

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SAFETY: Determining the role of School Resource Officers in MPS

June 2017



MINNEAPOLIS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Stakeholder Engagement

2016-2017:

- 803 survey participants
- Engagement sessions conducted with 198 participants
- Students, families, staff and community members

Spring/Summer 2017:

- May: Survey students, staff, families
- May/June: Sessions with School Site Councils and school PSWE Teams
- June: Sessions with students, families, community

Board of Education next steps:

- July 11: BOE receives initial SRO engagement results and staff recommendations on future of SRO program
- **August 8: BOE votes on SRO contract with Minneapolis Police Department**

School Resource Officers: National Context and MPS History

What is an SRO?

A police officer authorized by a police department or agency to work in collaboration with a school(s) to provide safe learning environments.

Why does MPS have SROs?

1. Foster positive relationships between youth and police
2. Strengthen police-community connections
3. Support safe learning environments
 - Protect from internal threats, e.g., student brings weapon to school
 - Protect from external threats, e.g., intruder with weapon



U.S. Dpt. of Education survey - 2013-14 school year:

- **30%** of public schools in survey had at least 1 full-time or part-time SRO
 - 98,500 public schools that year, means about **29,550 schools had at least 1 SRO**
- **43%** of school had some type of security personnel present at school at least once a week
- Represents a **conservative estimate** of SROs due to small survey sample size
- **NOTE:** Survey was a nationally **representative sample** of schools:
 - 1,600 regular public schools in all 50 states and District of Columbia
 - Elementary, middle, and high schools
 - Variety of enrollment size (< 300, 300 to 499, 500 to 999, and 1,000+)
 - Variety of communities: city, suburban, town and rural

Percent of Minnesota Public Schools with SROs, by School Type*

School Type	MDE School Count	SRO Count	Percent of schools with SROs
Elementary Schools	924 PK-6	189 PK-6	21%
Middle Schools	193 5-8	113 PK-8	59%
All Secondary Schools	761 7-12; K-12; ALCs	225 7-12; K-12; ALCs	30%
TOTAL	1,878**	527	28%
Senior High Schools Only	218 9-12 only	132 9-12 only	61%

*Schools classified by the highest grade served.

** Total public school count excludes 30 schools classified as state-approved Distance Learning Programs

+Percentages should be interpreted with caution due to different definitions in classifying schools

Source: [Law Enforcement in Minnesota Schools: A Statewide Survey of School Resource Officers](#)

- School Resource Officers in MPS since 1960s
- Formal contract with Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) since 1980
- Currently: 16 SROs
- Demographics:
 - 15 males, 1 female
 - 9 White, 3 Asian American, 4 Black (3 African American, 1 East African)
- Selection criteria: Letter of intent, review of work and discipline history, oral interview by panel equally represented by MPS and MPD

- All MPD: Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Certification
 - 2- or 4-year degree or military service, plus 2-9 months of training to start
- Annual use of force training and 16 hours a year continuing education to remain certified
- Any new MPD SRO receives additional 24 hours of training from the MN School Safety Center
- MPS has SROs spend 8-24 hours a year in school related issues, e.g., Special Education, Positive School Wide Engagement, Social Emotional Learning, Equity
- New SROs partnered with senior SRO their first year

School Climate and Safety Strategies

- Climate: degree to which school community feels safe and welcomed in school
- Safety: degree to which school community is protected by internal or external hazards
- Discipline/Restorative Practices
- Positive School Wide Engagement (PSWE)
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Mentoring



Restorative Mindset

- Looks at whole child in context of situation
- Emphasizes understanding of resulting harm
- Links deterrents to relationships, personal accountability
- Demonstrates empathy

Punitive Mindset

- Looks at negative behavior as defining person
- Focuses on blame
- Links deterrents to punishment
- Demonstrates a judgmental approach



Restorative Actions

Restores rift in relationship harmed by action through:

- Informal Conferencing
- Restorative Mediations
- Peace Circles

Punitive Consequences

- Redresses a rule that was broken
- Equates consequences with removal or suspensions

When SEL implemented faithfully, results in:

1. An increase in standardized test scores
2. Fewer disciplinary referrals for negative behavior
3. Increased school attendance rates
4. Fewer dropouts
5. Less violence
6. Lower rates of substance abuse
7. Preventing and treating emotional, behavioral, and mental disorders



To increase quality instructional time through reliance on restorative practices, social emotional learning instruction, increased access to mentoring, and overall efforts to increase student engagement.

MPS Policy 5200:
Behavior Standards and
Code of Conduct

BEHAVIOR

- Type, examples
- Definitions
- Levels 1-5
- Interventions
- Responses

Behavior Examples: Definitions and Level Response Options					
Level 1: Behaviors disruptive to the school environment of self and/or others.	Level 2: Repeated or significant Level One infractions. Disordered behavior toward another student, staff, volunteer, etc.	Level 3: Repeated or significant Level Two infractions. Behaviors targeted at others or interfere with safety equipment.	Level 4: Repeated or significant Level Three infractions. Behaviors that implicate safety.	Level 5: Behaviors identified as expellable offenses.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start with the lowest appropriate level response while considering a student's IEP/IAP, age and understanding, past history of similar offenses, and severity of the incident. ● Discovery coding questions for Levels 3-5 may be referred to subject matter experts. 					
ALPHABETICAL LISTING	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
ACADEMIC DISHONESTY					
Cheating, plagiarizing	●	●	Not available as an option	Not available as an option	Not available as an option
ALCOHOL					
Suspected impairment	Not available as an option	Not available as an option	●	●	Not available as an option
Using, possessing or distributing	Not available as an option	Not available as an option	●	●	●
ARSON					
Illegal fire setting or attempts	Not available as an option	Not available as an option	Not available as an option	Not available as an option	●
ASSAULT					
Intentional infliction of or attempt to inflict physical or sexual bodily harm upon another	Not available as an option	Not available as an option	●	●	●
BOMB					

Identified school staff are trained in:

- **“Nonviolent Crisis Intervention”** skills in verbal de-escalation and physical intervention
 - Focus is on prevention
 - Safely defuse anxious, hostile or violent behavior early
- **How and when to bring in SROs into a situation**

Appropriate use of SROs in schools per MPS guidelines:

- 1. Student engagement:** Classroom lessons with students, e.g., law enforcement careers, traffic safety, curfew, bullying prevention (coordinated with MPS subject expert)
- 2. Community connections:** Info sharing on community incidents that impact school day
- 3. School safety:** Diffuse high-threat situation that is dangerous to student or staff safety, examples:
 - A student seriously injures another student or staff in a fight
 - Student brings weapon into school

- 1. Does the incident fall within the guidelines of when to bring in an SRO?**
- 2. Outside of referral, why are you involving the SRO?**
 - a) What are you asking of your SRO, e.g., consultation, information sharing, etc.?
 - b) How will involving law enforcement help resolve the incident?
- 3. Is bringing in law enforcement consistent with other similar incidents?**

APPROPRIATE uses of SRO:

- Student brings a weapon to school
- Student seriously injures another student in an assault or fight

INAPPROPRIATE uses of SRO:

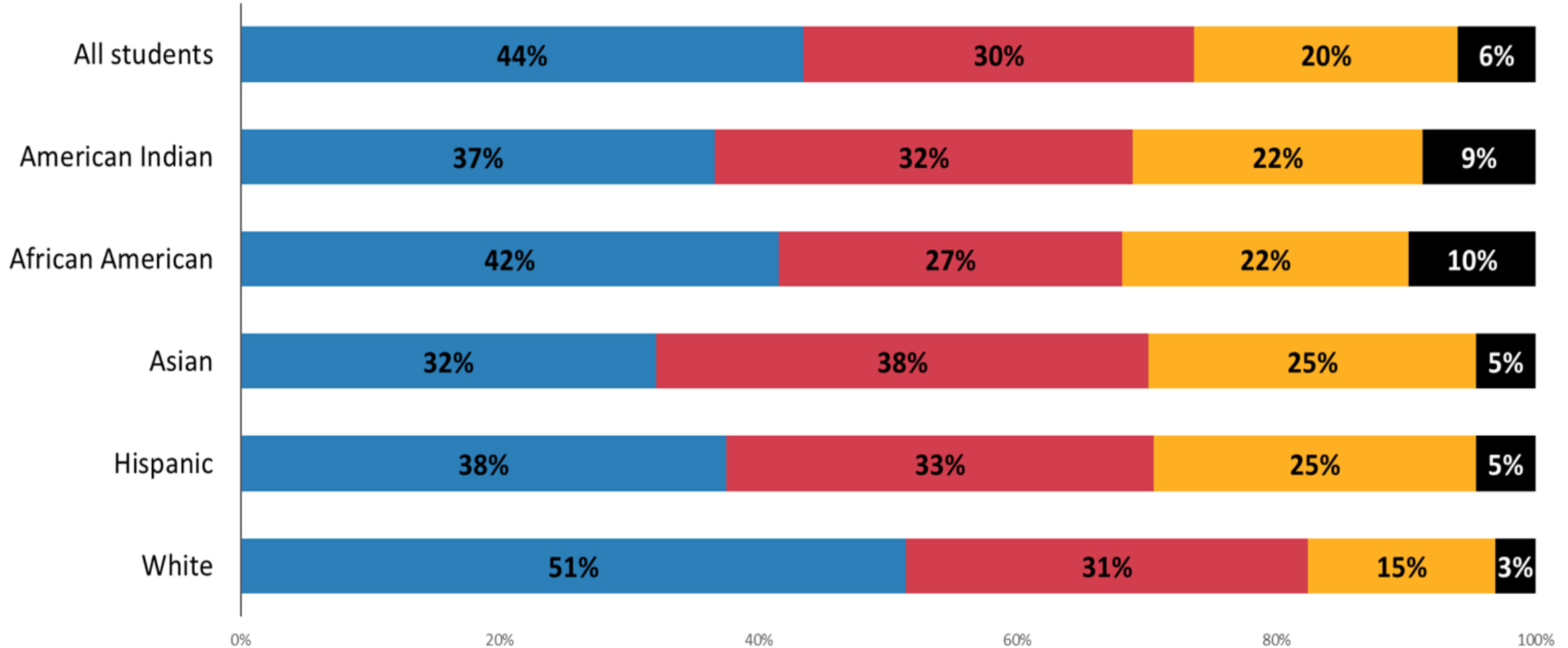
- Because administration is “fed up”
- To “scare” a student into doing the right thing
- To justify an administrative transfer

The Data



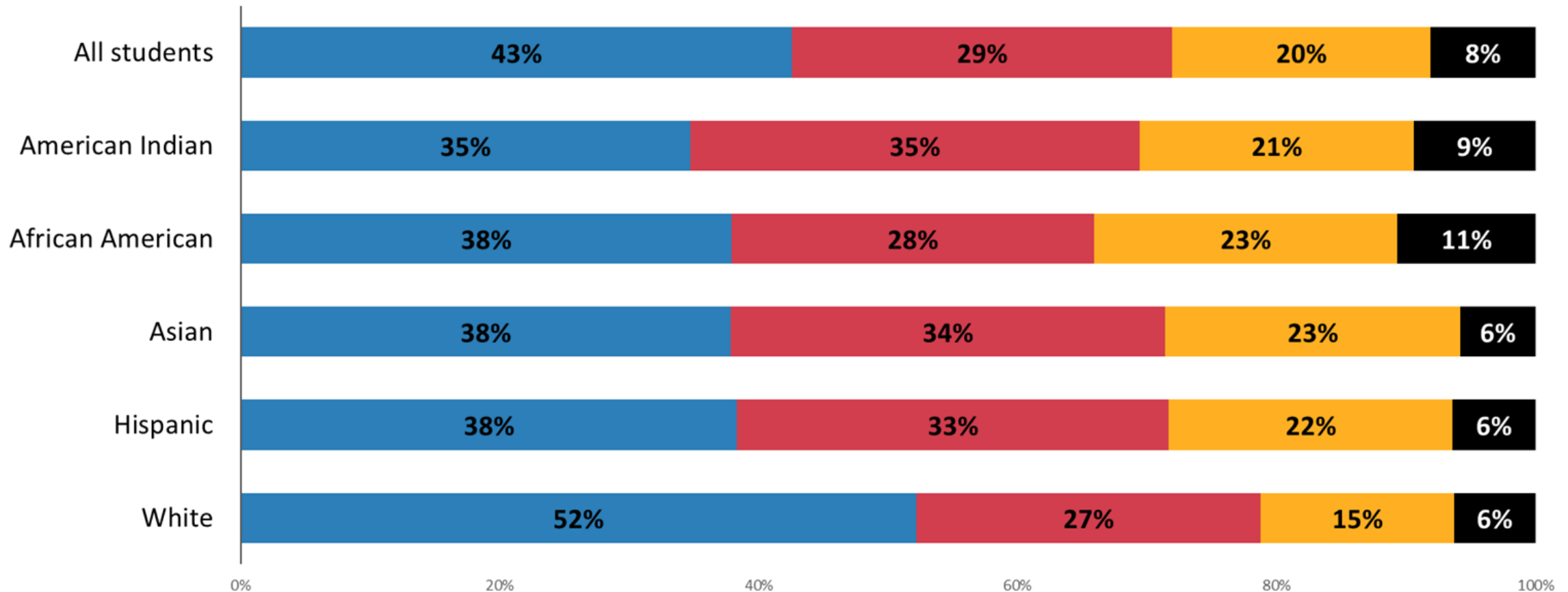
I feel safe in this school

■ Almost Always ■ Often ■ Sometimes ■ Almost Never



School Resource Officers treat students from my racial/ethnic group the same as students from other groups

■ Almost Always ■ Often ■ Sometimes ■ Almost Never



SRO Program: 3 Options

- 1. Maintain/Modify:** Maintain existing SRO program and modify agreement with MPD on how SROs work with students
- 2. Reduce and Support:** Reduce number of SROs and enhance centralized supports to schools
- 3. Eliminate:** Eliminate SRO program and support schools in site-based or centralized security management

1. Maintain existing SRO program and modify agreement with Minneapolis Police Department on how SROs work with students

PROs:

- Provides more time to evaluate other SRO program options (#2 and 3) and impact of SROs in schools
- Improve existing SRO program by using federal SRO program improvement framework (SECURE)

CONs:

- Does not address negative SRO program image and concerns, i.e., “school-to-prison pipeline”
- Over dependence on SROs may weaken school capacity to cultivate safe/welcoming climate
- May not completely align with restorative vs. punitive mindset/approach

2. Reduce SRO's and expand district supports to schools to increase their staff capacity to address behavior issues

PROs:

- Reduces number of SROs in schools
- Balances use of SROs with school staff trained in social emotional learning, restorative practices
- Enhances schools' capacity to handle situations
- Provide schools with more district level supports to handle high level situations
- High-risk situations still handled by SROs, e.g., student brings weapon into school

CONs:

- Fewer SROs in schools may lead to schools depending on 911 to respond to violent situations; more delayed response
- Reduces positive engagement opportunities between SROs and students
- Could weaken MPD-community connections

3. Eliminate SRO program and support schools in site-based or centralized security management.

PROs:

- Conveys MPS responsiveness to some individuals' SROs concerns
- Increases schools responsibility and authority to manage own student behavior and school climate

CONs:

- Schools would depend on 911 to respond to violent situations; more delayed response
- Likely increase in arrests as officers would not have specific training that SROs get
- School staff would be primary responders to high-threat situations
- Weakens MPD-community connections

Clarifying Questions?

Key Questions

1. Of the three SRO program options, which do you consider to be the most favorable?

Why did you pick that option?

- 1. Maintain/Modify:** Maintain existing SRO program and modify agreement with MPD on how SROs work with students
- 2. Reduce and Support:** Reduce number of SROs and enhance centralized supports to schools
- 3. Eliminate:** Eliminate SRO program and support schools in site-based or centralized security management

2. If MPS **does continue** to have SROs, what should their role be in providing a positive school climate?

3. If MPS **does not continue** to have SROs, how should schools continue to provide welcoming and safe schools?

Groups Report Out

MPS' next steps

THANK YOU!

Board of Education action:

July 11 - Initial presentation on Minneapolis Police Dept. contract

Aug. 8 - BOE Vote

Web: emss.mpls.k12.mn.us/sro