arrests: Secondary Deviance and Secondary Sanctioning*, Criminology 52: 345, 359, 363 (2014).

<sup>10</sup> Theriot, M. The Impact of School Resource Officer Interaction on Students' Feelings About School and School Police. *Crime and Delinquency*, 62(4): 446-469 (2016).

Students who lack trust in in school officials and who fear punishment if they come forward are less likely to come forward with information that can avert potential violence.<sup>11</sup>

- **Students of color are disproportionately arrested in schools.**

In the 2015-2016 school year Black students in Washington accounted for 8% of arrests and referrals and represented 4.4% of the student population.

Latino students accounted for 34% of school-based arrests/referrals, and 22% of the student population

Native American students accounted for 2% of school-based arrests/referrals and 1% of the student population.<sup>12</sup>

Research indicates that teachers are more likely to identify black students as having behavior problems, even from a very young age.<sup>13</sup>

Research also indicates that members of the public are more likely to see black children as more threatening and less innocent, even from an early age.<sup>14</sup>

- **Students with disabilities are disproportionately arrested in schools.**

In the 2015-2016 school year, students with disabilities represented 31% of arrests and referrals in Washington schools, but only 16.6% of the student population.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Levin, J. and Madfis, E. (2017) Rampage School shootings. In A.J. Trevino (ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of social problems*.

<sup>12</sup> United States Department of Education, *Civil Rights Data Collection 2015-2016 School Year* (2018); Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State Report Card, 2015-2016.

<sup>13</sup> Gilliam, et. al. *Do Early Educators' Implicit Biases Regarding Sex and Race Relate to Behavior Expectations and Recommendations of Preschool Expulsions and Suspension? A Research Brief*. Yale Child Study Center (2016).

<sup>14</sup> Goff, et. al. *The Essence of Innocence: Consequences of Dehumanizing Black Children*. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (2014).

<sup>15</sup> United States Department of Education, *Civil Rights Data Collection 2015-2016 School Year* (2018); Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State Report Card, 2015-2016.

- **A significant number of Washington schools have more school police and security officers than nurses or school psychologists.**

In the 2015-2016 school year, 331 schools in Washington had more law enforcement officers and security officers than nurses. 271 schools in Washington had more law enforcement and security officers than psychologists.<sup>16</sup>

- **Schools pay significant amounts of money for school police.**

In the 2015-2016 school year, the average Washington school district paid \$62,000 per officer per year (and as much as \$125,000 per year).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> US Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Civil Rights Data Collection 2015-2016*.

<sup>17</sup> ACLU of Washington, *Students Not Suspects* (2016).