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School Resource Officers, School Safety, and School Climate in a Large Urban School District

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SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS, SCHOOL SAFETY, AND SCHOOL CLIMATE IN A LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

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Under the Direction of Christopher Henrich, PhD

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationships between SROs' training and behaviors and student outcomes. Specifically, the relationships between SRO training and use of Restorative Practices and Social Emotional Learning and Student Perceptions of Safety and ratings of School Climate were examined. Results indicate that in schools where SROs use these practices more frequently, students report feeling safer and a more positive school climate. However, these results were not consistent across school years and were found cross-sectionally. Outcomes of this study suggest that SROs should be considered when school-wide interventions are implemented.

INDEX WORDS: School Resource Officers, Restorative Practices, Social Emotional Learning

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DEDICATION

To my husband, Santiago Reed-Morrice, who supported me every step of the way. Thank you for letting me work out my thoughts out loud, bringing me food at my computer, and for the endless supply of coffee.

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I would like to thank to my entire committee for their support throughout this research project. Thank you, especially, to Dr. Henrich, who brought me on to this project and guided me throughout.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SROs – School Resource Officers

CSSI – Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI)

SEL – Social Emotional Learning

CFA – Confirmatory Factor Analysis

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Study

In 2019, there were 25 school shootings that resulted in death or injury, which together exposed an estimated 20,000 students to violence (Blad et al., 2020). These shootings can have wide-ranging psychological impacts on students. A national survey following the 2018 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglass High School, found that 57% of teenagers reported that they were somewhat or very worried that a similar shooting could occur at their high school (Graf, 2018). Beyond efforts to increase school security, it is important to understand the effects that this fear can have on America's students, and the ways in which it could potentially be reduced. The purpose of this study is to deepen the understanding of students' feelings of safety at school and specifically the ways that the behaviors of School Resource Officers (SROs) contribute to overall school climate. Although schools are increasingly choosing to install SROs as a method of increasing school safety (Brown, 2006), it is unclear to what extent they are actually effective (Reingle Gonzalez, Jetelina, & Jennings, 2016; Sullivan & Hausman, 2017), and to what extent there are unintended side effects of having police in schools (Fisher, Gardella, & Tanner-Smith, 2019; Reingle Gonzalez et al., 2016; Theriot, 2016). This research will investigate factors that may condition or influence SRO effectiveness. Specifically, this study will examine the effects that SRO training in Social Emotional Learning and Restorative Practices may have on students' perceptions of safety and school climate.

1.1.1 Violence in Schools

The first step in understanding students' feelings of fear at school is assessing the actual likelihood of experiencing violence in school. While mass shootings tend to draw attention to school violence, nonlethal forms of violence are far more common (Musu-Gillette et al., 2018; Sullivan & Hausman, 2017). Additionally, overall rates of violent incidents have steadily declined from 1996 to 2016 (Musu-Gillette et al., 2018). These trends continue to move in a promising direction, although students across America still encounter hundreds of thousands of violent incidents each year. For the purposes of their study, Musu-Gillette et al. (2018, p. 56) defined a serious violent incident as "rape, sexual assault other than rape, physical attack or fight with or without a weapon, threat of physical attack with or without a weapon, and robbery with or without a weapon". The categorization of violent incidents includes all serious violent incidents as well as fights and threats of attack that do not involve a weapon (Musu-Gillette et al., 2018). During the 2016-2017 school year, 69% of schools reported at least one violent incident, with 15% reporting a serious violent incident (Musu-Gillette et al., 2018). Looked at from another perspective, more than 1% of students reported a violent or serious violent victimization during that same time frame (Musu-Gillette et al., 2018). In an earlier national study, 7% of high schoolers reported being either attacked or threatened with a weapon on school grounds at least once during the 2013-2014 school year (Zhang, Musu-Gillette, & Oudekerk, 2016). In contrast to these overall trends, mass shootings have occurred rarely, but attacks in recent years have been more deadly than in the past (Paradice, 2017).

1.1.2 Perceptions of Safety

While overall rates of violence have been on the decline over the past two decades, research indicates that students and teachers have a number of safety concerns (Borum, Cornell, Modzeleski, & Jimerson, 2010; Cornell & Mayer, 2010). Students' fear that they will be victims of violence tends to be disproportionate to their actual likelihood of experiencing violence, likely due to the high-profile nature of school shootings and other serious violent acts (Cornell & Mayer, 2010, Kupchik & Monahan, 2006). In a national sample collected in 2015, 5% of students reported that they avoid at least one class, activity, or area of their school out of fear of being attacked (Zhang et al., 2016). Additionally, students, parents, and teachers perceive school safety very differently. When presented with the statement, "Children are safe when they are at school", over 70% of educators and nearly 60% of parents agreed, while slightly less than 50% of students agreed (Safe and Sound Schools, 2018). While educators likely have a clearer understanding of the safety precautions being taken and the actual risk of violence in the school, students' fear actually tends to increase in proportion to the number of visible safety measures at their school (Perumean-Chaney & Sutton, 2012; Reingle Gonzalez et al., 2016; Mowen & Freng, 2019). Students may also be more aware of incidents occurring in the school, with one study finding that, when asked about the overall frequency of disruptions at school, which included incidents such as fights, arguments, threats, and name calling, students reported more disruptions and incivility than their teachers (Booren, Handy, & Power, 2011).

There are also some important individual-level predictors for feelings of safety. Some studies have found that Black students feel less safe than their White, Hispanic, or Asian classmates, both across schools and within the same school (Lacoe, 2015). This trend persists

even after controlling for school and neighborhood contexts such as school disorder and neighborhood crime rates (Lacoe, 2015). This trend is also evidenced in a 2018 survey following the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglass High School, which found that Black and Hispanic high schoolers were more likely than White high schoolers to report being very worried that a shooting could occur at their school (Graf, 2018). In contrast, several other studies have found no racial and ethnic differences in feelings of safety, especially after variables such as past victimization (Bachman, Randolph, & Brown, 2011), poverty, and neighborhood safety (Hong & Eamon, 2011) were controlled. Black students at schools with higher reported rates of perceived racial tension are also less likely to report feeling safe (Lacoe, 2015). Lacoe (2015) speculated that this trend was driven, in part, by increased racial tensions leading to increased conflict between students. Black students also tend to be disproportionately punished with exclusionary discipline measures, such as suspension and expulsion (Losen, Hodson, Keith II, Morrison, & Belway, 2015). If these students feel that school discipline is unfair, this could also reduce their feelings of safety (Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2016). These inconsistent findings suggest that differences in student perceptions of safety based on their racial and ethnic backgrounds, and the reasons behind these differences, are an important area for continued study.

Regardless of the actual threat level, feeling unsafe has important ramifications for students. On the academic front, students who feel safer at school also tend to perform better academically, with some studies showing higher math and reading scores (Milam, Furr-Holden, & Leaf, 2010; Booren et al., 2011). In contrast, students who feel unsafe show reduced classroom engagement, which is an important predictor of graduation from high school (Côté-Lussier & Fitzpatrick, 2016). These students also tend to feel less attached to their school, which increases their risk of dropping out (Booren et al., 2011). Among adolescents, students with the

lowest ratings of perceived school safety were at the highest risk for negative mental health outcomes (Nijs et al., 2014). A survey administered across eight states found that just 59% of students reported feeling safe throughout the school building (YouthTruth, 2018) and in a 2018 Gallup poll, 20% of parents reported that their children had expressed feeling unsafe at school (Jones, 2018). These findings indicate that fear at school is pervasive, regardless of the actual risk, and that efforts to both prevent violence and increase student feelings of safety are critical strategies for improving student academic outcomes.

1.1.3 School Climate

Violence and fear of violence should both be considered within the wider context of the school. From the ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), violent behaviors involve the interaction of individual characteristics with the behaviors of the other students, the actions of the faculty and staff, the physical characteristics of the school, and the overall culture of the school (Swearer & Doll, 2001). Although definitions vary, there is general agreement that "school climate is a multidimensional construct that includes organizational, instructional, and interpersonal dimensions" (Loukas & Robinson, 2004, p. 210). Within this broader definition of climate, researchers have identified the dimensions Safety, Teaching and Learning, Relationships, and Environmental/Structural Characteristics (White, La Salle, Ashby, & Meyers, 2014). From this perspective, school safety is considered to be one of several components that contribute to overall perceptions of school climate. Across the school violence literature, there has been consistent emphasis on the importance of school climate with regard to reducing victimization and increasing overall school safety (Benbenishty, Astor, Roziner, & Wrabel, 2016). In schools with a healthy and supportive school climate, students have better relationships

with both their peers and teachers as well as better academic and disciplinary outcomes (Benbenishty et al., 2016).

Tying perceptions of school safety to other dimensions of climate, Fisher, Viano, Curran, Pearman, and Gardella (2018) found that students perceive their schools to be safer when they have positive relationships with their teachers, when the school is clean, and when they feel a sense of belonging at school. Additionally, students are more likely to feel safe when they perceive the rules to be strict, but fair, and consistently enforced (Arum, 2003; Fisher et al., 2018). In a qualitative study, school faculty reported that strong relationships in the school and a positive school climate helped make their schools feel safer (Bosworth, Ford, & Hernandez, 2010). Brookmeyer, Fanti, and Henrich (2006) found that a positive school climate can act on both the individual and school levels and act as a buffer against violence, so that individuals who report a positive school climate are less likely to commit violent acts and schools with an overall positive climate are less likely to have violent students. These findings are consistent with the conception of perceptions of school safety as a component of the larger construct of school climate, and plans to measure both are consistent with an emphasis on measuring overall community health that is found in other prevention literature (Allegrante & Livingood, 2013).

Given the importance of feelings of safety both at the individual and school level, this is a key area for possible intervention. While actual rates of violent incidents are down, the fact that both exposure to violence and fear of violence can have long-term negative effects on students' mental health and academic outcomes suggests that more work needs to be done in the schools to create an environment that not only is safe, but also feels that way to students. What is less clear is what exactly those steps should include. The CDC (2001) made a number of wide-ranging

recommendations that included improving school climate and increasing resources available to students and staff. Other commonly implemented interventions included school resource officers, metal detectors, surveillance systems, and emergency-preparedness drills (Zhang et al., 2016). Across these security measures, little is known regarding how their implementation actually impacts school safety, and even less is known regarding their impact on overall school climate and environment (Bachman et al., 2011; Fisher, Higgins, & Homer, 2019). While most of the safety strategies used by schools involve security measures that monitor behaviors, School Resource Officers (SROs) have the potential to intervene and prevent violent incidents before they occur. Furthermore, unlike metal detectors and video cameras, SROs are additional staff within the schools who have the potential to build supportive relationships with students.

1.1.4 School Resource Officers

SROs are sworn law enforcement officials who are stationed in schools. These officers, who may be employees of the local police department or a department run by the school district, are often expected to act as mentors and to educate students on the law, in addition to performing traditional law enforcement duties (Sullivan & Hausman, 2017). Depending on the school district and the instruction of principals, an SRO's responsibilities may include patrolling the school, inspecting physical security measures, investigating crimes that occur on campus, and assisting with mentorship and conflict mediation (Travis III & Coon, 2005). An ideal SRO has been described as an individual who builds strong and trusting relationships with both students and faculty in order to facilitate prevention of disruptive behaviors (Zullig, Ghani, Collins, & Matthews- Ewald, 2017).

SROs have been an increasingly popular school safety strategy over the last three decades (Brown, 2006; Coon & Travis III, 2012; Theriot & Orme, 2016). In 2015, 57% of public schools reported that they had an SRO on campus at least once a week, compared to 42% of schools in 2005 (Musu-Gillette et al., 2018). SROs can be found in every state and there are an estimated 20,000 of them working in schools across the United States (Counts, Randall, Ryan, & Katsiyannis, 2018; Myrstol, 2010). This number is likely to increase as spending on school safety has increased dramatically following the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in February 2018 (Schuppe, 2018). In fact, states have designated $965 million for the maintenance and expansion of SRO programs since 2018 (Strategies for Youth, 2019). Considering that the annual salary of a single SRO can fall anywhere between $45,000 and $80,000 (Henderson, 2018), SROs represent a considerable investment by America's schools in improving safety.

Despite this investment, the available research on the effectiveness of SROs is limited (Raymond, 2010, Zullig et al., 2017). In a cross-sectional survey of SRO programs, the majority of school administrators reported being highly satisfied with their SROs (Finn & McDevitt, 2005). Similarly, many of the other studies on SROs were cross-sectional and used opinion surveys as opposed to changes in student behavior and violent incident rates (Mayer, 2008). The few longitudinal studies that have been conducted have produced mixed results. In a systematic review, Reingle Gonzalez et al. (2016) found that most of the longitudinal studies considered reported that the number of problem behaviors in the school significantly declined after SROs were introduced. Another study found that hiring SROs was followed by a decrease in the number of violent incidents and weapons brought to school (Finn et al., 2005). Other studies, including another longitudinal study of the effect of SROs on criminal behavior, have found no

effect (Sullivan & Hausman, 2017). A systematic review concluded that the effects of SROs on school safety were inconclusive (Reingle Gonzalez et al., 2016).

In addition to finding limited positive effects, the literature has also detected some unintended consequences of introducing SROs to schools. Some studies have found that the presence of SROs was negatively related to students' feelings of safety (Reingle Gonzalez et al., 2016), although another study found that students felt safer the more visible SROs were in their school (Lindstrom Johnson, Bottiani, Waasdorp, & Bradshaw, 2018). In a nationally representative survey of high school students, the presence of SROs was related to lower quality student-teacher relationships (Fisher et al., 2019). A study performed in a large urban school district found that middle and high schoolers reported lower feelings of school connectedness (an important component of school climate) when an SRO was present at their school (Theriot, 2016). Schools with SROs were also 21% more likely to have incidents of exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions (Fisher & Hennessy, 2016). The increased presence of SROs in schools since the 1990s has also been accompanied by an increase in the number of arrests made in schools (Counts et al., 2018). This is particularly problematic because these punishments tend to disproportionately affect students of color, result in missed school time, and carry the potential for involvement with the juvenile justice system (Losen et al., 2015).

In order to improve the role of SROs, it is important to consider why the available research has found the presence of SROs to be so limited in its effectiveness. With regard to feelings of safety, school climates that place emphasis both on fair and consistent rules and fostering positive student relationships with staff, have been found to predict increased feelings

of safety (Fisher et al., 2018). However, SROs are often perceived by students as an authoritarian presence that demands obedience (Fisher et al., 2018). Student reporting of suspicious behavior is considered by school officials to be an essential step in violence prevention (Connell, Barbieri, & Reingle Gonzalez, 2015). A study from the bullying literature suggests that students may fail to report incidents due to a lack of trust in adults at school (Hicks, Jennings, Jennings, Berry, & Green, 2018). Looking more specifically at SROs, 14% of students reported that they would not tell an SRO about a knife or gun (Connell, Barbieri, & Reingle Gonzalez, 2015). In that study, students who reported having actually seen a weapon at school were even more reluctant to report the presence of that weapon to an SRO (Connell et al., 2015). In contrast, greater likelihood of reporting a weapon on school grounds was associated with student reports of more positive attachment to their schools and awareness of two or more security measures at their school (Connell et al., 2015). These findings suggest that the impact of SROs on school environment, and the relationships that students form with adults at school, could be important determinants of overall safety.

Unlike more comprehensive approaches toward improving school climate, introducing SROs into schools is generally intended only to improve school safety, which is just one component of the overall school climate. Further, there has generally been little consideration for how SROs can shape the school environment as a whole (Fisher et al., 2019). In attempts to connect SROs to overall school climate, researchers have proposed that increased SRO interaction with students will be related to increased feelings of safety among students (Zullig et al., 2017). This prediction is supported by findings that the more contact students have with SROs, the more positively they tend to perceive them (Finn & McDevitt, 2005; Zullig et al., 2017), and that students with more positive attitudes towards SROs report feeling safer at school

(Theriot & Orme, 2016). These findings suggest that improving SRO relationships with students could be one effective way to improve overall school climate. With this goal in mind, one possible course of action is to ensure that SROs are provided with the skills necessary to build these relationships.

As of the December 2019, 26 states still do not have any laws requiring trainings for SROs and in the states with formal policies, the guidelines vary widely (Strategies for Youth, 2019). For example, Virginia has comprehensive guidelines that require officers to be trained on child development, mental health and trauma, special education and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and working with community partners (Strategies for Youth, 2019). In Alabama, SROs are only required to receive firearms certification and complete active shooter trainings (Strategies for Youth, 2019). The state in which the current study was conducted passed a law recommending that SROs receive 40 hours of training, but this is not mandated (Strategies for Youth, 2019). These policies, or lack thereof, have resulted in considerable variability in both the extent and quality of SRO training (Kim & Geronimo, 2010). Brown (2006) found that SROs and their supervisors often have little or no training in educational theory and child development. This is in contrast to the advanced training and extensive certifications required of other professionals who work in schools, including teachers, counselors, and administrators (Kim & Geronimo, 2009). In order for an intervention to be effective, it should be developmentally appropriate for those receiving it (Conyne, 2010), but many SROs may lack the skills and knowledge required to communicate with students and make disciplinary decisions in ways that are developmentally appropriate. According to the National Assessment of School Resource Officers, “without proper training, SROs can make serious mistakes related to their relationships with students, school administrators, and parents that at best cause short-term crises and at worst

jeopardize the entire program at the school" (Finn, Shively, McDevitt, Lassiter, & Rich, 2005, p. 50). This national assessment also found that some skills learned during traditional police training, such as quickly restraining suspects, may be inappropriate in school settings, and that SROs with policing backgrounds may require extra training to unlearn these techniques (Finn et al. 2005). Students may also benefit from SROs receiving training consistent with that received by other staff. Oswald, Safran, and Johanson (2005) found that students felt safer when all school personnel received a common violence-prevention training. The current study will focus on two complementary areas in which SROs can be trained: Social Emotional Learning and Restorative Practices. This training emphasis was part of a larger district-wide initiative focused on school safety.

1.1.5 Comprehensive School Safety Initiative

The current study uses data from a Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI) grant, funded by the National Institute of Justice. This grant was awarded to researchers who partnered with schools with the purpose of increasing understanding of the consequences of violence at school as well as programs and policies that increase school safety. In 2015, this grant was awarded to WestEd and Georgia State University in partnership with the Office of Safety and Security at the large urban school district featured in this study. The purpose was to develop, implement, and test a comprehensive approach to school safety, which the researchers theorized included improving physical safety and security as well as improving relationships, positive behavioral supports, and mental health for both students and staff (McCrary et al., 2016). In order to enact these changes, the researchers identified three key areas to target: more inclusive disciplinary practices centered around Restorative Practices, a multi-tiered support system that

includes Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). These goals were also consistent with steps that the district took in 2016 to establish a district police department that is independent of the city's police force. According to the district Superintendent, the new school police department should operate on "a three-part model, anchored in social emotional learning, helping teach kids the skills on how to build healthier relationships, how to self-monitor and control their behavior, and also express emotions in healthier ways" (Shamma, 2016, para. 4). Due to these goals set at the district level, as well as the focus of the grant, the present study will focus on the use of SEL and Restorative Practices by SROs.

1.1.6 Social Emotional Learning

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), SEL is "the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (CASEL, 2019, para. 1). The term SEL first emerged in 1994 during a meeting amongst researchers, teachers, and children's advocates that was intended to address the ineffective and uncoordinated nature of many school-based programs (CASEL, 2019). Since schools are inherently social, with students learning in settings shared with peers and through interactions with both their teachers and parents, socio-emotional learning is considered to be an essential area of possible intervention (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

The purpose of SEL programs is to increase children's skills in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2005).

In many of the most popular SEL programs, these skills are explicitly taught through developmentally appropriate lesson plans and then students are given the opportunity to practice these skills (Low et al., 2015). A number of positive student outcomes have been associated with SEL programming. In a meta-analysis, Durlak et al. (2011) found that not only did students experience a significant increase in SEL skills, but they also had improved academic performances and fewer behavioral issues when compared to their peers who did not receive SEL programming. These academic outcomes have been found to be enduring, with students who received SEL programming still scoring higher than their peers 3.5 years after the program was completed (Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017). In a meta-analysis on the long-term effects of SEL programming on students, Taylor et al. (2017) found that increased social-emotional skills and well-being were sustained similarly across all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socio-economic status.

Considering the popularity of SEL programming, researchers have also endeavored to understand which programs are most effective, and why. SEL programs have been found to have better student outcomes when they follow all four of the recommended SAFE practices: sequenced step-by-step training approach, active forms of learning, focus sufficient time on skill development, and explicit learning goals (Durlak et al., 2011). A meta-analysis found that teacher led programs were the most effective, which went against their prediction that multi-component programs, which include parental involvement and school-wide initiatives would result in the largest changes in student outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011). The researchers hypothesized that the lack of effectiveness of multi-component programs was due to implementation problems, since these programs were less likely to meet all of the SAFE criteria (Durlak et al., 2011). While these programs may be more difficult to implement, Durlak et al.

(2011) hypothesized that a well-designed multi-component program would have the potential to shape student outcomes more than interventions limited to the classroom.

Another way in which the effectiveness of SEL programming can be improved is by increasing the SEL competencies of the adults working within the school (CASEL, 2017). In an initiative focusing on helping schools to implement high-quality SEL programming, researchers found that staff played a critical role by collaborating on SEL instruction, promoting a positive school climate, and modeling key socioemotional competencies during interactions with students (CASEL, 2017). Adults who possess these socioemotional competencies also tend to have stronger relationships with their students, resulting in a more positive classroom climate (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). As an added benefit, school employees who are able to express and regulate their emotions are less likely to report feeling burned out (Brackett, Palomera, Mojsa-Kaja, Reyes, & Salovey, 2010), which is a major concern amongst educators (CASEL, 2019). Although SEL for adults is still a relatively new field, the existing research suggests that paying attention to the socioemotional needs and skills of school staff has the potential to improve SEL implementation for students as well as broader relationships within the school.

1.1.7 Restorative Practices

Another area in which the SROs in the current study's school district received further training is with regard to discipline. One alternative to exclusionary discipline practices, such as suspensions and expulsion, can be found in the implementation of restorative practices. Restorative Practices are a type of comprehensive positive youth development program that emphasizes restoring relationships over exclusionary discipline (Acosta et al., 2016). Restorative

Practices have been described as a method of remediation that are executed *with* the willing involvement of the offender as opposed to something that is done *to* them (González, 2015).

Restorative Practices were first used in Australian schools in the early 1990s and the majority of studies on the practices have occurred outside of the United States (González, 2012). One of the most commonly used interventions in the United States was developed by the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) in 1999 (Acosta et al., 2016). IIRP trains faculty and staff in '11 Essential Elements' such as using affective statements, including students in decision making, and the use of restorative circles (Acosta et al., 2016). According to Acosta et al. (2016), ideally all staff will be trained in these elements and will use them as a part of regular school activity, increasing school connectedness and reducing the frequency of disciplinary issues (Acosta et al., 2016). In a case study involving a school district in Denver, the implementation of Restorative Practices resulted in an 86% decline in the number of police citations from the previous year (González, 2015). Higher student-reported rates of Restorative Practices implementation have also been found to be significantly related to fewer disciplinary referrals of minority students by the teachers (Gregory et al., 2016), suggesting that this may be an effective strategy for the reduction of racial disparities in discipline referrals.

The use of Restorative Practices also provides an opportunity for staff to build relationships with students at the school, even in scenarios where discipline is necessary. At the very core of restorative justice is the belief that individuals most effectively learn socially accepted behaviors when they are well-integrated into a society and have strong social networks (Morrison, 2001). By their very nature, exclusionary discipline practices remove students from the learning environment and take few, if any, steps to rebuild social connections in the

classroom. Furthermore, Restorative Practices are built on the premise that when individuals behave in a socially unacceptable way, they are breaking a social contract with their community, and that this contract must be restored for there to be progress and healing (González, 2012). The effects of implementing the philosophy can be seen in findings that higher student-reported rates of Restorative Practices implementation were significantly related to higher student ratings of the quality of student-teacher relationships (Gregory et al., 2016).

1.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The purpose of the present study is to address the gaps in the literature surrounding SRO training and the relationships between SRO behaviors and attitudes and student outcomes. The effects of SROs were considered at the school level. In order to explore these relationships, the following research questions and hypotheses were examined.

1.2.1 How do SRO attitudes and experience relate to their behaviors?

1.2.1.1 Hypothesis 1.

It is hypothesized that SROs who report more positive attitudes towards SEL and Restorative Practices will also report more frequent use of these practices. The relationship between years of experience and reported Use of SEL and Restorative Practices was also considered.

1.2.2 *How* do student characteristics relate to student perceptions of safety and school climate?

1.2.2.1 Hypothesis 2.

It is hypothesized that students with higher perceived levels of cultural acceptance at schools will report higher ratings of school climate and perceptions of safety.

1.2.3 Do SROs attitudes and behaviors relate to student perceptions of safety and school climate?

1.2.3.1 Hypothesis 3.

Within the schools, it is hypothesized that the behaviors that the SROs exhibit in their schools, and in particular their use of SEL and Restorative Practices, will have an impact on the perceptions of the students in that school. More specifically, at the school level, it is hypothesized that higher self-reported use of SEL and Restorative Practices by SROs will predict higher aggregated student ratings of school climate and perceptions of safety. This prediction is consistent with previous findings that the use of Restorative Practices by school personnel is related to improved relationships with students (Gregory et al., 2016) as is the use of SEL (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Positive relationships with school personnel have also been found to be related to higher ratings of school climate (White et al., 2014) and perceptions of school safety (Fisher et al., 2018).

1.2.4 Do SROs attitudes and behaviors relate to student perceptions of cultural acceptance?

1.2.4.1 Hypothesis 4.

Explorative analyses examined whether there is variability in the effects of cultural acceptance across schools, and if this variability can be partially explained by SRO behaviors and characteristics.

2 METHOD

The measures for this study were drawn from a larger project funded in 2015 by a National Institute of Justice (NIJ) grant under the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI). The purpose of this grant was to support the awarded school districts as they worked to develop and then implement and refine comprehensive approaches to school safety (McCrary et al., 2016). For participating schools, data on students and SROs were collected for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years using surveys, which are described in more detail in the following sections. Regression analyses were performed to examine predictors of SRO behaviors. Additionally, multilevel analyses were conducted for each school year to examine the relationships between SRO behaviors and attitudes (at the school level) and student outcomes (aggregated at the school level).

2.1 Participants

2.1.1 SROs

Survey data for this study was collected in a large urban school district in the Southeastern United States with its own police force. This school district police force was

created in 2016 in order to replace previous dependence by the district on the city police force. Another motivation for creating this independent school police force was to place officers with the skills to teach and counsel students, in addition to fulfilling traditional law enforcement responsibilities, in the districts' schools. The SROs featured in this study received training on Restorative Practices, conducted by IIRP, and on SEL, in partnership with CASEL, upon being hired. The Restorative Practices training consisted of a single eight hour workshop during which the officers were introduced to the concept of Restorative Practices, watched videos provided by IIRP, and broke into discussion groups throughout the day to discuss their own experiences and the ways in which Restorative Practices could have been implemented in the past.

Survey data from SROs working in middle and high schools in a large, urban Southeastern school district were used. The survey was administered in the Spring of 2018 and the Spring of 2019. For the 2018 survey, 57 SROs responded, with a response rate of 95%. Results from command staff and SROs not assigned to a specific school campus were removed, resulting in a sample of 34 SROs working in 12 middle schools and nine high schools. Each SRO included in the sample was assigned to a single school. The SROs included in the 2018 sample reported an average experience of 13.60 years in law enforcement (see Table 2) and 42.9% of the officers had prior law enforcement experience working specifically as an SRO. Fifty one percent of the SROs reported that they had been at their current placement for the past two school years, with the remaining officers reporting one year or less at their current assignment. The 2019 survey was completed by 91 SROs working throughout the district, with a response rate of 96%. Just as was done for the 2018 sample, the results for command staff and SROs without a specific school assignment were removed, producing a final sample featuring the results from 41 SROs working at 12 middle schools and 11 high schools. Of the SROs included in the sample, eight

reported that they had begun working for the district after the 2018 survey was administered. The SROs surveyed in 2019 reported an average experience of 13.87 years in law enforcement (see Table 3). The 2019 survey did not ask the responders to report if they had prior experience working as an SRO or the number of years spent in their current placement.

2.1.2 Students

Survey data from the Georgia School Health Survey 2.0 for the 2017-2018 school year and the 2018-2019 school year were collected from middle and high school students from a large Southeastern school district. The survey assesses a variety of constructs related to school climate as well as student behaviors. The sub-sample for the present study was obtained from an annual state-wide survey of students. Data were included from middle and high schools with at least one SRO assigned to the campus full time. The resulting sample from the 2018 survey includes data from 6,808 high school students across 9 schools and 5,916 middle school students across 12 schools for a total of 12,724 students from 21 schools. The 2019 sample consists of data from 7,648 high school students across 11 high schools and 7,092 middle school students across 12 schools for a total of 14,740 students from 23 schools.

2.2 Measures

2.2.1 School Climate

Student perceptions of school climate were measured using eight items from the GSHS 2.0. Nine items were previously selected by White et al. (2014) to be representative of the dimensions of school climate discussed by other researchers, including Cohen et a1. (2009). These items included statements such as “I like school”, “I know an adult at school that I can talk

with if I need help" and "My school sets clear rules for behavior". Students rated items in the school climate subscale along a four-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Parallel exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted, and the resulting factor loadings (ranging from 0.466 to 0.686 for the exploratory factor analysis and from 0.451 to 0.689 for the confirmatory factor analysis) and fit statistics (RMSEA = .035 [.033, .036] and .051 [.049, .052]) suggested that a single-factor solution is a good fit for these survey items (White et al., 2014). In the current study, eight of these items were used due to the overlap of the ninth item, "I feel safe at my school", with the feelings of safety subscale described below. For the full subscale, see appendix A. Previous research examining the structure of this scale found measurement invariance for both student gender and grade level (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, Debnam, & Johnson, 2014). A confirmatory factor analysis was performed for the present data set using these eight items. The CFA produced factor loadings ranging from .36 to .68 in 2017-2018 and from .38 to .69 in 2018-2019. The fit statistics (RMSEA = .11 [.11, .11] and CFI = .89 for 2017-2018 and RMSEA = .11 [.10, .11] and CFI = .90 for 2018-2019) indicate adequate model fit for both school years.

2.2.2 Feelings of Safety

Student feelings of safety were measured using a six-item subscale from the GSHS 2.0. Students rated items in the safety subscale along a four-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Items included statements such as "I feel safe at my school" and "If I report unsafe or dangerous behaviors, I can be sure the problem will be taken care of". A seventh item, "I have observed fights at my school", was not included in the 2018-2019 edition of the survey and was not used in this study. Prior to completing analyses, a confirmatory factor

analysis was completed for this subscale. The results of the CFA revealed good overall model fit, RMSEA = .06 [.05, .06] and CFI = .98 for 2017-2018, RMSEA = .05 [.04, .06] and CFI = .99 for 2018-19. For the 2017-2018 data set, three of the individual factor loadings ranged from .68 to .81. The loadings for the remaining two items ranged from .27 to .33. Similarly, for the 2018-2019 data set three of the individual factor loadings ranged from .72 to .82 and the remaining two loadings were both .38. Although two of the items had lower factor loadings, they were deemed to provide valuable information surrounding perceptions of safety and therefore were not removed from the subscale. The complete subscale can be found in Appendix B.

2.2.3 Cultural Acceptance

Students' perceptions of cultural acceptance at their schools were measured using a five-item subscale from the GSHS 2.0. Students were asked to rate items in this subscale along a four-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The five items are "Students at this school are treated fairly by other students regardless of race, ethnicity, or culture", "All students in my school are treated fairly regardless of their appearance", "Students at my school treat each other with respect", "Students show respect to other students regardless of their academic ability", and "Students treat one another fairly". Prior to testing the hypotheses, a confirmatory factor analysis was completed for this subscale. The CFA produced individual factor loadings ranging from .68 to .79 in 2017-2018 and from .63 to .78 in 2018-2019 and indications of good fit (RMSEA = .17 [.16, .17] and CFI = .95 for 2017-2018, RMSEA = .22 [.22, .24]) and CFI = .90 for 2018-2019.

2.2.4 Peer Support

Students' feelings of peer support at their schools were measured using two items from a three-item subscale from the GSHS 2.0. Students were asked to rate items in this subscale along a four-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The two items are "I get along with other students at school" and "I know a student at my school that I can talk to if I need help (e.g., homework, class assignments, projects)". A third item, "Students in my school are welcoming to new students" was excluded since it captures school-level, rather than student-level, differences in peer support.

2.2.5 SRO Use of SEL and Restorative Practices

One important area of focus in the larger grant from which these data were drawn is the role of norms and policies in overall school climate. The researchers theorized that SEL and Restorative Practices, when properly implemented, will result in improved school climate and an increased sense of connectedness amongst students and staff. In order to assess the effectiveness of policies, it was important to first ascertain how frequently they were actually being implemented. SRO Use of SEL and Restorative Practices in the schools was measured using a single item from the SRO survey. SROs were asked "Since the beginning of this school year, how often have you used Social Emotional Learning (SEL) or Restorative Practices with students". Response options ranged from 1 "never" to 6 "daily".

2.2.6 SRO Attitudes Towards SEL and Restorative Practices

SRO attitudes towards SEL and Restorative Practices were measured using five items that comprised a single subscale from the SRO survey. SROs were asked to indicate their

agreement with each statement using a four-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The items in this scale are “Students respond well to SEL and Restorative Practices”, “Students' behavior improved with exposure to SEL and Restorative Practices”, “SEL and Restorative Practices implementation is consistent with the training I have received”, “There are frequent opportunities to implement SEL and Restorative Practices with students”, and “My training has prepared me well to implement SEL and Restorative Practices”. Internal reliability for these items in this study is 0.87 for the 2018 survey and 0.89 for the 2019 survey.

2.3 Procedures

SRO data were collected from a survey that was sent out to all SROs in a large urban school district in a Southeastern state, which had a response rate of 95%. IRB authority for this survey was ceded to WestEd and approval was obtained prior to data collection. This survey was distributed by the school district via email and administered online using Qualtrics. The elementary schools in the district being studied are each assigned a roving SRO, who patrols a number of schools in the area. Since these SROs have less direct interaction with the students and are not stationed in any one school on a daily basis, data from SROs that serve elementary schools were excluded from this sample. SROs consented to involvement in the larger study before completing the survey. Data collection in 2018 took place over the course of several weeks, from late March through early April. This procedure was repeated in 2019 during the end of May and beginning of June.

The 2018 SRO survey consisted of 22 questions, the majority of which involved multiple choice responses using Likert scales. The topics covered included the SROs’ law enforcement background, attitudes towards SEL and Restorative Practices, interactions with administrators,

teachers, parents, and students, as well as building access and the development of safety plans. The survey also included a few free response sections in which the SROs were invited to share their Law Enforcement Certifications, trainings that they had received or would like to attend, and their recommendations for improving the SRO program. For the 2019 survey, 3 open-ended questions regarding trainings and certifications were eliminated in an effort to streamline the survey.

Student data were obtained from the Georgia School Health Survey 2.0 (GSHS 2.0), which is administered annually across the state to all public-school students enrolled in grades 6-12. This survey is administered by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and is designed to collect information required by the federal Department of Education (White et al., 2014). The survey is typically administered between November and February to ensure that students have sufficient exposure to the school climate to respond accurately (LaSalle, Wang, Paris, & Brown, 2017)**.** All schools in the state are asked to ensure that at least 75% of their student body completes the survey each school year (La Salle, Wang, Paris, & Brown, 2017). Passive-consent procedures are used, with parents being given the option to have their children opt out of participating. Students are also given the opportunity to opt out of participating at any point during data collection. The survey is administered entirely online and is completed anonymously. Updates to the survey were completed prior to the 2018-2019 school year. The only relevant change for the purposes of this study was a modification to the feelings of safety subscale, which will be discussed in the following section.

2.4 Analysis

In order to understand the relations between measures of SRO SEL and Restorative Practices Use, SRO Attitudes towards these practices, Cultural Acceptance, Peer Support, School Safety, and School Climate, correlation analyses were conducted separately for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years. Although the same measures were administered for each school year, student data were collected anonymously. Because it is not possible to track student responses from year to year, cross-sectional analyses were completed separately for each school year. Patterns across school years, as well as differences, were examined for each analysis.

2.4.1 Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1, that SROs' attitudes towards SEL and Restorative Practices predict their use of these practices, was tested using regression analyses, which were performed separately for each school year using IBM SPSS V24. SROs' years of policing experience were included as a covariate.

Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 involved student outcomes, and these analyses were conducted for each school year using multi-level models within MPLUS. This technique was necessary because students' data are inherently nested within the schools that they attend. The outcome measures of school climate and students' feelings of safety exist at both the individual and school levels and this analysis allowed for the separation of these outcomes. A multilevel analysis also allowed for a comparison between schools after the variability within each school had been accounted for (Mehta et al., 2013). In schools with multiple SROs, there was complete agreement on 45% of items. The remaining items differed by only a single point on a four-point

scale. Given the consistency of responses within schools, the mean response was calculated for each item, resulting in one response per school. Identical predictors and outcomes were used for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years. Since the measures used in these analyses did not have a true zero value, the data were rescaled to increase interpretability. The school-level variables were centered using the grand-mean. For the multi-level analyses, the student-level variables were centered using the group-mean following the recommendations of Aguinis, Gottfredson, and Culpepper (2013). Group-mean centering was deemed to be preferable to grand-mean centering at the student-level because the grand-mean includes both student-level and school level-effects (Aquinas, Gottfredson, & Culpepper, 2013). Group-mean centering is particularly important when attempting to interpret cross-level interactions; using the grand-mean for these analyses can produce uninterpretable or inaccurate effects (Enders & Tofighi, 2007).

2.4.2 Hypothesis 2.

The first level of the multi-level model examined the effects of individual-level predictors on students' perceptions of school safety.

Level 1:

$$Y_{\text{School Safety}} = \beta_{0b} + \beta_1(\text{gender}) + \beta_2(\text{grade level}) + \beta_3(\text{cultural acceptance}) + \beta_4(\text{peer support}) + \varepsilon$$

2.4.3 Hypothesis 3.

The second level of the model examined the effects of school-level characteristics on the school-level outcome, perceptions of safety. These characteristics included the SROs' reported use and attitudes towards SEL and RP, the SROs' years of experience as an SRO, as well as student perceptions of cultural acceptance at their school.

Level 2:

$\beta_{0SchoolSafety} = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1$(SRO SEL and RP use) + γ_2(SRO SEL and RP attitudes) + γ_3(SRO experience-years) + γ_4(cultural acceptance-school level) + ε

2.4.4 Hypothesis 4.

Also at the second level, the interactions between the school-level measure of Cultural Acceptance and the SRO responses were examined using the Random Effects Model.

Level 2 – Slopes as Outcomes Model:

$\beta_{3CulturalAcceptance} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_1$(SRO SEL and RP use) + γ_2(SRO SEL and RP attitudes) +

γ_3(SRO experience-years)

In order to explore the relationship between the predictors and covariates and School Climate, identical multi-level analyses to those described above were conducted for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years, with the only difference being the outcome of interest. As in the analyses completed for Perceptions of Safety, the first level of the model examined the effects of individual-level predictors on School Climate. Students' gender, grade level, and rating

of cultural acceptance and peer support were entered into the model at this level (see Hypothesis 2). The second level of the model examined the effects of school-level characteristics on the school-level outcome, School Climate. These characteristics included the SROs' reported use and attitudes towards SEL and RP, the SROs' years of experience as an SRO, as well as student perceptions of cultural acceptance at their school (see Hypothesis 3). The interaction between Cultural Acceptance at the school level and SRO characteristics was also examined at the second level (see Hypothesis 4).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

3.1.1 2017- 2018 School Year

The first correlation analyses were completed for student-reported variables for the 2017-2018 school year (see Table 1). For this school year, School Climate was moderately correlated with Cultural Acceptance ($r(12{,}724) = .52$, $p < .001$) and Peer Support ($r(12{,}724) = .43$, $p < .001$). School Climate had a low negative correlation with grade ($r(12{,}724) = -.13$, $p < .001$), indicating that older students reported a less positive school climate than their younger peers. There was also a small but statistically significant correlation between Perceptions of Safety and School Climate ($r(12{,}724) = .02$, $p = .01$). Similar to School Climate, Perceptions of Safety had a low negative correlation with grade ($r(12{,}724) = -.10$, $p < .001$). Unlike School Climate, Perceptions of Safety were uncorrelated with Cultural Acceptance ($r(12{,}724) = 0.00$, $p = .72$).

The second set of correlations for the 2017-2018 school year were completed using responses from the SRO survey. During the 2017-2018 school year (see Table 2), SRO years of experience were negatively correlated with SRO reported use of SEL and Restorative Practices

($r(30) = -.43$, $p = .03$), indicating that younger officers implemented these practices more frequently than their more veteran peers. SRO reported use of SEL and Restorative Practices was uncorrelated with SRO reported attitudes towards SEL and Restorative Practices ($r(30) = -.04$, $p = .85$), indicating a disconnect between how officers reported feeling about SEL and Restorative Practices and how often they said they utilized them in the school. SRO reported attitudes towards SEL and Restorative Practices were also uncorrelated with SRO years of experience ($r(32) = .05$, $p = .81$).

3.1.2 2018- 2019 School Year

The results of the correlation analyses for the 2018-2019 school year (See Tables 3 and 4) were largely the same as those found for the prior year. Beginning with the student-reported measures (Table 3), School Climate was moderately correlated with Cultural Acceptance ($r(14{,}740) = .52$, $p < .001$) and Peer Support ($r(14{,}740) = .47$, $p < .001$), like the previous year. School Climate was negatively correlated with grade ($r(14{,}740) = -.10$, $p < .001$) and, in a change from the previous year, there was also a small negative correlation between School Climate and Perceptions of Safety ($r(14{,}740) = -.11$, $p < .001$). Perceptions of Safety were once again negatively correlated with grade ($r(14{,}740) = -.16$, $p < .001$), with an additional low significant relation between Perceptions of Safety and gender ($r(14{,}740) = -.04$, $p < .001$), indicating that older students and female students tended to report feeling less safe at school. Whereas in the previous year, Perceptions of Safety were uncorrelated with Cultural Acceptance and Peer Support, in 2018-2019 Perceptions of Safety had low negative correlations with both Cultural Acceptance ($r(14{,}740) = -.20$, $p < .001$) and Peer Support ($r(14{,}740) = -.07$, $p < .001$).

As in 2017-2018, correlations for the 2018-2019 school year were calculated from responses from the SRO survey (Table 4). Just as in the previous year, SRO's years of experience were negatively correlated with SEL and Restorative Practices Use ($r(41) = -.32$, $p = .05$). Consistent with the data from the previous year, there was no correlation between SEL and Restorative Practices Attitudes and SEL and Restorative Practices Use ($r(39) = .14$, $p = .39$) or SRO Years of Experience ($r(41) = -.07$, $p = .66$).

Table 1 2017-2018 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Level 1 Variables

	Grade	Gender	Perceptions of Safety	School Climate	Cultural Acceptance	Peer Support
1. Grade	1.00	–	–	–	–	–
2. Gender	-.02	1.00	–	–	–	–
3. Perceptions of Safety	-.10**	.01	1.00	–	–	–
4. School Climate	-.13**	0.00	.02*	1.00	–	–
5. Cultural Acceptance	.01	.05**	0.00	.52**	1.00	–
6. Peer Support	-.05**	-.04**	-.01	.43**	.39**	1.00
Mean	8.70	1.47	2.38	3.06	2.64	3.30
Standard Deviation	1.97	0.50	0.60	0.62	0.80	0.72

Note N= 12,724, * p <.05, **p<.001

Table 2 2017-2018 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Level 2 Variables

	SRO Years of Experience	SRO SEL and RP Use	SRO SEL and RP Attitudes
1. SRO Years of Experience	1.00	–	–
2. SRO SEL and RP Use	-.43*	1.00	–
3. SRO SEL and RP Attitudes	.05	-.04	1.00
Mean	13.60	3.58	3.10
Standard Deviation	7.63	1.33	0.49

Note N = 30-34, * p <.05, **p<.001

Table 3 2018-2019 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Level 1 Variables

	Grade	Gender	Perceptions of Safety	School Climate	Cultural Acceptance	Peer Support
1. Grade	1.00	–	–	–	–	–
2. Gender	-.01	1.00	–	–	–	–
3. Perceptions of Safety	-.16**	-.04**	1.00	–	–	–
4. School Climate	-.10**	.01	-.11**	1.00	–	–
5. Cultural Acceptance	.01	.06**	-.20**	.52**	1.00	–
6. Peer Support	-.03**	-.04**	-.07**	.47**	.43**	1.00
Mean	8.70	1.48	2.17	3.00	2.63	3.27
Standard Deviation	1.97	0.50	0.63	0.63	0.78	0.73

Note N = 14,740, * p <.05, **p<.001

Table 4 2018-2019 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Level 2 Variables

	SRO Years of Experience	SRO SEL and RP Use	SRO SEL and RP Attitudes
1. SRO Years of Experience	1.00	–	–
2. SRO SEL and RP Use	-.32*	1.00	–
3. SRO SEL and RP Attitudes	-.07	.14	1.00
Mean	13.87	3.67	3.18
Standard Deviation	7.31	1.58	0.57

Note N = 39-41, * p <.05, **p<.001

3.2 SRO Outcomes

3.2.1 Hypothesis 1

During the 2017-2018 school year (Table 5), SRO years of experience significantly predicted SRO reported use of SEL and Restorative Practices, β = -.45, p = .01. SRO Attitudes towards SEL and Restorative Practices were not a significant predictor of SRO Use of SEL and Restorative Practices, failing to support the hypothesis, β = -.13, p = .45. The overall model was significant, indicating that together these two predictors accounted for a significant portion of the variance in SRO Use of SEL and Restorative Practices, F(2, 30) = 3.92, p = .03, R^2 = .23.

The results for the 2018-2019 school year (Table 6) differed somewhat from those of the previous year. At this time point neither SRO Attitudes Towards SEL and Restorative Practices, β = .10, p = .54, nor SRO years of experience, β = -.30, p = .06, significantly predicted SRO reported use of SEL and Restorative Practices. The overall model for this school year was not significant (F (2, 39) = 2.24, p =.12, R^2 = .11). Looking across the two school years, these results indicated that SROs who hold more positive attitudes towards SEL and Restorative Practices are no more likely to report using these practices while working in schools than their peers with negative attitudes towards these practices. SROs with more years of experience may be less likely to use SEL and Restorative Practices, although this finding was only true of the 2017-2018 school year

Table 5 2017-2018 Regression Model for SRO Use of SEL and Restorative Practices

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	*β*
SRO Attitudes Towards SEL and RP	-.33	.43	-.13
SRO Years of Experience	-.08	.03	-.45*
R^2		.23*	

Note N = 30, * p <.05, **p<.001

Table 6 2018-2019 Regression Model for SRO Use of SEL and Restorative Practices

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	*β*
SRO Attitudes Towards SEL and RP	.34	.55	.10
SRO Years of Experience	-.06	.03	-.30
R^2		.11	

Note N = 39, * p <.05, **p<.001

3.3 School Safety

3.3.1 2017-2018 School Year

First, in order to determine the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) for Perceptions of School Safety, un unconditional mean model was used. In this model, the variance for the Perceptions of School Safety was portioned into within-school and between-school variance. The ICC of .03 in 2017-2018 (See Table 7) and .05 in 2018-2019 (See Table 8) indicated that 3% and 5% of the variability in Perceptions of Safety in each school year can be accounted for by differences between the schools. Although these ICCs are small, Aguinis, Gottfredson, and Culpepper (2013) suggested that any non-zero ICCs merit investigation using a multilevel model. Once the extent to which Perceptions of Safety vary between schools was determined, the student-level and school-level predictors were entered into the second model (See Tables 7 and 8, Model 2 – Main Effects Only). In the final model, the random effects of Cultural Acceptance were included as a school-level predictor (See Tables 7 and 8, Model 3 – Random Effects). In order to compare the models, -2 Loglikelihoods were compared using formulas recommended by Muthén and Muthén (2006). The Random Effects Model was determined to be a better fit for the data than the Main Effects Model for both the 2017-2018 ($\chi^2(5) = -127.74$, $p < .001$) and 2018-2019 ($\chi^2(5) = 215.18$, $p < .001$) school years. Due to this finding, the results from the Random Effects Model will be discussed.

3.3.1.1 Hypothesis 2

During the 2017-2018 school year (Table 7), there were no significant effects of any student-level predictors (gender, grade level, cultural acceptance, and peer acceptance) on Perceptions of Safety, failing to support Hypothesis 2

3.3.1.2 Hypothesis 3

Consistent with Hypothesis 3, at the school level, SRO SEL and Restorative Practice Use was a significant predictor of Perceptions of School Safety, indicating that students felt safer in schools where SROs used SEL and Restorative Practices more frequently, $B = .11$, SE = .05, $p = .02$.

3.3.1.3 Hypothesis 4

Looking at Hypothesis 4, the residual variance for Perceptions of Safety was also significant at the school level, $B = .09$, SE = .03,$p = .002$. This significant variance suggests that there was also unexplained variability in student Perceptions of Safety between the schools in the sample.

3.3.2 2018-2019 School Year

3.3.2.1 Hypothesis 2

The findings for the 2018-2019 school year differed from those found for the previous year. At the student level, during the 2018-2019 school year (Table 8), grade was a significant predictor of Perceptions of School Safety, $B = -.05$, SE = .01, $p < .001$. Gender was also a significant predictor, indicating that boys felt less safe than their female peers, $B = -.04$, SE = .01, $p < .001$. Additionally, a main effect was found for Cultural Acceptance, $B = -.14$, SE = .02, $p < .001$. This effect indicates that students who report higher levels of Cultural Acceptance at their schools also tend to report lower levels of Perceptions of Safety.

3.3.2.2 Hypothesis 3

Turning to the school level, unlike the previous year, during 2018-2019 SRO Years of Experience was a significant predictor of Perceptions of School Safety, B = -.02, SE= .01, p = .001. However, neither SRO Attitudes Towards nor reported Use of SEL and Restorative Practices significantly predicted student Perceptions of School Safety, failing to support Hypothesis 3. Additionally, just as in 2017-2018, the residual variance for Perceptions of Safety was significant at the school level, B = .01, SE = .00, p = .001.

3.3.2.3 Hypothesis 4

Turning to Hypothesis 4, during the 2018-2019 school year the interaction between school-level variance in Cultural Acceptance and SRO SEL and Restorative Practice Use was significant, B = -.02, SE = .01, p = .04. To probe this interaction further, the effects of Cultural Acceptance on Student Perceptions of Safety were examined at both high and low levels of SRO SEL and Restorative Practice Use. This was done by rerunning the multilevel analysis using SRO SEL and Restorative Practice Use re-centered at one standard deviation above the mean and then one standard deviation below the mean. The results of these analyses indicated that the negative effect of Cultural Acceptance on Perceptions of School Safety was only significant at low levels of SRO SEL and Restorative Practice Use, B = -.08, p = .02. At high levels of SRO SEL and Restorative Practice Use, Cultural Acceptance had no significant association with Perceptions of Safety, B = -.01, p = .83.

Table 7 Multilevel Results for School Safety (2017-2018)

	Model 1 Unconditional Model	Model 2 Main Effects Only	Model 3 Random Effects
Fixed Effects			
Intercept			
Perceptions of Safety		0.01 (0.07)	0.01 (0.07)
Cultural Acceptance			0.00 (0.03)
Student Level			
Grade		-0.02 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.01)
Gender		0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Peer Support		-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Cultural Acceptance		-0.00 (0.03)	
School Level			
SRO Years of Experience		0.00 (0.00)	0.01 (0.01)
SRO SEL and RP Use		0.03(0.02)	0.11* (0.05)
SRO SEL and RP Attitudes		-0.03 (0.04)	-0.18 (0.14)
Cross-level Interaction			
SRO Years of Experience			-0.00 (0.00)
SRO SEL and RP Use			-0.03 (0.02)
SRO SEL and RP Attitudes			0.05 (0.05)
Variance Components			
Level 1		.35** (.01)	.34** (.01)
Level 2			
Intercept		.01** (.00)	.09* (.03)
Cultural Acceptance			.01** (.00)
-2 Loglikelihood	-11609.30	-11380.74	-11252.13
AIC	23224.59	22781.47	22534.27
ICC for School Safety	0.03	0.02	0.02

Note N = 12,724, * p <.05, **p<.001

Table 8 Multilevel Results for School Safety (2018-2019)

	Model 1 Unconditional Model	Model 2 Main Effects Only	Model 3 Random Effects
Fixed Effects			
Intercept			
Perceptions of Safety		-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (-.03)
Cultural Acceptance			-0.14** (0.02)
Student Level			
Grade		-0.05** (0.01)	-0.05** (0.01)
Gender		-0.04** (0.01)	-0.04** (0.01)
Peer Support		0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Cultural Acceptance		-0.16** (0.01)	
School Level			
SRO Years of Experience		-0.02* (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)
SRO SEL and RP Use		-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)
SRO SEL and RP Attitudes		-0.07 (0.08)	-0.07 (0.08)
Cross-level Interaction			
SRO Years of Experience			-0.00 (0.00)
SRO SEL and RP Use			-0.02* (0.01)
SRO SEL and RP Attitudes			-0.02 (0.07)
Variance Components			
Level 1		.36** (.01)	.36** (.01)
Level 2			
Intercept		.01* (.00)	.01** (.00)
Cultural Acceptance			.01 (.00)
-2 Loglikelihood	-13752.30	-13380.28	-13336.90
AIC	27510.60	26780.57	26703.81
ICC for School Safety	0.05	0.02	0.02

Note N = 14,740, * p <.05, **p<.001

3.4 School Climate

An unconditional mean model, which portions the variance in School Climate into within-school and between-school variance, was used to determine the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) for School Climate.These models produced ICC for School Climate of .05 and .04 for 2017-2018 (Table 9) and 2018-2019 (Table 10) respectively. These values indicate 5% and 4% of the variability in School Climate in each school year could be accounted for by differences between the schools. Since there is variability between schools, a multi-level model is appropriate (Peugh, 2010). In the second model, the student-level and school-level predictors were included (See Tables 9 and 10, Model 2 – Main Effects Only). In the final model, the random effects of Cultural Acceptance were included as a school-level predictor (See Tables 9 and 10, Model 3 – Random Effects). -2 Loglikelihoods were compared using formulas recommended by Muthén and Muthén (2006) in order to determine the best model. After comparing the Main Effects and Random Effects Models, the Random Effects Model was determined to be the best fit for the data for both the 2017-2018 ($\chi^2(5) = 19.74$, $p = .001$) and 2018-2019 ($\chi^2(5) = 57.29$, $p < .001$) school years. For this reason, the results from the Random Effects Model are discussed below.

3.4.1 2017-2018 School Year

3.4.1.1 Hypothesis 2

During the 2017-2018 school year (See Table 9), at the student level, grade was a significant predictor of School Climate, indicating that younger students reported a more positive School Climate, *B* = -.03, SE = .-01, p = .001. Peer Support was also a significant predictor of School Climate, which shows that students reported a more positive School Climate when they

felt more supported by their peers, $B = .24$, SE = .01, $p < .001$. Also at the student level, Cultural Acceptance significantly predicted School Climate, $B = .31$, SE = .01, $p < .001$. This suggests that students who reported higher levels of Cultural Acceptance also reported a more positive School Climate. These student-level findings provide support for Hypothesis 2.

3.4.1.2 Hypothesis 3

Looking at Hypothesis 3, at the school level, SRO Years of Experience was a significant predictor of School Climate, $B = .01$, SE = .00, $p = .01$. This finding suggests that schools with more experienced SROs tended to have higher ratings of School Climate. SRO Use of SEL and Restorative Practices was also a significant predictor of School Climate, $B = .03$, SE = .01, $p = .02$, suggesting that students report a more positive school climate when the SROs at their school used SEL and Restorative Practices more frequently. Finally, SRO Attitudes towards SEL and Restorative Practices significantly and negatively predicted School Climate, $B = -.12$, SE = .05, $p = .01$. This finding indicates that students report a more positive school climate when the SROs at their schools held less positive attitudes towards SEL and Restorative Practices.

3.4.1.3 Hypothesis 4

For Hypothesis 4, although the interactions between the school level variables and Cultural Acceptance were not significant for School Climate, the model that included this interaction (See Table 10, Model 3 – Random Effects) was a better fit for the data. This may be due to the significant variance in Climate at the school level, $B = .01$, SE = .00, $p = .03$, which suggests that there was variance between schools on the effect of Cultural Acceptance on School Climate that is not accounted for by this model.

3.4.2 2018-2019 School Year

3.4.2.1 Hypothesis 2

The results for the 2018-2019 school year were very similar to those of the previous year at the individual level, with some notable differences at the school level. Beginning at the student level, Grade, B = -.02, SE = .01, p = .004, and Peer Support, B = .27, SE = .01, p < .001, were both significant predictors of School Climate, indicating that younger students and students with more supportive peers reported more positive School Climate. Cultural Acceptance was also a significant predictor of School Climate, B = .31, SE = .01, p < .001, providing support for Hypothesis 2.

3.4.2.2 Hypothesis 3

There were some differences observed at the school level. For the 2018-2019 school year, neither SRO Years of Experience, B = .00, SE = .01, p = .49, nor SRO Use of SEL and Restorative Practices, B = .00, SE = .02, p = .75, were significantly related to School Climate. SRO Attitudes towards SEL and Restorative Practices were a significant predictor of School Climate, but in the opposite direction found in the previous year, B = .08, SE = .04, p = .05. These results failed to support Hypothesis 3.

3.4.2.3 Hypothesis 4

Just as was seen in the previous year, the residual variance for School Climate was significant at the school level, B = .01, SE = .00, p < .001.

Table 9 Multilevel Results for School Climate (2017-2018)

	Model 1 Unconditional Model	Model 2 Main Effects Only	Model 3 Random Effects
Fixed Effects			
Intercept			
Perceptions of Safety		0.04 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)
Cultural Acceptance			0.31** (0.01)
Student Level			
Grade		-0.03** (0.01)	-0.03** (0.01)
Gender		-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)
Peer Support		0.24** (0.01)	0.24** (0.01)
Cultural Acceptance		0.32** (0.01)	
School Level			
SRO Years of Experience		0.01* (0.00)	0.01* (0.00)
SRO SEL and RP Use		0.03* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)
SRO SEL and RP Attitudes		-0.12* (0.05)	-0.12* (0.05)
Cross-level Interaction			
SRO Years of Experience			-0.00 (0.00)
SRO SEL and RP Use			-0.00 (0.01)
SRO SEL and RP Attitudes			0.01 (0.02)
Variance Components			
Level 1		.24** (.01)	.24** (.01)
Level 2			
Intercept		.01* (.01)	.01* (.01)
Cultural Acceptance			.00* (.00)
-2 Loglikelihood	-11903.42	-8924.13	-8916.40
AIC	23812.84	17868.26	17862.80
ICC for School Climate	.05	0.03	0.03

Note N = 12,724, * p <.05, **p<.001

Table 10 Multilevel Results for School Climate (2018-2019)

	Model 1 Unconditional Model	Model 2 Main Effects Only	Model 3 Random Effects
Fixed Effects			
Intercept			
Perceptions of Safety		0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)
Cultural Acceptance			0.31** (0.01)
Student Level			
Grade		-0.02* (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)
Gender		-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Peer Support		0.27** (0.01)	0.27** (0.01)
Cultural Acceptance		0.31** (0.01)	
School Level			
SRO Years of Experience		0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
SRO SEL and RP Use		0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
SRO SEL and RP Attitudes		0.08 (0.04)	0.08* (0.04)
Cross-level Interaction			
SRO Years of Experience			0.00 (0.00)
SRO SEL and RP Use			0.01 (0.01)
SRO SEL and RP Attitudes			-0.02 (0.03)
Variance Components			
Level 1		.24** (.01)	.24** (.01)
Level 2			
Intercept		.01 (.03)	.01** (.00)
Cultural Acceptance			.00* (.00)
-2 Loglikelihood	-13845.56	-10558.44	-10539.024
AIC	27697.12	21136.88	21108.05
ICC for School Climate	0.04	0.02	0.02

Note N = 14,740, * p <.05, **p<.001

4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 SRO Outcomes

The first hypothesis was intended to examine the relationship between SROs' Attitudes Towards SEL and Restorative Practices and how frequently they report using these practices in schools. Although it was hypothesized that SRO Attitudes towards SEL and Restorative Practices would predict their use of these practices, the results of the regression analyses did not support this hypothesis. These findings indicate that there is a discrepancy between how SROs feel about SEL and Restorative Practices and how often they use them during their work in the school. It is also worth noting that SROs with more years of policing experience used SEL and Restorative Practices less frequently during the 2017-2018 school year, but not during the following year. It is possible that more experienced officers may take longer to adapt to new practices, especially if those practices represent a significant deviation from their current behaviors. Although they derived their recommendations from qualitative data, this finding is consistent with observations by Finn et al. (2005) that SROs with more experience working patrol may require additional assistance unlearning techniques that are appropriate for policing, but not in schools. Collecting additional qualitative data regarding SROs attitudes towards the trainings that they receive, and the reasons that they choose to implement SEL or Restorative Practices, could provide valuable information in this area.

4.1.2 Perceptions of Safety

Although no previous studies have looked directly at the impact of SRO SEL and Restorative Practices Use on student outcomes, past studies have found that when other school personnel use Restorative Practices and SEL, they tend to have better relationships with students

(Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Gregory et al., 2016). Positive relationships with school personnel have also been found to be related to higher ratings of school climate (White et al., 2014) and perceptions of school safety (Fisher et al., 2018). Bringing these findings together, it was hypothesized that students would report feeling safer and would report more positive school climate in schools in which SROs used SEL and Restorative Practices more frequently. A series of multilevel models were conducted in order to test these hypotheses.

The results of the multilevel model examining student Perceptions of Safety provided mixed support for this hypothesis. During the 2017-2018 school year, SRO Use of SEL and Restorative Practices was significantly, positively associated with student Perceptions of Safety. This means that in schools where SROs used SEL and Restorative Practices more frequently, students tended to feel safer. This relationship was not significant for the 2018-2019 school year. Although these findings were inconsistent, it is important to consider further their implications.

Because this was a cross-sectional study, these results can be interpreted in a number of ways. The first possibility is that SROs who tend to use SEL and Restorative Practices more frequently are more likely to be placed in schools with higher Perceptions of Safety. Although possible, this interpretation is less likely given that most principals have little or no say in which SROs are assigned to work in their schools (Superville, 2019). It is also possible that SROs tend to shape their behaviors to be more consistent with the school settings in which they operate. If SROs behaviors are mirroring their settings, this would suggest that students tend to feel safer in schools that support the use of SEL and Restorative Practices. The successful implementation of Restorative Practices, even more so than SEL, requires a cultural shift surrounding discipline and authority, a cultural shift that must be backed by policy changes throughout the school (Blood &

Thorsborne, 2005). The widespread policy changes, which go far beyond the responsibilities of an SRO, lend support to the explanation that SROs use SEL and Restorative Practices more frequently in schools where these practices are being widely implemented. More data on school-wide implementation of SEL and Restorative Practices could provide more information on the potential match between SROs and their schools. Finally, it is possible that SROs, and the frequency with which they implemented SEL and Restorative Practices, had an impact on the experiences of the students within their schools, helping these children to feel safer. SROs are responsible for many of the functions in schools that relate to safety (Sullivan & Hausman, 2017), so it is possible that they have a direct impact in this area. Although the final interpretation has more obvious implications for intervention, all of the explanations provide valuable information regarding the workings of schools and their personnel.

Regardless of the interpretation, this finding contributes to the existing literature regarding the impact of SROs on students' perceptions of safety. While one previous study found that students feel less safe when SROs are present (Reingle Gonzalez et al., 2016), another found that students felt safer when SROs were more visible in their school (Lindstrom et al., 2018). Like most of the research pertaining to SROs and student perceptions of safety, these two contradictory studies measured the frequency of interactions, but do not capture the quality of student-SRO interactions. The findings of the present study indicate that the specific behaviors of the SROs in a school, as opposed to their mere presence, may play a significant role in how safe students report feeling. Additionally, although research on both SEL (Durlak et al., 2011) and Restorative Practices (Acosta et al., 2016) has indicated that implementation throughout the whole school is important, no other studies could be found that examine SRO implementation of either SEL or Restorative Practices.

4.1.3 School Climate

Just as with the models for School Safety, the results of the multilevel models for School Climate supported the hypothesis for the 2017-2018 school year, but not for 2018-2019 school year. During 2017-2018, both SRO Use of SEL and Restorative Practices and SRO years of experience were significant, positive predictors of School Climate. Just as with Perceptions of Safety, there are a number of interpretations for the significant 2017-2018 finding, including that SROs' behaviors are shaped by the existing school environment and that the behaviors of SROs have a direct impact on student outcomes. Given the fact that School Climate is a broader concept than School Safety, and includes a number of dimensions such as teaching and learning, relationships, and environmental/structural characteristics (White, La Salle, Ashby, & Meyers, 2014), that fall outside of the domain of SROs, it seems more likely that SROs' behaviors are shaped by the environments in which they work. These findings build on previous work by Fisher et al. (2019) and Theriot (2016), which connected the presence of SROs to student-teacher relationships and school connectedness respectively. Fisher et al. (2019) noted that there has been little consideration for how SROs shape the school environment. These findings add to the knowledge in this area and suggest that further attention should be paid to the effects of SROs' presence and behaviors on the climates of schools.

SRO Attitudes Towards SEL and Restorative Practices were significant predictors of School Climate for both school years, although the direction of this effect changed. In 2017-2018, SRO Attitudes Towards SEL and Restorative Practices negatively predicted School Climate, whereas in 2018-2019 attitudes positively predicted School Climate. When considering this finding it is worth noting that, although the correlation between SROs Use of SEL and

Restorative Practices and their Attitudes towards these practices was not significant, the beta value for these variables suggests that they may be negatively related for the 2017-2018 school year. Based on this, it is possible that SROs shifted their attitudes over time to be more consistent with their behaviors, especially since the beta value for the following year suggests a potential positive relationship between SEL and Restorative Practices Use and Attitudes. This shift in attitudes over time is consistent with findings surrounding cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), which predicts that, when individuals are required to behave in ways that are contradictory to their attitudes, they will change their attitudes over time to be more consistent with their behaviors. Collecting additional qualitative data from SROs regarding their perceptions of SEL and Restorative Practices, and how their perceptions changed as they implemented these practices, could provide additional insight in this area.

4.1.4 Cultural Acceptance

Shifting to Cultural Acceptance, based on previous findings that perceived racial tension is related to lower feelings of safety (Lacoe, 2015), it was predicted that Cultural Acceptance would be positively related both to Perceptions of Safety and School Climate. This hypothesis was not supported for Perceptions of Safety. In 2017-2018, there were no significant main effects for Cultural Acceptance on Perceptions of Safety. In contrast, for the following year there was a significant negative relationship between Cultural Acceptance and Perceptions of Safety. Although this finding contradicts past research, it is possible that it can be explained by school diversity, which was not measured in this study. Past research has found that students report lower levels of cultural acceptance in schools that are more diverse (Paris, Neves, & LaSalle, 2018) and that black and latinx students report feeling safer when they are in classrooms that are

more diverse (Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2006), suggesting a moderating role of diversity on both of these outcomes. With regard to School Climate, the hypothesis was supported during both school years. For both 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, Cultural Acceptance was positively related to School Climate.

In addition to these findings, there was also some indication that the effects of cultural acceptance varied as a function of SRO SEL and RP Use. Looking at the relation between Cultural Acceptance and SRO Use of SEL and Restorative Practices, the interaction was not significant for the 2017-2018 school year. For the 2018-2019 school year, the interaction was significant and was probed further at high and low levels of SRO SEL and Restorative Practices Use. The results of these analyses revealed that Cultural Acceptance only had a significant, negative association with Perceptions of Safety when SROs reported low Use of SEL and Restorative Practices. This effect was not significant when SROs reported high Use of SEL and Restorative Practices. This means that students who reported higher levels of Cultural Acceptance only felt less safe in schools where SROs reported low levels of SEL and Restorative Practices Use. Although the relationship between Cultural Acceptance and Perceptions of Safety is in the opposite direction predicted, these results provide some evidence that SRO practices can produce a buffering effect for students. In order to understand the relationship between SRO behaviors and Cultural Acceptance, it is necessary to consider school-level diversity and individual ethnic/racial identities, neither of which were available in the present study. These findings indicate that SROs may be associated with student outcomes in ways that are complicated and counterintuitive.

4.1.5 Limitations and Future Directions

The first limitation to this study involves the way in which SEL and Restorative Practice Use in SROs was measured. SROs responded to a single item where they were asked to rank how frequently they had used these practices in the last month. Although SEL and Restorative Practices have many similarities, they are distinct sets of practices (Acosta et al., 2016; CASEL, 2019) and the SROs in this study were trained on them separately. Since Restorative Practices relate more directly to discipline and the ways in which infractions are handled (Acosta et al., 2016), it is possible that it is the use of these practices that are driving the overall findings. Future research should attempt to disentangle these practices and attempt to determine their unique contributions to students' perceptions of safety and school climate.

The second limitation was the sample size at the school level. The lack of significant findings for the 2018-2019 models was not surprising given the sample size at the school level. Although the sample size was quite large (> 12,000) at the student level for both school years, the power of the multilevel analyses to detect significant differences was limited by the number of schools at the second level. The sample of 21 and 23 schools for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years respectively were smaller than is preferable for multilevel analyses (Maas & Hox, 2006). Given that data collection occurred in a single school district, this sample was limited by the size of the district and the number of schools with SROs on campus. Since the analysis was underpowered, it is not possible to determine if, for example, there truly was not a relationship between SRO Use of SEL and Restorative Practices and School Climate in 2018-2019, or if these effects were simply too small to detect in the samples used. Issues surrounding power and sample size may account for the inconsistent findings across school years. To

determine the impact of SROs on the students in their schools, replication is necessary. It is notable that, even with this limited sample size and related issues with power, significant effects of SRO variables on both student Perceptions of Safety and School Climate were detected for the 2017-2018 school year. Future studies could include multiple school districts in order to achieve the recommended sample size of 50 or more schools (Maas & Hox, 2006).

Although this study examined data across two consecutive school years, this was not a longitudinal study. This cross-sectional study design limits the causal claims that can be made and opens any results up to multiple interpretations, as discussed above. This cross-sectional design has been a limitation in much of the research surrounding SROs and their impact on schools (Mayer, 2008). The directionality of the relationship between SRO Use of SEL and Restorative Practices and student outcomes has important implications for interventions and future research should explore this relationship over time.

The conclusions that can be drawn from this study are tempered by inconsistencies between the results for the consecutive school years. These inconsistencies could be a function of several of the limitations discussed, such as small sample size, potential measurement invariance and leadership turnover. Like many large school districts, there was considerable turnover throughout the departments of interest during the duration of this study. Although there are limitations to these findings, the results suggest that the behaviors of SROs are related to how safe students feel in their schools, as well as the overall school climate. These findings highlight the importance of considering how SROs affect not just disciplinary outcomes, such as the number of arrests and suspensions, but the overall environment in which students learn and grow. This study examined the effects of specific practices when used by SROs, drawing

attention to the need to study SRO trainings and to develop best practices. As the presence of SROs in schools continues to increase, as does the investment in SRO programs, it is essential that researchers and school districts alike consider the impact that SROs have on students, and the ways in which SROs may be trained to be more effective.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

School Climate Subscale of the GSHS 2.0 (White, La Salle, Ashby, & Meyers, 2014).

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following:

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Somewhat agree Strongly Agree

1. I like school
2. I feel successful at school
3. I feel my school has high standards for achievement
4. My school sets clear rules for behavior
5. Teachers treat me with respect
6. The behaviors in my class allow the teachers to teach
7. Students are frequently recognized for good behavior
8. I know an adult at school that I can talk with if I need help

Appendix B

School Safety Subscale of the GSHS 2.0

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following:

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Somewhat agree Strongly Agree

1. I feel safe in my school
2. I have been concerned about my physical safety at school
3. I have been involved in a fight at school

4. I have felt unsafe at school or on my way to or from school
5. I have worried about other students hurting me
6. Students at my school fight a lot