

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT ARREST DECISIONS,
ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS, AND THEIR IMPACT ON STUDENTS' EXCLUSIONARY
OUTCOMES IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

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Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

Title: A Descriptive Study of Law Enforcement Arrest Decisions, Administrative Actions, and Their Impact on Students' Exclusionary Outcomes in the Secondary School Environment

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Public reaction after violent incidents in schools have led policymakers and school officials to institute security measures including zero tolerance policies and police officers. Researchers reported an increase in student arrest rates and exclusionary discipline rates for minor offenses after implementing these initiatives.

This study focused on student arrest rates and exclusionary discipline measures in two high schools among School Resource Officers (SRO)/School Based Police Officers (SBPO) and secondary administrators over two school years. Furthermore, the study examined the factors influencing arrest decisions of the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers involved. The data collected answered these questions:

1. What factors contribute to the School Resource Officers'/School Based Police Officers' decisions of whether to arrest students in the school setting?
2. How do zero tolerance approaches influence student arrest rates and student exclusionary discipline rates in schools that utilize School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers?
3. What role do the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers have in the school environment?

A descriptive research method, utilizing interviews, surveys and student arrest and discipline information, was used to answer these questions. The participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling based on their assignment in a secondary school.

This study reported that there were similarities among the police officers regarding the factors affecting the arrest decisions. This was reasonably consistent with the research. Most students in the study were arrested at both site locations for minor misconduct in 2014-15 but major offenses in 2015-16. The exclusionary discipline rates were dependent on site location. This appeared to be an indication that it had little to do with the SROs/SBPOs assigned to the schools and much more to do with the administrative leadership within the respective schools.

The findings indicate a need for ongoing collaboration and communication between the supervisors of the schools and law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, the implementation of a positive approach to student behavior rather than a punitive approach may assist in reducing the amount of exclusionary outcomes. Lastly, training for the police officers related to interactions with misbehaving students may assist in changing their arrest decisions.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

As the stakes have gotten higher, bars have been raised, and strategies have been developed to combat school violence, a much more rigid and formal culture of discipline has occurred in American public schools. Safety and security measures, such as zero tolerance policies, surveillance cameras and School Resource Officers (SROs), have become the norm for students entering the schoolhouse doors everyday. But instead of these practices resulting in decreasing school violence, researchers are reporting an increase in student arrest rates and exclusionary discipline rates within the school setting for minor offenses. In the 2005-2006 school year, out of the 26,990 school-related offenses in Florida referred to juvenile court, 76 percent were for misdemeanors (Hirschfield, 2008); and, the number of students suspended in New York City annually has increased from 31,879 in the 2002–2003 school year to 73,943 in the 2008–2009 school year (Miller, Ofer, Artz, Bahl, Foster, Phenix, Sheehan, & Thomas, 2011).

The security changes in our educational settings began as the amount of youths arrested dramatically increased nationwide. From 1986 to 1995, juvenile arrest rates outside of the school setting increased by 67 percent (Snyder, Sickmund, & Poe-Yamagata, 1996). Juveniles who were victimized also increased during this time frame; in 1994, about 2.6 million juveniles were victims of violent crimes (Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, 1999).

The juvenile crime rate began to decline after this time period and steadily decreased over the next ten years. Public perception of youth violence in general, however, remained and extended to the school setting (Price, 2009). During this time, Congress passed the Gun Free Schools Act in 1994 (Skiba, 2000). The Gun Free Schools Act made zero tolerance in public schools a nationwide requirement, which mandated a one-year expulsion and referral to the

criminal or juvenile justice system for any student possessing a firearm in school. The law was later expanded to include other weapons offenses, while school districts afterward added their own zero tolerance punishments to other types of student behaviors (Skiba, 2000).

In 1999, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) created a grant program to promote the hiring of SROs for community policing efforts in schools (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2010). Between 1999 and 2005, COPS granted more than \$750 million to over 3,000 agencies specifically for the hiring of SROs. Approximately \$23 million more was given to train both the SROs and the administrators of the participating school districts. An additional \$11.5 million was awarded through the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative and the Office of Justice Programs' Gang Reduction Project (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2010).

Researchers agree that both the financial support of the federal programs combined with the high-profile incidents of school violence in the late 1990s allowed the SRO programs across the country to gain momentum (Hopkins, 1994; Johnson, 1999; Jackson, 2002). Occurrences of individual and randomized school violence during this time in the United States continued to occur. They included school incidents in West Paducah, Kentucky, 1997; Jonesboro, Arkansas, 1998; Edinboro, Pennsylvania, 1998; Springfield, Oregon, 1998; and Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, 1999 (National School Safety and Security Services, 2009).

The school massacre that occurred in Littleton, Colorado in 1999 involving two high school seniors was a shock to the nation. Two students, in a pre-meditated shooting in Columbine High School, murdered twelve students and one teacher before both committed suicide (Larkin, 2007). By this time, President Clinton called for more police in schools and school districts implemented even harsher punishments by suspending and expelling students for

seemingly minor offenses – bringing items to school such as butter knives, Advil, and acne medication (Skiba, 2000).

It was this type of heightened fear among school and community members that led various stakeholders to uphold and implement new zero tolerance policies. Zero tolerance, as a discipline approach, involves excluding a student from school. This is a removal of a student from the school environment by a school administrator and includes either suspensions or expulsions from school. The removal from school can also include an arrest or referral to a law enforcement agency. Zero tolerance policies, generally, do not allow for administrators to use discretion for the discipline action, but rather they are mandated to suspend or expel a student for a specified period of time for a certain type of behavior based on federal law, state law, or school policy (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010).

After ten years of research and calls for action against zero tolerance policies, researchers and policymakers were beginning to meet in late 2012 to review zero tolerance measures (Kang-Brown, Trone, Fratello, & Daftury-Kapur, 2013). A call for improving education had begun and groups were beginning to discuss ideas to replace the punitive measures behind zero tolerance. Then, the deadliest elementary school shooting in modern history occurred on December 14, 2012. Adam Lanza drove to the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut and murdered twenty schoolchildren and six school staff members before committing suicide (Vogel, Horwitz, & Fahrenthold, 2012).

Public reaction after these shocking school events led to policymakers and school officials to an immediate institution or, in some cases, re-institution of the School Resource Officer (SRO) initiative within their schools (Rucker, 2013). The cooperation of the local and state police departments across the country to implement these programs or complement existing programs was also an immediate occurrence (Rucker, 2013). Just as the energy was increasing to

begin policy change regarding zero tolerance measures, schools across the nation were once again increasing police presence and implementing harsher disciplinary actions with the financial support of the federal government due to the recent school violence events (Rucker, 2013).

Although the public's perception regarding the safety of public schools was negative, incidents of crime and violence within the school setting had been steadily declining since the late 1990s (Price, 2009). At the same time, the numbers of arrests and referrals of students into the juvenile justice system by School Resource Officers (SROs) had been steadily increasing. In most cases, the types of arrests were for minor offenses. A study by Theriot (2009) showed that even when controlling for high levels of economically disadvantaged student populations, schools with an SRO had nearly five times the rate of arrests for disorderly conduct as schools without an SRO. Another study related to SROs, undertaken by a county judge in Georgia, found that the number of juvenile referrals increased from 89 per year in the 1990s to 1,400 per year in 2004 (Petteruti, 2011).

The number of juvenile arrests occurring in recent years is significant since school shootings and other violent incidents affect school climate for the internal and external school community members (Saad, 2012). Extant research on student arrest rates and SROs is limited; therefore, additional research must be conducted to determine the impact of SROs and School Based Police Officers on the student arrest rates and types as well as administrator imposed exclusionary discipline rates. Furthermore, it is important to determine how School Resource Officers and School Based Police Officers (SBPO) decide when a student is arrested for misbehavior in school and what their roles and responsibilities are in the overall school context.

Due to the amount of recent school violence incidents and the reactionary response of policymakers and school officials to implement the SRO and SBPO programs, it is imperative to

discuss the historical foundation of the School Resource Officer program that may have contributed to American public schools adopting this safety initiative.

Background

The utilization of police officers in public schools dates back to the 1950's (Mulqueen, 1999). The City of Flint, Michigan assigned a police officer to a school with the goal of improving relationships between the police and youth in their community. One of the first tasks of the Flint police officers was to determine their acceptance in the schools based on the students' attitudes toward law enforcement. The first year of this program was deemed a success and was well received by School Board officials, principals, teachers, parents and, most importantly, the students themselves. The Flint Michigan School Resource Officer Program was nationally recognized in 1973, and has since become the model program for law enforcement and school partnerships across North America (Mulqueen, 1999).

Throughout the decades, various School Resource Officer (SRO) programs continued to expand slowly. By the 1990s, a dramatic increase of a police presence in schools was motivated by several high-profile school shootings (Brown, 2006). The American public as well as American educators had become more accustomed to having a police officer on the school campus (Cook, Gottfredson, & Na, 2009).

School Resource Officers are trained certified police officers stationed in schools commonly through agreements between school districts and police departments. Their role as law enforcement officers has grown to include a multitude of roles from sworn police officer to mentor/counselor to teacher (Eisert, 2005).

While the use of police officers' in public schools has been continuous since the Flint Michigan School Resource Officer Program, only in the last two decades has the School Resource Officer been raised to the level of a security measure within the school. However,

studies are inconclusive regarding the police officer and their overall impact on student arrest rates in the school setting (Hopkins, 1994; Johnson, 1999; Jackson, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

The problem is that as law enforcement presence in schools has increased, the number of student arrests and student law enforcement referrals has also increased (Na and Gottfredson, 2011). Furthermore, many Pennsylvania school districts have adopted discipline policies that have established conventional and extensive use of student exclusions, including suspensions, expulsions, and reassignments to alternative education schools (Jordan, 2015) as part of zero tolerance initiatives with the use of police in schools. Research also shows that schools with School Resource Officers (SROs) are more likely to have arrests of students for minor offenses. These arrests in schools have shown to be related to behavioral offenses typically dealt with school administration rather than law enforcement. Theriot (2009) found that the schools in his study that had SROs had almost five times the number of arrests for disorderly conduct as the schools without SROs. There is limited research on studies examining the School Resource Officers' decision making process of whether or not to arrest a student for an offense committed in school (Wolf, 2012), as well as their role in the school environment.

It is important to note that there have been several studies completed over the last decade regarding the placement of sworn law enforcement officers in schools. However, most of the evaluations have been studies of perceptions of students and/or school administrators. Na and Gottfredson (2011) completed a study using a national sample, which included principals' reporting measures of school data. In order to determine the factors that influence the police officers' arrest decision making in the school setting, it is important to use outcome measures including student arrest rates and student exclusionary discipline information.

Other accounts of police in schools reported negative outcomes. One study of police in schools described the school climate as a “prison-like environment” in which police were abusive toward the staff and students (Mukherjee, 2007). Another study of SROs in New York City schools reported negative results of decreased student attendance, increased suspensions and increased police incidents compared to other schools without SROs assigned to them (Brady, Balmer, & Phenix, 2007).

Although there have been many studies completed over time regarding police officers in the school environment, at least one essential component was missing from the methodology. Many of the studies were limited in terms of sampling or participant response rates, or they lacked the rigor needed for the outcome measures for the study with the implementation of the School Resource Officer program. Hence, a gap exists in the literature of School Resource Officers and outcome measures, including student arrest rates, police officers’ arrest decision making, and information regarding police roles and responsibilities in schools, in terms of current data collection.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the factors influencing the arrest decisions of School Resource Officers and School Based Police Officers as well as the amount of student arrests, and school administrator imposed exclusionary discipline rates in two secondary schools in northeastern Pennsylvania. Furthermore, the police officers described their roles and responsibilities in the school context. The school districts’ discipline rates were collected and reviewed as well as the survey data and interview data from the participating SROs/SBPOs to determine the factors influencing arrest decisions. In addition, interview data from the school administrators were collected and reviewed to determine the administrators’ decision making regarding exclusionary discipline as well as their potential involvement with the SROs/SBPOs in

school-based arrest incidents. This study specifically examined whether the School Resource Officer/School Based Police Officer influenced the student arrest rates and types in school and the exclusionary discipline students receive within the context of their arrest decision making process. Without a comprehensive study of the deployment of the School Resource Officer/School Based Police Officer, it would be difficult to determine if they are deemed an appropriate safety strategy for ensuring a sustained safe educational environment.

Theoretical Perspective

Social control theory has served as a basis for studying School Resource Officer policies. Social control theory is related to the social bonds and associations that are based on relationships between people (Nye, 1958). These relationships include a focus on commitments, values, social norms, and beliefs that suggest the stronger these relationships hold to a person, their want or need to violate law is weakened. The role that a person plays depends on the situation and their connections to various internal (family) and external factors (institutions/schools). According to social control theory, a weakened sense of relationships, commitments, values, and social norms may influence a person to gravitate toward criminality or deviance (Reiss, 1951).

Strong bonds between adolescents and those they have frequent contact with will either support or erode that child's sense of belonging and community. Four elements have been identified as modes to strengthen these bonds: attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief (Hirschi, 1969). The positive ties a child has to parents, social groups, friends, and role models are examples of *attachment*. *Involvement* suggests that as the adolescent is consumed by conventional daily activities, they will not have the time to devote attention toward unconventional or criminal conduct. *Commitment* involves the investment that society has already pre-established in the pursuit and attainment of formal education. It also provides

recognition of conformity by those obeying laws and rules, and maintaining a good reputation. In order to obey and conform to social controls, a person must possess *belief* that acknowledges society's rules as being fair. For one to follow and obey norms and laws, the belief that they are fair creates a moral obligation toward conformity (Hirschi, 1969).

The way that a person behaves is socially meaningful. It serves as a tool for social survival and also provides the means for social interaction or reaction to occur. Most people are influenced by the reactions of those close to them or by the reaction of society. An individual's sense of social acceptance or security results from identifying with other members of a group and by gaining their acceptance and approval, a behavior typically seen among adolescents (Kaiser, 1998).

A control theory of adolescent delinquency by Albert J. Reiss, Jr. (1951) suggested that many social control foundations begin and are developed during childhood. Informal controls were recognized as those influences stemming from the home, such as learned social behavior and expectations established by parents, guardians, or strong role models. These informal influences on adolescents extended to friends, social groups, and clubs. Within these informal networks, normative behaviors and customs are learned and established. Reinforcement of these social norms by informal influences occur when undesirable actions or behavior are demonstrated by the child.

While some of the undesirable actions may not be deviant or rise to the level of criminality, influence and reaction to this behavior by informal networks create the basis of social control in the adolescent. Formal control on social norms and customs is located in statutory laws. Society's ability to enforce these normative expectations of behavior located in statutory law is carried out by law enforcement. Formal social control and influence is introduced to adolescents throughout their development depending on numerous factors. By

placing a uniformed law enforcement officer in a school, such formal control is present on a daily basis and suggests that criminal behavior will be reduced by the tangible presence of a School Resource Officer. As such, most students will conform to these socially accepted norms and will find motivation to obey these social controls. This conformity to rules and social behavior tends to result in a safer school environment for the school community.

The utilization of the School Resource Officer may have direct implications and influence on reinforcement of positive social behavior based on a constant and frequent presence within the school. As the relationship with the SRO is established with students, such influence may shift from a law enforcement role, to that of a role model as trust is established between students and the police officer.

In direct conflict to this perception of the School Resource Officer as the trusted role model is their role as law enforcement officer, wherein that officer may be required to monitor safety aspects with the school and respond to student discipline and student behavioral incidents. As part of this role, the officer may be arresting the same students they were counseling or teaching, within the triad model of the School Resource Program.

Research Questions

This study focused on student arrest rates and types as well as the exclusionary discipline measures in two high schools among School Resource Officers (SRO)/School Based Police Officers (SBPO) and secondary administrators over the period of two school years. Furthermore, the study examined the factors influencing arrest decisions of the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers involved. The data collected was used to answer the following questions:

1. What factors contribute to the School Resource Officers'/School Based Police Officers' decisions of whether to arrest students in the school setting?

2. How do zero tolerance approaches influence student arrest rates and student exclusionary discipline rates in schools that utilize School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers?
3. What role do the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers have in the school environment?

Significance of the Study

Although studies have indicated that school crime rates are dropping, students continue to be referred to the juvenile justice systems within their respective states (Theriot, 2009; Na & Gotfredson, 2011; Mukherjee, 2007). Thus, it was vital to capture student arrest rates and examine various data among different School Resource Officers (SRO) and School Based Police Officers (SBPO) to explore the decision making processes of various personnel over time.

This study described factors influencing arrest decisions of SROs and SBPOs and the impact they may have had on student arrest rates and exclusionary discipline types and rates within their respective high schools located in northeastern Pennsylvania. The study analyzed data gathered from the participating School Resource Officers and School Based Police Officers and the participating secondary schools. The study data collection occurred over the period of two school years. The survey information gathered from the SROs/SBPOs was related to the arrest decision making process. The information generated through the study may prove useful to school districts, particularly in school districts where SRO/SBPO programs may be under consideration as a solution to their particular school safety issues.

The research is significant to school board members, central office administrators, as well as law enforcement administrators who may be hiring and training for various positions within the school environment because it may assist in developing a school police program.

Furthermore, the information from this study is important for instruction in higher education.

Future law enforcement officers, school administrators and teachers can also learn from the larger lens of police and school community relations.

This study merges the school community and the police community as they work with each other in maximizing student safety in the students' largest daily social context. Most importantly, this study is significant since there has been only one other similar study completed at the secondary level, however, this study included data that is much more in-depth regarding arrest rates in the secondary school environment and included a review of data among SROs and SBPOs assigned to two different secondary schools in two different school districts over the course of two school years.

Overview of the Methodology

This study utilized a descriptive research design and employed the qualitative research method. The study described student arrest rates as well as administrative exclusionary discipline rates among School Resource Officers (SRO)/School Based Police Officers (SBPO) and secondary administrators in two secondary schools. Descriptive research describes participants' experiences with depth and richness, organizes qualitative data visually, and interprets the data using the research questions as a guide.

Descriptive research describes a phenomenon rather than determining causality between variables (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). This study gathered data to describe the student arrests occurring on the school campus as well as the students' exclusionary discipline, and then organized the data into visual information (Glass and Hopkins, 1984). The phenomena described in this study are the student arrests and discipline occurring among the participants – the SRO/SBPO, and the administrators.

The qualitative approach was used in this study for the analysis of the arrest and discipline data, the SRO survey data, the SRO/SBPO interviews and the administrator

interviews. The qualitative approach continued into the analysis phase using a flexible ongoing technique to discover the emerging themes from the interview data. The interpretation of the data was finalized using the extant literature and the discussion of this study's findings.

Definitions

The following terms are defined according to their usage in this study:

Age of majority: Age in which status as a legal adult or juvenile is determined. Commonly, 18 years and over in most legal jurisdictions is considered to be a legal adult.

Arrest: Either a student detained in custody or a student issued a legal citation while under police custody.

Exclusionary discipline: Any student discipline implemented by a school administrator that removes a student from their regular classroom placement or schedule (i.e. in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, alternative placement, arrest).

Expulsion: Removal from school that is longer than 10 consecutive school days.

Felony: A violation of criminal law punishable by over one year in a prison.

Misdemeanor: A violation of criminal law punishable by less than one year in a jail.

Out-of-school Suspension: Removal from the regular school setting, usually for behavior.

School Based Police Officer: A certified peace officer who is employed by the school district with the goal of increasing safety and security for the school.

School Resource Officer: A sworn law enforcement officer possessing the authority under law to make arrests, detain, issue criminal and traffic citations who works within the school environment.

School climate: Shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape interactions between students, teachers, and administrators and set the parameters of acceptable behavior and norms for the school.

School safety: An environment free of violence, crime and harassment both for students, teachers, visitors, and other school district employees.

Summary offense: Any minor crime, initially heard and decided by a magisterial district judge. (i.e. disorderly conduct, underage drinking, harassment)

Limitations

The limitations of this study consider several factors. First, the participants contained within the study are not representative of the entire law enforcement population or administrative population since the participants in this study were chosen through a purposive sample. The generalization of data collected will only be linked to this specific population. This study consisted of data collected over the course of two school years from two specific high schools.

A second limitation to the study is the potential for inaccurate reporting of school safety data regarding criminal offenses by the school districts since different school personnel may record and implement various offenses and their corresponding policies in a dissimilar manner.

Likewise, a third limitation to the study is the potential for contrasting arrest data by the various police officers over the course of the school years since different officers may have recorded various violations and implement corresponding actions in a dissimilar manner. For example, the School Resource Officer's (SRO) arrest information may show differing arrest data compared to another SRO or another School Based Police Officer (SBPO) from the year prior, simply based on police discretion during arrests or differing police organizational expectations.

The fourth limitation to the study is unforeseen factors occurring in or near the school environment during the time of the study, such as a change in student population due to the transience of the surrounding communities within the participating school districts.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Each chapter contains information specific to certain areas of the study. The first chapter introduces an overview of the study and includes the background and historical context of school safety and law enforcement in public schools in the United States as well as a need to determine if School Resource Officers and School Based Police Officers are deemed an effective strategy for ensuring a safe environment where student arrest and discipline outcomes are appropriate.

The second chapter provides a review of the literature pertinent to the topic of School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers and their effects on school safety and zero tolerance policies. The review of the literature will also provide an analysis of qualitative research and its relation to zero tolerance, arrest decision making theories, and school criminalization in the context of secondary public schools and the utilization of a School Resource Officer (SRO)/School Based Police Officer (SBPO).

The third chapter provides the information relevant to the methodology of the research. The study will utilize a qualitative analysis of arrests, survey and interview data among different School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers and a review of the student discipline information among different school administrators assigned to two different secondary schools. The chapter will also provide a description of the subject selection for the sample within the study. The SROs/SBPOs and school administrators selected were part of the study as the high schools chosen were part of a purposive sampling based on set criteria. The chapter also describes the thematic analysis used to qualitatively code the interview data, which allows the researcher to categorize emergent themes as the data is reviewed and constantly compared.

The fourth chapter describes the results of the study. The fifth and final chapter of the dissertation provides a discussion of the findings, an overview and summary of the research

findings, a discussion of the meaning of the findings, and implications of the study, as well as recommendations for further research.

Chapter Summary

As schools struggle with problems of discipline and security, many have turned to the implementation of School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers in schools as a possible solution. It was the intent of this study to describe the arrest making decisions of a law enforcement officer in the school setting and their role in the school context, students' arrest rates, as well as the administrative exclusionary discipline students received in the school environment. A comprehensive study of the implementation and utilization of School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers in schools could provide meaningful recommendations to educational and legislative stakeholders who are capable of making decisions affecting the future of public education in the United States.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter includes a review of the literature related to the role of the School Resource Officer, zero tolerance in schools, and arrest decision making. The purpose of this study was to describe the factors influencing the arrest decisions of School Resource Officers and School Based Police Officers and their impact on student arrest rates and school administrator imposed exclusionary discipline rates in two secondary schools in northeastern Pennsylvania. In addition, the SROs/SBPOs described their role and function in the school setting. This chapter is organized into four sections. The first section reviews the history and role of School Resource Officers. The next section explains the arrest decision making process; section three explores zero tolerance policies and the last section examines the theory of criminalizing student behavior in school.

Criteria for Selecting the Literature

Several types of literature were chosen for the literature review, including articles from peer-reviewed journals, books, unpublished dissertations, and meta-analytic reviews of previous studies. A methodical analysis of the journals specifically related to School Resource Officers, zero tolerance, school-to-prison pipeline, arrest decision making and school discipline research resulted in studies found in the *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, *Sociology Compass*, and *The New York Law School Law Review*. Several national criminal justice and education web sites were searched relating to school safety and juvenile justice, including the Justice Policy Institute, the United States Department of Justice, and the National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice Statistics web sites.

Finally, several databases were used to search and review articles and statistics related to arrest decision making, School Resource Officers, school discipline, and zero tolerance.

School Resource Officers: An Overview

The actual origins of the School Resource Officer (SRO) in the United States are difficult to pinpoint due to the large change in the school police programming over the last 50 years. Some states permit school districts to contract services with state and municipal police and sheriff departments to have officers assigned to the school campus. Other states allow school officials to create their own school police departments, which are known as School Based Police Officers (SBPO).

Many researchers attribute the concept of the SRO program to the Flint, Michigan police department in the 1950s, although it is clear that police officers were serving in schools prior to the 1950s (Girouard, 2001; Burke, 2001; Lambert & McGinty, 2002). Before the 1950s, schools would occasionally ask police officers to instruct students on traffic and bicycle safety (Lambert & McGinty, 2002). The history of the Indianapolis Public School Police dates back even further to 1939 when schools had a “special investigator” assigned to them. Another example is the Los Angeles School Police Department, which was created in 1948 as a security section and later became a police department with more than 300 sworn agency personnel (Coy, 2004).

Although it is not clear exactly when sworn police officers began to patrol school campuses, it is obvious that before the 1990s, there were few police officers in schools. As the 1990s continued, the amount of officers increased. Public fear regarding the perception of school violence led to the increase in School Resource Officers nationwide as well as the availability of state and federal funding for these programs (Beger, 2002; Girouard, 2001).

The number of schools with SROs has increased significantly over the last 20 years (Raymond, 2010; Watkins & Maume, 2012). During the 1995-1996 school year, for example,

there were 243 SROs assigned to North Carolina public schools. Thirteen years later, the number of SROs assigned to work in North Carolina public schools had increased more than threefold to 849 (Finn, Shively, McDevitt, Lassiter, & Rich, 2005). Similarly, 54 percent of students who completed a nationwide survey in 1999, reported the presence of security guards and/or police officers in their school. By 2007, this number had increased to nearly 70 percent (Robers, Kemp, & Truman, 2013.)

Regarding the overall estimates of the number of SROs in the United States, the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) data reveal that more than one-third of the nation's sheriffs' offices and almost half of the country's local police departments have assigned sworn police officers in schools, which equals more than 17,000 officers (Hickman & Reaves, 2001; Reaves & Hickman, 2002). It must be emphasized that due to various school law enforcement programs and a lack of standardization for defining School Resource Officers, it is challenging to gain a precise calculation (Girouard, 2001). The total amounts of SROs should be regarded as moderate approximations of the number of SROs in the United States.

Role of the School Resource Officer

School Resource Officers (SROs) are trained sworn police officers who are assigned to work in a school. It is important to note for the purposes of this research study that not all law enforcement officials in schools are School Resource Officers. Some schools do not have a permanently assigned SRO to their campus or school building, so they rely on calling upon their jurisdictional law enforcement agency to respond to their school incidents.

According to Girouard (2001), a School Resource Officer is a:

“career law enforcement officer, with sworn authority, deployed in community-oriented policing, and assigned by the employing

police department or agency to work in collaboration with school and community-based organizations.”

School Resource Officers have four main roles within the school environment. They act as a law enforcement officer, while serving as a liaison between the school and other agencies; they teach and demonstrate topics related to law enforcement to students; they act as an informal counselor or mentor to students; and they act as an emergency management planner in conjunction with the school district administration (Finn et.al, 2005). The first three roles listed above are referred to as the TRIAD concept, which divide the SROs’ responsibilities into the three areas of teacher, counselor/mentor and law enforcement officer (Center for the Prevention of School Violence).

Although School Resource Officers (SROs) have been assigned to school campuses for several decades, few research studies have focused on how they are chosen for their position in the school as well as their relevancy in the school setting. The extant research has focused mainly on the perception of SROs and their presence in schools by students, staff, parents, and the community. The research has shown conflicting results. A study completed by Brown and Benedict (2005) determined that most of the students they surveyed in Texas preferred having a police officer at school. A similar result was found in a study of a large sample of middle and high school students in Virginia (Schuiteman, Aikens, & Thornton, 2001). However, a study completed by Hopkins and Hewstone (1992) found that students in schools with an SRO have less positive opinions of the police than those in schools without an SRO. Over time, the support for the SROs in those schools significantly decreased.

Further research has suggested that teachers and school administrators support having SROs in schools since the police officers can take the responsibility for other tasks including legal consultant, security director for school events, and being an emergency first responder

(Finn, Shively, McDevitt, Lassiter, & Rich, 2005; Travis & Coon, 2005). May, Fessel, and Means (2004) found similar results in a study completed with school administrators in California. Their study revealed that school officials felt that the SROs' presence in the school setting assisted in decreasing school crime and truancy rates.

Johnson (1999) discovered that although school administrators generally felt that SROs were effective in their schools at deterring student misbehavior, his study also concluded that the staff and administrators perceived that the SROs were not visible enough in the school setting. Another study found that teachers were satisfied with having an SRO on the school campus; however, they felt that they should work more with the students in the hallways. In that same study, school officials exposed that although they were satisfied with the SROs' effect on safety in the school environment, there were significant communication issues between the SROs, the school officials and the law enforcement supervisors (May, Fessel, & Means, 2004).

Hence, concerns continue regarding the SROs' true role within the school environment. The integration of two different agencies within one environment – law enforcement and education – can bring a multitude of issues based on differing missions and organizational cultures. Usually, the School Resource Officers are city, county, or state law enforcement officers, dependent on the jurisdictional boundaries of the school district in which they are assigned. Although the SROs may be funded partially or entirely by the school district, they are still employees of the law enforcement agency (Moore, 2001). Having the SRO work within the confines of an educational environment requires specific roles and understanding between the agencies.

Arrest Decision Making of the School Resource Officer

While the School Resource Officer works for a law enforcement agency, they ultimately make the individual decision of how to reconcile a situation. The police officers may solely

decide who will and will not be arrested, what they will be charged with, and which agency may or may not be contacted to assist in the situation or incident. There are three overarching theories of what factors influence police officer behavior and their discretion regarding arrest decision making: organizational factors, situational factors, and individual factors.

Much research has been completed in the area of organizational influences on police officers' behaviors. The seminal work of James Q. Wilson (1968) branded three main management styles of a police organization that, to some degree, explains the relationship between the application of law and the individual agencies. Wilson's watchman style organization focuses on peacekeeping or maintaining order. His legalistic style organization stresses the function of law. And, finally, the service style organization is one in which the police officers concentrate on community service more so than crime reduction. Wilson (1968) contended that the organization controls how a police officer will behave in their professional decision making.

Later research supported Wilson's findings to an extent. The research methodologies were limited in a variety of aspects and none were able to replicate Wilson's study exactly. Mastrofki, Ritti, and Hoffmaster (1987) reported that police agencies formed informal and formal norms, creating organizational cultures, which influenced how police officers applied the law. Their study, however, showed that the size of the agency affected how officers behaved. For example, in smaller agencies, the officers were more inclined to be influenced by formal policies compared to larger agencies where officers were impacted more by peers and other environmental factors.

Further research has shown support for Wilson's theories. Smith (1987) found that police officers working for agencies in a legalistic style organization were almost three times more likely to arrest juvenile offenders. In a more recent study, McCluskey, Varano, Huebner, and

Bynum (2004) discovered that when organizations change their priorities, police officers also change their behaviors regarding how they use discretion.

Other studies have proposed that police officers' decision making and behaviors have been affected by the factors surrounding the situations or incidents that they handle. Black's (1971, 1980) research has been influential in this area of general arrest theory. He explored police arrest decision making and arrest behaviors and noted that there were several factors that affected their discretion. The first step in determining whether a crime had been committed depended on whether a crime was reported to the police or if they observed the crime being committed first-hand. The considerations influencing the decision to arrest included the victim's preference for the suspect to be arrested, the type and availability of evidence, the seriousness of the crime, the relationship between the victim and the suspect, and the demeanor of the suspect when interacting with the police during the incident (Black, 1971).

Other researchers supported Black's theories throughout the years and used various measures to test arrest decision making data. The factors most important to the arrest decision making process that are most widely accepted in the current literature are the amount of evidence (Brown, Novak, & Frank, 2009; Linn, 2009), the seriousness of the crime (Brown, Novak, & Frank, 2009; Schulenberg, 2010), the preference of the victim (Novak, Frank, Smith & Engel, 2002; Smith & Visher, 1981; Smith, 1987), suspect demeanor (Worden & Shepard, 1996; Smith, 1987; Oppenlander, 1982), and the relationship between the suspect and the victim (Black, 1971; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1988).

Many of the current studies focused on suspect demeanor during the incident and police officer arrest decision making. Oppenlander (1982) reported that police officers charged offenders with an offense as "retribution for their hostility with police." Klinger (1996) found that police only arrested suspects who were "extremely hostile" during an incident. Smith (1987)

also found that the demeanor of both the victim and the suspect during the incident were critical variables in determining if the suspect would be arrested.

The third theory of individual officer factors influencing general on-the-job decision making has conflicting results in the research. Studies have been completed regarding officers' age, gender, race, and experience to determine their effect on their decision to make an arrest. Worden (1995) reported that police officer race and gender have no effect on the use of force. Terrill and Mastrofski (2002) validated this conclusion. Homant and Kennedy (1985) revealed in their research that female officers were more involved in certain incidents than male officers were. Dunham, Alpert, Strohshine, and Bennett (2005) noted that Caucasian officers were twice as likely to issue a ticket compared to other officers. Further research shows that years of service impacts officers' behaviors. Police officers with more experience are less likely to make an arrest during a domestic violence incident and their level of use of force decreased during incidents (Brecci, 1989; Stalans & Finn, 1995; Terrill & Mastrofski, 2002).

Little research has been written regarding School Resource Officers (SRO) and their arrest decision making in the school environment. Theriot (2009) utilized school arrest data in schools with and without SROs and discovered that arrests for disorderly conduct were more likely to occur in schools with an SRO than in schools without an SRO. However, his research did not analyze the arrest decision making process. Kupchick (2010) and Nolan (2011) both describe SROs' interactions with students but neither examines the arrest decision making process. Theriot specifically mentions SRO arrest decision making as an area of critical need of investigation. The only study that currently exists using student arrest data and analysis of the arrest decision making process was completed in 2012 in the state of Delaware. The study utilized surveys of SROs and arrest data, however, the school data was not accessed and the SROs were only contacted indirectly (Wolf, 2012).

As Black (1980) continued his research, he noted that how police deal with a specific incident will depend on the “characteristics of the police officers... and... their relationship with [those] involved” (p.5). This assertion may relate to the School Resource Officers’ (SROs) arrest decision making in the school environment since they have a unique relationship with students, staff, families, and the community at large. It is important to note that SROs who are permanently assigned to a school campus inevitably form connections to people who they work with regularly, which may impact their arrest decisions. A school community is a type of environment in which victims and offenders generally know each other and the SROs and the administrators and staff also know each other (Wolf, 2012). The relationships among all the parties involved in the constant daily occurrences in a school are much different when a permanently assigned SRO works there compared to different police officers who respond to incidents from a dispatched phone call. It is critical to consider the SROs’ thoughts and beliefs about these relationships and the arrest decision making in the school environment. It is also important to consider the school context including the zero tolerance policies guiding the school administrators in the incidents since they may have an impact on the SROs’ arrest decisions.

Zero Tolerance

School discipline in the United States has a history rooted in English beliefs (Parker-Jenkins, 1997). The 18th century American schoolroom used corporal punishment as classroom control and management through discipline (Conte, 2000). It wasn’t until the 19th century when “in loco parentis” was first recognized and implemented in American schools (Worley, 2003). “In loco parentis,” meaning “in place of the parent,” is the legal doctrine still in effect in the American public education system in which teachers and school officials assume parental rights of the minor students within the school environment (Worley, 2003).

During the Victorian age of the 19th century, parents viewed laziness and insubordination among their children as signs of sinfulness. Therefore, they saw teachers as the role models for preparing their children how to be moral and ethical citizens (Parker-Jenkins, 1997). Since this time in our history, teachers had been expected to teach students educationally and morally using “physical chastisement” or corporal punishment as the method of discipline in schools (Conte, 2000).

As various research and literature regarding child abuse and neglect began to emerge, corporal punishment in schools began to wane as a means to discipline students, and states began banning corporal punishment legally. By the 1970s, out-of-school suspensions and expulsions began to replace corporal punishment in schools as the discipline method used by school officials to remove disruptive students (Insley, 2001). Over the next ten years, schools nationwide began using more in-school suspensions rather than removing the students from the school environment. In this way, the students would be able to complete schoolwork with staff assistance and supervision in a structured school environment while discipline was still being maintained (Hanson, 2005).

The trendy, yet harsh, school discipline approach commonly used today in American public schools – zero tolerance – did not emerge until the late 1980s and 1990s. Zero tolerance has been defined as a:

“philosophy or policy that mandates the application of predetermined consequences, most often severe and punitive in nature, that are intended to be applied regardless of the seriousness of behavior, mitigating circumstances, or situational context” (Skiba et al., 2006).

Zero tolerance has been intended as a means to let people know that certain behaviors will not be tolerated. Zero tolerance began as a federal drug enforcement program in 1986 in San Diego in which cargo ships were being impounded for drug smuggling. The program became a model for border agents as they began charging those trying to enter the United States in vehicles with trace amounts of drugs and charging them with federal drug charges (Skiba et al., 2006).

As school officials were looking for new ways of curbing drugs, gangs, and weapons in the educational setting at this time in the 1980s, they looked to the federal zero tolerance programs. California, New York and Kentucky were the first states to mandate expulsions for students involved in drugs, fighting, and gang-related activity (Skiba, 2000). By 1993, zero tolerance policies in schools had spread nationally and expanded to include smoking on school property and school disruption behaviors.

In 1994, the federal government put their stamp of approval on the zero tolerance policies of the time through the passage of the Gun Free Schools Act. This legislation mandated that students possessing a firearm in school would be expelled from school for one calendar year and would be referred to the criminal or juvenile justice system through law enforcement (Skiba, 2000). Although the original Act only stated firearms as the reason for expulsion, later amendments added “any instrument that may be used as a weapon” (Skiba, 2000).

A state law known as Act 26 was added in Pennsylvania in 1995, which requires the expulsion of students who are in possession of a “weapon.” The policy defines a weapon as “anything capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.” Just like other states, Pennsylvania had to enact this law in order to qualify for federal funds under the Gun Free Schools Act of 1994 (Jordan, 2015). School districts nationwide have not only adopted the federal legislation of zero tolerance but they have expanded upon it to include other variations of student misbehavior. Districts now include drugs, fighting, alcohol, threats, profanity, and other types of disruptive

behavior (Skiba, 2000). Some school districts in Pennsylvania have utilized zero tolerance policies for school uniform violations and talking back to adults, even when it was not required by law (Jordan, 2015).

There are some states, including California and Massachusetts, which have applied suspensions and expulsions to incidents and behaviors that have occurred outside of school (Seymour, 1999). And, still there are variations in how school districts apply zero tolerance policies across the country and even in the same state. Some districts enforce the zero tolerance discipline policies as they are written and punish students for major and minor behaviors equally while other school districts have begun to use a progressive form of zero tolerance discipline structure allowing for the consequence to correspond to the seriousness of the offense (Skiba, 2000).

Suspensions and Expulsions

Suspensions and expulsions are the most widely used form of zero tolerance in American public schools. Compared to suspensions from school, expulsions are relatively infrequent. It appears as if they are reserved for the most severe and/or dangerous incidents in which the offender is removed from the regular school setting for a longer period of time (Sinclair, 1999).

Suspensions, on the other hand, are much more common in public schools. Over the course of almost 40 years, the use of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for high school students increased 40 percent from one in 13 students in 1972 to one in nine students in 2009 (Kang-Brown, Trone, Fratello, & Daftary-Kapur, 2013). Almost two million students annually are suspended from secondary schools in the United States (Kang-Brown et al., 2013). School suspensions are most frequently used for disciplining students who have been involved in serious incidents such as fights or other types of physical aggression (Costenbader & Markson, 1998; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997). However, suspensions are also used for many minor

offenses and misbehaviors, including insubordination and disrespect, attendance issues and school disruption (Skiba et al., 1997). Generally, students are suspended the least for the most serious offenses – drug possession, weapons violations, vandalism of school property, and assaults of school staff (Skiba, 2000).

In Pennsylvania, the most prevalent method of formal discipline used in public schools is out-of-school suspensions (OSS) (Jordan, 2015). During the 2011-12 school year, approximately 10 days OSS were issued for every 100 students. During the 2009-10 school year, one out of every 15 students was suspended from school at least once. The size of the school district is not the best predictor for the suspension rate. Out of ten school districts in Pennsylvania with the highest suspension rates, only two are among the ten largest school districts in the state (Jordan, 2015). For example, the top four school districts in Pennsylvania with the highest number of suspension rates are York City School District with an overall enrollment of 5196; Sto-Rox School District with an overall student enrollment of 1383; Woodland Hills School District with an overall student enrollment of 4048; and, the Wilkinsburg Borough School District with an overall student enrollment of 1100. The York City School District had 91.4 suspensions per 100 students; the Sto-Rox School District had 78.3 suspensions per 100 students; Woodland Hills School District had 70.4 suspensions per 100 students; and, the Wilkinsburg Borough School District had 59.3 suspensions per 100 students (Jordan, 2015).

The expulsion rate in Pennsylvania corresponds to the national comparison of being much more infrequent compared to the suspension rate. An expulsion, as defined in Pennsylvania law, is the removal of a student from school for more than 10 consecutive school days, which must be approved by the majority vote of the school district's governing body or the local education agency, which can be the superintendent of schools (24 P. S. § 26-2603-B 1949). Expulsions can also include waiver provisions in which the superintendent determines the length

of the expulsion without the formal hearing in front of the governing body of the school district. Since expulsions are such a severe form of punishment for students and are meant for violent and dangerous behaviors, they are a rare form of discipline in schools. The expulsion rate in the 2011-12 school year in Pennsylvania was a mere 1800 compared to 166,000 out-of-school suspensions (Jordan, 2015).

Another study showing the implementation of zero tolerance was completed in Texas in 2011. The researchers tracked every student in Texas who entered seventh grade for six years. They discovered that 60 percent of those students were suspended or expelled while in middle school or high school. Those suspensions and expulsions were for offenses involving conduct that was a violation of the school district's code of conduct, such as tobacco or disruptive behavior (Kang-Brown et.al., 2013).

The underlying theory of zero tolerance is that effective and strong discipline helps to maintain an orderly school environment by minimizing disruptions, showing others examples of discipline and ensuring that they won't want to face the same harsh consequences, and by doing so, preventing dangerous incidents from occurring. However, there is no research that shows increases in suspensions and expulsions reduce classroom disruption. Generally, suspension and expulsion rates are not associated in any way to the school's overall levels of success (Kang-Brown et.al., 2013). The research does show that out-of-school suspensions can disrupt a student's academic growth, which can have long-term consequences. A single suspension or expulsion doubles the risk of a student repeating a grade (Fabelo, 2011), and being retained increases the odds of dropping out of school (Jimerson, Anderson, & Whipple, 2002). One study showed that students with only one school suspension were 68 percent more likely to drop out of school (Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007). The findings have shown that the importance of keeping

students in the school environment and engaged, especially when they are having behavioral problems, is critical (Fabelo, 2011).

The severity of zero tolerance practices intensified in some states and in some school districts with the assignment of police in the schools. As a result, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of students arrested and referred to juvenile court for infractions once handled by school administrators. This phenomenon has been referred to as school criminalization (Wald & Losen, 2003).

School Criminalization

The use of suspensions and expulsions have become common through the use of zero tolerance policies in schools throughout the United States; so too have the reliance on police in schools to assist in responding to student misconduct. With increasing numbers, suspensions and expulsions result in students being arrested. In many cases, schools are punishing students for the same incident by not only suspending them but also referring them to law enforcement. Students are being suspended or expelled and then arrested or referred to juvenile court for misconduct at school. Research is showing that, in many states and school districts, zero tolerance policies are being implemented by the School Resource Officers (SRO) (Na & Gottfredson, 2011).

The public's perception regarding victimization and overall violence in society has changed over the last several decades. Amendments to public policies concerning juvenile conduct and misbehavior have reflected those beliefs. Since 1992, 45 states have made it easier through the legal process to try juveniles as adults, 31 states have made more stringent penalties against juveniles for various offenses, and 47 states relaxed confidentiality clauses regarding juveniles (Wald & Losen, 2003).

Originally, the involvement of the police in school incidents was limited to serious offenses such as drugs and weapons. Over time, police have gotten increasingly involved in

minor offenses as well. This pattern is parallel to that which has been seen with zero tolerance policy implementation. Every year, there are over three million suspensions and more than one million expulsions of students nationwide (Planty, Hussar, & Snyder, 2009). These numbers have doubled since 1974 with the rates mounting during the 1990s as zero tolerance policies were becoming widespread (Skiba, 2000). Although the rates of suspension and expulsion were rising in schools, the overall numbers of school violence were generally declining (Skiba, 2000). For example, from 1993 to the present, the number of students involved in fights has been stable, while the amount of juvenile court referrals for minor misconduct has escalated (Casella, 2003).

School Resource Officers were first employed in Pennsylvania in 1997 and their numbers have continued to rise since then. In the 2003-04 school year, 26 school districts utilized SROs; and, by the 2011-12 school year, there were 87 school districts that utilized SROs. The SROs in Pennsylvania have no statewide set of standards regarding their role in schools and the overall expectation regarding their contact and interaction with students. In fact, there is increased concern regarding the ever-increasing contact between students and police and the inevitability of police involvement in everyday school disciplinary matters (Jordan, 2015). The arrest rates of students in school-related incidents have increased while the numbers of SROs in schools have also continued to increase (Jordan, 2015).

Serious violent crime in schools has decreased since the early 1990s. In fact, the General Accounting Office reported that school incidents involving firearms and other weapons were exceedingly infrequent and rare (U.S. GAO, 2001). The issue remains, however, that students are still being referred to the juvenile court systems in record numbers even though the serious, violent, and dangerous behaviors in schools are declining. During the 2004-05 school year in Florida, more than 75 percent of the almost 27,000 school-related referrals to the Florida

Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) were for minor behavioral offenses such as disorderly conduct, trespassing, or misdemeanor assault (Hirschfield, 2008).

School administrators in Pennsylvania have discretion regarding school discipline in all areas except when they are mandated to report and refer students to outside law enforcement for specific acts and behaviors as outlined by state law. In 2010, Act 104, revised Pennsylvania school code to list specific student conduct for which school officials are required to notify police immediately (Act 104 of 2010. P.L. 996 No. 104, 2010). There is also an additional list of incidents in the law, which school officials may, but are not required to, notify local law enforcement. This list includes incidents such as simple assault, harassment, theft, disorderly conduct, tobacco sale or use, alcohol-related matters, and making terroristic threats (Jordan, 2015). The law may encourage schools to report matters that they would otherwise have handled themselves.

Pennsylvania school districts often refer students involved in even minor misconduct to law enforcement as part of zero tolerance discipline methods. Many of the law enforcement referrals result in citations for summary offenses, which commonly are disorderly conduct or harassment charges (18 Pa. Code §106(c). A summary offense is the lowest-level criminal offense in Pennsylvania with no possibility for jail time; and, it does not offer the Sixth Amendment right to counsel. The students who receive citations through the referral process will appear in a magisterial court usually with no counsel (18 Pa. Code §106(c).

There is no current data to show why or how the students are receiving the summary offense charges and who is determining why and when they should receive them. The police officers who are permanently assigned to the school campus are easily accessible and therefore can respond quickly to a school administrator, whereas a police officer being called into the

school from the street to issue a summary offense citation is not as readily available to handle school administrative referrals.

As the presence of SROs in schools has increased over time, research has shown that minor incidents are intensified into criminal issues. A study of police officers assigned to schools in Clayton County, Georgia showed a 600 percent increase in referrals to juvenile court over three years. During that same time, however, there were no increases in serious violations (Sherrod, Huff, & Teske, 2008). The Philadelphia School District experienced increases in student arrests as well. Between the 1999-2000 school year and the 2002-2003 school year, the number of arrests in schools increased from 1632 to 2194 (Hirschfield, 2008). And, in Denver, law enforcement referrals soared 71 percent from 818 in the 2000-2001 school year to 1401 in the 2003-2004 school year (Hirschfield, 2008).

One reason for the rise in referrals for minor misconduct is that the easily accessible SRO enables a straightforward yet strict processing of minor offenses and an equally severe response to minor disciplinary incidents (Kupchik, 2010). School Resource Officers may also depend on legal definitions and formally processing, which removes the school administrators' discretion. Once minor behavioral problems are considered criminal problems and teachers are expected to rely on police in dealing with disciplinary problems, discipline responsibilities tend to be shifted away from teachers and administrators to the SROs (Skiba et al., 2006).

Chapter Summary

School Resource Officers (SRO) have a long history in the United States, beginning at least in 1939. They started in Indianapolis as a special investigative unit and then later as security in Los Angeles (Coy, 2004). The Flint, Michigan police program did not begin until the 1950s and there are records of police invited into schools prior to that as instructors in general safety courses for students (Lambert & McGinty, 2002).

Although SROs in American public schools have a lengthy past, there are still no consistent guidelines or procedures regulating their role and behavioral expectations when dealing with today's students and the educational organization (Jordan, 2015). It has become increasingly important to define the SROs' roles and responsibilities as the numbers of SROs permanently assigned to school campuses rises.

Through research, it has been shown that bringing two different types of organizational missions together – police and education – is not always the best decision for the education needs of students in a school environment (Moore, 2001). There are communication problems between the SROs, the school administrators and the law enforcement supervisors (May, Fessel, & Means, 2004) and varying perceptions on the effectiveness of the SRO in the school environment (Johnson, 1999).

The arrest-decision making process of the SRO and police officer is also important as they are the individual responsible for determining which students get arrested, what the arrest is for and why they are arrested. There are various research theories as to why someone is arrested including the amount of evidence (Brown, Novak, & Frank, 2009; Linn, 2009), the seriousness of the crime (Brown, Novak, & Frank, 2009; Schulenberg, 2010), the preference of the victim (Novak, Frank, Smith & Engel, 2002; Smith & Visher, 1981; Smith, 1987), suspect demeanor (Worden & Shepard, 1996; Smith, 1987; Oppenlander, 1982), and the relationship between the suspect and the SROs and their arrest decision making in the school environment.

Since the late 1990s, the research has shown that the school violence rates have steadily declined (Price, 2009); however, the use of zero tolerance policies by administrators has increased. The zero tolerance policy implementation was in direct response to the Gun Free Schools Act of 1994 and was tied to federal funding (Jordan, 2015). The states that enacted such policies, including Pennsylvania, had to incorporate a provision for expelling students for one

calendar year who possessed a firearm on school property with an additional law enforcement referral for the same incident (24 P. S. § 26-2603-B 1949). The Act was later expanded to include other weapons and individual school districts added their own minor offenses for zero tolerance violations for out-of-school suspensions and law enforcement referrals including insubordination and dress code violations (Jordan, 2015).

The addition of increased SROs in schools across the nation at the same time of the expanded federal funding for the various law enforcement programs also saw an increase of student arrest rates in schools for minor behavioral offenses (Hirschfield, 2008; Jordan, 2015). The possibility for this increase is the more easily accessible SRO on the school campus as well as their more heavy involvement in school discipline incidents, which were historically school administrative prerogatives. There are limited studies, which address student arrest rates and the types of offenses the students are arrested for as well as the SROs' arrest decision making processes for the student arrest. It is critical to determine how many students are being arrested in school, what types of offenses they are being arrested for, and the decision making process of the person making the arrest in the school environment.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe the factors influencing the arrest decisions of School Resource Officers (SRO) and School Based Police Officers (SBPO) and their impact on student arrest rates and school administrator imposed exclusionary discipline rates in two secondary schools in northeastern Pennsylvania. In addition, the SROs/SBPOs described their role and function in the school setting. Data was gathered from several sources including school district student arrest and discipline rates, School Resource Officer surveys, SRO/SBPO interviews and school administrator interviews. The descriptive research method was used for this study to address the guiding research questions:

1. What factors contribute to the School Resource Officers'/School Based Police Officers' decisions of whether to arrest students in the school setting?
2. How do zero tolerance approaches influence student arrest rates and student exclusionary discipline rates in schools that utilize School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers?
3. What role do the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers have in the school environment?

Chapter three includes an overview of the research design, an explanation of the selection of participants, the study setting, and the timeline of the study. The research methodology and rationale for the choice of methods is also outlined. The chapter presents the information pertaining to data collection, instruments used, and data analysis of the study. This study will add to the literature of police officers in schools and outcome measures, including student arrest rates

and student exclusionary discipline data, since extant studies are limited in terms of sampling or participant response rates.

Study Design

This study utilized a descriptive research design and employed the qualitative research method to describe student arrest rates and exclusionary discipline on the school campus among School Resource Officers (SRO)/School Based Police Officers (SBPO) and secondary administrators. The benefit of using a qualitative research approach is that it provides comprehensive knowledge of an occurrence or an experience (Gay, Mills, & Airisian, 2009). Since descriptive research utilizes qualitative methodologies, it describes phenomena with more vigor, organizes the data in distinctive and descriptive ways, and focuses on the participants' experiences.

Descriptive research specifies the type of research questions and data analysis applied to the study. Descriptive research describes a phenomenon rather than determining causality between variables (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). This study gathered data describing phenomena in the secondary school environment, and then organized that data into visual and other forms of manageable information (Glass and Hopkins, 1984). The phenomena described in this study were the student arrest rates and exclusionary discipline rates among SROs and SBPOs and administrators in two high schools in northeastern Pennsylvania, as well as the SROs' and SBPOs' arrest decision making as they related to the student arrest rates related to the respective school campuses and their role within the school setting.

Rationale

The research questions of this study were developed to determine the factors influencing the arrest decisions of School Resource Officers and School Based Police Officers and their impact on student arrest rates and school exclusionary discipline rates in two secondary schools

over the course of two school years. The utilization of the qualitative methodology promoted the information gathering process related to the collection of the surveys and the interviews. Since research has shown that the use of qualitative data collection regarding police officers' behavior has enhanced the quality and depth of the information, this study employed the qualitative method to answer the guiding research questions (Gorard, 2013).

Research Study Phases

This study took place in several phases. In the first phase, school districts in northeastern Pennsylvania were contacted to determine if they utilize a permanently assigned School Resource Officer (SRO) and/or a School Based Police Officer (SBPO) in their high school. It was necessary to determine what type of organization or agency employs the police officer and how they were associated with the school district. It was also necessary to determine how long the SRO/SBPO had been assigned to their high school as the longer the timeframe, the less likely the data would have been applicable. The researcher then established a list of prospective school districts that met these criteria and chose two high schools based on the non-random purposive sampling. The superintendents and building level administrators within those two school districts as well as the law enforcement administrators of the participating police officers were contacted for formal consent to begin the next phase of the study.

In phase two of the study, the researcher, the school district administrator, and the law enforcement administrator determined the SROs and the SBPOs who would be participating in the surveys through purposive sampling. It is important to note that most school districts in northeastern Pennsylvania utilize only one SRO per secondary school campus if they are assigned as a permanent full-time police officer. Since the data collection took place over the course of two school years, the SRO(s) and police officers involved in the study will have

responded to school law enforcement referrals from one or both school years in the data collection.

Once the researcher obtained the names of the SROs/SBPOs from the law enforcement agencies, letters of informed consent to the SROs/SBPOs were presented individually to each of the participants (Appendix A). Follow-up phone calls and emails were made to the participants to answer any questions they had relative to the study. Once written authorization was received from all those involved including the school districts, the police departments, and the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers, then the data collection began and the surveys to the SROs/SBPOs were distributed. The SROs and SBPOs were also interviewed face-to-face after the completion of the surveys. The interviews focused on the role as the SRO/SBPO in the school environment. The interviews were also audio-recorded and transcribed for later qualitative analysis.

In phase three, the researcher collected data from the school district, which included law enforcement referrals of students and exclusionary disciplinary referrals for the two school years. The law enforcement referrals included all student arrests in the high schools participating in the study. The exclusionary discipline data included all out-of-school suspensions, alternative placement rates, and expulsions involving misdemeanors, summary offenses, and felony level offenses among the different SROs/SBPOs assigned to the school campuses for the period of the two school years.

Lastly, in phase four, the researcher conducted individual face-to-face interviews with the secondary school administrators who were involved in assigning the exclusionary discipline to the students in the participating schools during the two school years of the data collection. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for later qualitative analysis. The interviews with the school administrators focused on their decision making regarding exclusionary discipline and

SRO/SBPO involvement in school-based arrests. After the collection of student arrest rates and exclusionary discipline rates and SRO surveys, and the completion of the interviews, the researcher analyzed the data and presented the findings.

Selection of Participants and Study Setting

Prior to beginning the study, the researcher applied to the university Internal Review Board (IRB) for research involving human subjects. The IRB application included details regarding the study's purpose and objectives, participant selection, research methodology, informed consent, and benefits of the study. Participants were contacted after the full IRB approval was received.

The study setting was selected based on the whether a School Resource Officer/School Based Police Officer was permanently assigned to the school district's high school. It was also dependent on how long the SRO/SBPO has been assigned to the high school as the data collection applicability and validity was contingent on the when the police officer was assigned to the high school (i.e. ten years ago, one year ago). The SRO is a full-time certified police officer who is employed by the municipality or other police department which serves or oversees the school district. The SRO typically works at the same school building everyday, unless they are assigned to a larger school campus. The SBPO is a certified peace officer who is employed by the school district with the goal of increasing safety and security for the school (Denham, Robles-Pina, Polnick & Webb, 2016).

This study described the student arrest rates, and school exclusionary discipline rates as well as police officer arrest decision making and their role in the school setting. The criteria for participation in the study are high schools that have had a permanently assigned full-time School Resource Officer and/or a School Based Police Officer during the two-year collection period of the study.

The researcher, the school district administrator, and the police department administrators mutually agreed on the SROs/SBPOs to be surveyed regarding their arrest decision making. The administrators selected for the sample were assistant principals and/or principals who assigned discipline in the high schools within the two school years of the study in the participating high schools. The SROs/SBPOs and administrators' participation was voluntary and without compensation. A review of student arrests, and school exclusionary discipline rates were also conducted among the different SROs/SBPOs and school administrators assigned to the high school campuses.

Instruments

School Resource Officer Survey Instrument

Several sources of data collection were used in this study including a survey, student outcome data related to discipline and law enforcement referrals, and school administrator and police officer interviews. The purpose of the School Resource Officer survey in the study was to determine the arrest decision making of the SROs/SBPOs in a school environment.

Research Question 1 provided the focus for the review of the School Resource Officer Survey data:

- What factors contribute to the School Resource Officers'/School Based Police Officers' decisions of whether to arrest students in the school setting?

The School Resource Officers Survey Instrument (Wolf, 2012) was used to gather data from the SROs/SBPOs regarding their arrest decision making in the school environment (Appendix B). The survey was developed for SROs in the state of Delaware to determine their arrest decision making capabilities in a school environment versus on the street. It consisted of four sections: factors that affect the arrest decision making process, attitudes towards the juvenile justice system, training regarding arrest decision making, and demographic information.

The section of the survey, which asked questions regarding factors affecting the arrest decision making process, was measured on a Likert scale. A set of arrest scenario questions was next in the survey. Four of these questions ask how often the SRO decides to arrest students for minor misconduct with specific conditions. The other four questions ask the SRO how often they decide not to arrest students even when there is reason or evidence to make an arrest. According to Wolf, the survey included these questions to verify whether the SROs' answers regarding the factors of their arrest decisions corresponded with their actual arrest decision making behavior (2012). Five of the arrest scenario questions are associated with five of the factor type questions. The other three scenario questions deal with occurrences in which school resource officers may exercise discretion.

The researcher involved in the development of the School Resource Officer Survey Instrument administered pre-tests in order to determine the survey's validity. The consistency of the SROs' answers to the first set of questions compared to the five scenario questions was tested using the Spearman Correlation Test (Wolf, 2012). Figure 1 displays the outcome of the test. According to Wolf's study, the Spearman Correlation indicated high rates of correlation (significant at $<.05$) for four out of five of the questions. This signifies that the School Resource Officers who participated in Wolf's pre-test were consistent in their responses regarding the factors that they thought were important to the arrest decision making process and how those factors have actually influenced their decisions in the past (2012). These findings provide validity to the survey and reliability to the School Resource Officers' responses to the questions in the survey.

Factor	Scenario	Significant at .05 Level	Spearman Correlation
The Wishes of Teachers	In the past, I have arrested a student for a relatively minor offense because a teacher wanted the student to be arrested.	Y	.574
Expectations of Whether Student Will Continue to Misbehave	In the past, I have decided NOT to arrest a student who had committed an arrestable offense because the student promised to stop misbehaving.	Y	.505
The Student's History of Misbehavior	In the past, I have decided NOT to arrest a student who had committed an arrestable offense because that student had never been in trouble before.	Y	.371
The Student's Attitude When Approached about the Alleged Misbehavior	In the past, I have arrested a student who was acting in a disorderly manner because it was the only way to calm the student down.	Y	.369
The Need to Ensure the Student is Punished	In the past, I have arrested a student for a relatively minor offense to show the student that actions have consequences.	N	.268

Figure 1. Correlation Between Arrest Factors and Arrest Scenarios

Source: Kerrin Wolf, 2012, School Resource Officer Survey Instrument.

The protocol this researcher used with the School Resource Officer Survey Instrument followed a three-step process. First, the researcher contacted the School Resource Officers (SRO) and School Based Police Officers (SBPO) who were participating in the survey via telephone to determine a place and time to meet to administer the survey. Second, the researcher personally administered the surveys to the participants, as it was a small group of SROs/SBPOs. Since this was a cross-sectional survey, data was collected from individuals at a single point in time. It was a stand-alone study, meaning, it was not a longitudinal study; the data provided a snapshot of the participants' current behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs at a current place in time

(Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). Since the surveys were personally administered by the researcher, there was no need for a follow-up for the surveys to be completed.

Third, the researcher reviewed the data collected per survey and analyzed the information using the descriptive research method and wrote a brief narrative of the survey outcome (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009).

Police Officer Interview Protocol

The researcher interviewed the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers who also participated in the School Resource Officer survey. The interviews were focused on the role of the SRO/SBPO in the school environment (Appendix D). The questions used in the interview protocol were developed by Jack McDevitt and Peter Finn in a study regarding police officers in schools (2005). Research Question 3 provided the focus for the review of the police officers' interview data:

- What role do the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers have in the school environment?

The original questions developed by McDevitt and Finn encompassed several interview guides from their research study involving SRO programs in 19 site locations. Based upon the relevancy to this study, select interview questions were chosen with the assistance of an expert panel to ensure their validity. The expert panel included professors who are directly involved with police officer training programs as well as current law enforcement officers and law enforcement administrators.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face and audio recorded. The police officers who participated in the interviews signed an informed consent indicating their agreement of the recording and each interview session began with the interviewee acknowledging that he or she

agreed to be recorded. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed for later data analysis using a qualitative coding analysis process (Saldana, 2009).

Administrator Interview Protocol

The researcher interviewed the school administrators involved in assigning the exclusionary school discipline. The interviews were designed to determine the administrators' decision making regarding exclusionary discipline as well as their potential involvement with the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers in school-based arrest incidents (Appendix C). The questions used in the interview protocol were developed by Janell Wood in a study regarding zero tolerance policy implementation (2008). Two additional questions were added to the interview protocol to address research question number two. Research Question 2 provided the focus for the review of the school administrators' interview data:

- How do zero tolerance approaches influence student arrest rates and student exclusionary discipline rates in schools that utilize School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers?

All interviews were conducted face-to-face and audio recorded. The school administrators involved in the interviews signed an informed consent indicating their agreement of the recording and each interview session began with the interviewee acknowledging that he or she agreed to be recorded. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed for later data analysis using a qualitative coding analysis process (Saldana, 2009).

School Arrest and Discipline Data

The examination of the student exclusionary data included student arrest rates among the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers and the exclusionary discipline rates by the school administrators.

Research Question 2 provided the focus for the review of the student data:

- How do zero tolerance approaches influence student arrest rates and student exclusionary discipline rates in schools that utilize School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers?

This study's examination of student arrests as well as exclusionary discipline provided further awareness into the possible impact School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers may have had on the school environment. Trends and patterns of the data were considered, as the information was analyzed along with the survey and interview data. The data was collected from the school districts using their Student Information System (SIS). The law enforcement referrals were itemized into date of incident, type of offense, and student arrest or citation. The exclusionary discipline data were categorized into date of incident, type of action/discipline received, and type of offense.

The examination of the data was used in conjunction with the qualitative research methods in order to triangulate the data surrounding a specific phenomenon (Patton, 2001). Qualitative research uses more than one source of information to increase the validity of the study. Triangulation is a method in which the researcher analyzes the research questions from multiple points of view. It is important to note that the goal of triangulation is not necessarily to reach consistency across the data sources or methods. The variances in the data can lead to opportunities to discover more substantial significance within the study (Patton, 2001).

Data Analysis

Survey Data Analysis

Several School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers participated in the surveys during the Winter 2016. The surveys were distributed by the researcher in person. The surveys were mainly descriptive in nature in that the majority of the questions were preplanned

and structured around multiple choice questions. The responses were given predefined categories that the participant must choose from. The surveys allowed the researcher to generalize some opinions and behaviors among this group of participants. There were also eight additional open-ended exploratory questions in the survey for the participants to include any further information or expanded knowledge they may have had on the themes and topics included in the survey. Since this study was explicitly conducting research with specific individuals rather than a random sample, it was important to be able to expand upon their knowledge and experience instead of describing characteristics that a general population may possess (Gorard, 2013).

The researcher used the School Resource Officer Survey (Wolf, 2012) to determine the SROs'/SBPOs' arrest decision making capacity in a school environment versus on the street. The answers to the multiple choice questions within the survey were either labeled with a number denoting its significance – not important at all (1); to extremely important (5). The researcher summarized the answers from the multiple choice sections in narrative form for each participant and in some cases, recorded and displayed the items on a table or figure.

Administrator and Police Officer Interview Data Analysis

Each school administrator's interview and police officer's interview occurred face-to-face and was audio recorded and transcribed. There were three levels of analysis in the interview assessments in order to code the answers to the questions.

The qualitative analysis involved several steps in the analysis process in which patterns were located in the data and themes were determined (Taylor & Bogdan, 2008). Thematic analysis was used to locate patterns in the transcribed interview data. This type of analysis focuses on patterns of experiences described by the participants during the interview process that explain ways of living or patterns of behavior. The researcher determined the overarching themes that emerged from all of the interviewees based on these patterns.

The researcher then identified all of the data that relates to these previously categorized patterns or themes (Taylor & Bogdan, 2008). For example, after the overarching theme had been located, then any other related information was categorized with a corresponding pattern or as a sub-theme to the main category. Lastly, the researcher interpreted the data into narrative paragraphs describing the interview responses and analyzing the interview data.

Data Examination

The examination of the student arrest rates and student exclusionary discipline data employed qualitative analysis to describe the numerical information and interpret the data into a narrative form. This information was then displayed in a visual format, such as a table or figure for clear examination or review of the information. Since this study is a descriptive study, no causal comparisons can be made, therefore, it is important to show a categorization for the data and an examination of any similarities or dissimilarities that may occur across the settings or across the participants.

Limitations

The limitations of the study design take several items into account. First, the participants in the study were not representative of the entire School Resource Officer (SRO)/School Based Police Officer (SBPO) and school administrator population since the school districts had to meet specific criteria of grade level and SRO/School Based Police Officer (SBPO) assignment status. The generalization of the data collected will only be linked to these specific populations. This study consisted of two secondary schools, which were recognized as having at least one full-time SRO permanently assigned to the secondary school campus in one school district and having at least one full-time SBPO permanently assigned to the secondary school campus in the other school district.

The second limitation to the study design is the duration of the study. As a descriptive research design, this study employed cross-sectional data. The information gathered within the study is limited, since the data occurred during a snapshot in time and cannot signify a series of events linked with results. Therefore, it is not possible to assume causality with this research design.

A third limitation was the small number of participants in the survey and interview portions of the study. There were four School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers involved in the survey and interview collection and seven administrator participants involved in the interview data collection. The small amount of participants is not unusual for a descriptive study of this nature; however, it can create some difficulty for generalizations.

The final limitation concerns the researcher's identity. It is important to disclose the relevant features of the researcher's identity since they have been acting as the human qualitative research instrument regarding data collection and data analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The researcher is a professor at a university near the school districts in the study and who was formerly involved in law enforcement. The researcher's interest in the research study is related to not only his educational background and training in law enforcement but also his professional interest in studying the arrest decisions and potential impact police officers have on the local public school systems.

Protection of Human Subjects

Since this study utilized human subjects as participants, it was necessary to protect the subjects from harm, physically, mentally, and socially, and ensure that they participated in the research study of their own free will by informed consent. The adult participants were provided basic information about the study. The subjects were also given written documentation to provide their consent to participate in the study. Even after the informed consent was received

from the participants, the subjects still had the right to change their decision and decline to participate in the study.

The researcher ensured that the participants were free from harm by not exposing them to undue risks. This required strict confidentiality of information by restricting access to information or data collected. Consent forms have been kept for documentation purposes in a secure and restricted cabinet and transcribed interview notes will also be maintained for the length of the study in a secure location.

Chapter Summary

The goal of this study was to describe the factors influencing the arrest decisions of School Resource Officers and School Based Police Officers and their impact on student arrest rates, and school administrator imposed exclusionary discipline rates in two secondary schools. The descriptive research method was utilized and the qualitative research method was employed. Several types of data sources were used to gather information including School Resource Officer surveys, police officer interviews, school administrator interviews, and an examination of data including student arrest rates and student exclusionary discipline rates. Participants were chosen based on a predetermined set of criteria guided by the research questions. The study will conclude in a comprehensive analysis of the impact School Resource Officer/School Based Police Officer programs may have on the secondary school environment in terms of student based outcomes of arrest and exclusionary disciplinary rates.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This study examined student arrest rates and exclusionary discipline rates in two high schools among School Resource Officers (SRO), School Based Police Officers (SBPO) and secondary administrators over the period of two school years. Furthermore, the study examined the factors influencing arrest decisions of the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers involved. Data were gathered from several sources including school district discipline and arrest data, School Resource Officer surveys, SRO/SBPO interviews and school administrator interviews. The data collected from the participants and their respective school districts were used to answer the following research questions:

1. What factors contribute to the School Resource Officers'/School Based Police Officers' decisions of whether to arrest students in the school setting?
2. How do zero tolerance approaches influence student arrest rates and student exclusionary discipline rates in schools that utilize School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers?
3. What role do the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers have in the school environment?

Study Participants

The criterion for participation in this study was a secondary school in Pennsylvania with a permanently assigned full-time School Resource Officer or a permanently assigned full-time School Based Police Officer. The SROs and SBPOs selected for participation in the study were those assigned to the participating high schools during the 2014-15 and/or the 2015-16 school years. Furthermore, the school administrators who worked in the high schools during the 2014-

15 and/or 2015-16 school years were also selected for participation in the study. The study began by contacting school districts in northeastern Pennsylvania to determine if they met the criteria. Two school districts were chosen through non-purposive sampling – one with a School Resource Officer and one with a School Based Police Officer. The researcher, the school district administrators, and the police department administrators mutually agreed on the SROs/SBPOs to be surveyed regarding their arrest decision making. The administrators selected for the sample were assistant principals and principals who assigned discipline in the two high schools within the two school years of the study in the participating school districts. The administrators who agreed to participate in the study were interviewed using the School Administrator Interview protocol (Appendix C). The SROs/SBPOs were interviewed using the Police Officer Interview protocol (Appendix D) and also participated in a survey regarding arrest decision making in schools. The SROs’/SBPOs’ and school administrators’ participation was voluntary and without compensation. A separate review of data regarding student discipline and arrest rates was also conducted in both school districts.

School Resource Officer Survey Instrument

The School Resource Officer Survey was designed to gather data regarding SROs’ arrest decision making (Wolf, 2012). The survey included three sections of questions focused on factors that might influence the police officers’ arrest decisions in the school environment. The survey included questions regarding the amount of discretion they exercise, their perceptions of how arrest decisions are different in school compared to on the streets, and the extent to which they collaborate with others when making arrest decisions in the school setting.

The first set of questions identified what affected the SROs’/SBPOs’ arrest decisions. The participants were asked to rate how important certain factors were to their arrest decision making, using a 5-point scale, with “1” being not important at all and “5” being extremely

important. The questions included a total of 13 factors, originating from Black's general theory of arrest (1971, 1980).

The next section of the survey contained questions associated to the SROs'/SBPOs' justification for arresting students for misbehavior, since these beliefs might affect their arrest decision making. The questions were designed to determine the extent to which SROs/SBPOs believe involvement in the juvenile justice system has rehabilitative, deterrent, and incapacitating effects. The SROs/SBPOs responded using a 5-point scale, with "1" indicating - strongly disagree - and "5" indicating - strongly agree.

The survey also contained three supplementary questions. One question asked the SROs/SBPOs whether they had requested advice regarding their arrest decisions from others, including school administrators, teachers, other SROs, police supervisors, and probation officers. Another question asked how often the SROs/SBPOs made arrests when met with clear evidence that a student had committed an arrestable offense. This question was included to determine if the SROs/SBPOs acknowledged that they may exercise discretion when making arrest decisions in the school environment. Finally, the SROs/SBPOs were asked whether they believed the arrest decision was different in schools than on the streets, and, if so, why it was different. This gave the SROs/SBPOs an opportunity to explain in their own words how the school setting affected their arrest decisions.

Survey Results

There were four respondents who participated in the School Resource Officer Survey. Two participants were School Resource Officers (SRO) permanently assigned to Site A during one or both of the prescribed school years for the study (2014-15; 2015-16) and two were School Based Police Officers (SBPO) assigned to Site B during one or both of the prescribed school years for the study.

Discretion

The participants were asked to specify how often they made an arrest when they have compelling evidence that a student committed an arrestable offense in school. Only one respondent (SBPO_B1) answered that they made an arrest 100% of the time. SBPO_B2 and SRO_A2 both responded that they made arrests 80% of the time and SRO_A1 responded that he made arrests 60% of the time.

The School Resource Officers and the School Based Police Officers who participated in the survey noted that there were other situations besides an arrestable offense which may have led them to make an arrest or not in the school setting. One section of the survey presented certain scenarios involving arrest decisions. The participants indicated how often they experienced these situations. Four of the eight questions in this section asked the participants how often they decided *not* to arrest students in certain circumstances in which there was evidence of an arrestable offense. The other four questions in this section asked the participants how often they decided to arrest students for minor misbehaviors in certain circumstances. They had to choose the options of “never,” “rarely,” or “frequently” as possible answers to these questions. Table 1 illustrates the SROs/SBPOs response rates to these questions. It is important to note that in three of the eight scenarios presented, all of the participants indicated that they never arrested in those specific cases. They identified discretion in those three areas. It is also worth mentioning that every officer who participated in the survey, acknowledged at least one other scenario where they exercised discretion of arrest decision making within the school environment.

All of the SRO/SBPO participants noted that they had decided against making an arrest in at least one of the four scenarios presented to them in the survey.

Table 1

Arrest Scenarios Involving Arrest Decisions

Scenarios	SRO_A1	SRO_A2	SBPO_B1	SBPO_B2
In the past, I have arrested a student because it was the only way to calm a group of students down who were disrupting classes.	Rarely	Rarely	Frequently	Rarely
In the past, I have decided NOT to arrest a student who had committed an arrestable offense because the student promised to stop misbehaving.	Never	Never	Never	Never
In the past, I have arrested a student for a relatively minor offense because a teacher wanted the student to be arrested.	Rarely	Rarely	Frequently	Never
In the past, I have decided NOT to arrest a group of students who had been involved in a fight because they demonstrated to me that their fight was over.	Rarely	Never	Never	Rarely
In the past, I have arrested a student for a relatively minor offense to show the student that actions have consequences.	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely	Never
In the past, I have decided NOT to arrest a student who had committed an arrestable offense because the student cooperated with my investigation.	Never	Never	Never	Never
In the past, I have arrested a student who was acting in a disorderly manner because it was the only way to calm the student down.	Rarely	Never	Rarely	Never
In the past, I have decided NOT to arrest a student who had committed an arrestable offense because that student had never been in trouble before.	Never	Never	Never	Never

All of the officers indicated on the survey that they had never arrested a student in the past to calm them down. Two of the officers surveyed indicated that they had made arrests to show students that actions have consequences (SRO_A1 and SBPO_B2); and, all of the officers indicated on the survey that they had never arrested students for minor offenses because teachers had wanted the arrests to occur. None of the officers reported that they had arrested students to calm down a group of students who were disrupting classes.

In most circumstances, all of the officers surveyed indicated that they had not arrested a student who committed an arrestable offense because that student had never been in trouble before. Only one of the officers surveyed indicated that they had made arrests even when students cooperated with their investigations (SBPO_B2); only one officer surveyed also indicated that they had arrested students after a fight even when the students demonstrated that the fight was over (SBPO_B2); two of the officers surveyed indicated that they had not made arrests when students promised to stop misbehaving (SRO_A2; SBPO_B2). The survey results in this section indicated that although there were clear signs of criminal conduct, the officers used discretion in the school environment to not make arrests all of the time. This regular use of discretion has been indicated in several situations and under different circumstances in the school setting.

Due to the fact that this section of the survey requires the participants to self-report the rates of occurrence using the options of “never,” rarely,” or “frequently,” the responses do not disclose much about how often SBPOs and SROs make these decisions. The responses do suggest that different situations may impact their arrest decisions. The SBPO/SRO survey responses in the next section examine which factors the officers believe are important to the arrest decision.

Factors that Affect the Arrest Decision

The survey requested the participants to itemize the importance of 13 different factors to the arrest decision in the school setting using a five-point scale in which “1” signified that the factor was “not important at all” and “5” signified that the factor was “extremely important.” Table 2 shows the results of the participants’ responses indicating their response value for each factor. The higher the response value, the more important the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers thought the factor was to their arrest decision making.

Table 2

Factors Affecting the Arrest Decision Making

Factors	SRO_A1	SRO_A2	SBPO_B1	SBPO_B2
Quality of Evidence	5	5	5	5
Guidelines Provided by Applicable Laws, Rules, and Regulations	5	5	5	5
Nature of the Alleged Misbehavior	5	5	5	5
The Impact the Behavior Had on the Victim	5	5	5	5
Expectations of Whether Student Will Continue to Misbehave	3	4	5	5
The Student's History of Misbehavior	4	3	3	5
The Wishes of the Victims' Parent/Guardian	3	2	3	5
The Wishes of School Administrators	2	3	2	4
The Student's Attitude When Approached about the Alleged Misbehavior	3	1	1	5
The Student's Academic Achievements	2	1	3	3
The Need to Ensure the Student is Punished for Misbehavior	1	3	2	1
The Wishes of Teachers	2	3	1	1
The Potential Consequences of the Student's Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System	1	3	4	4

The participating SROs/SBPOs ranked the following factors as the four most important factors to their arrest decisions: quality of evidence, guidelines provided by applicable laws, rules and regulations, the nature of the alleged misbehavior and the impact the behavior had on the victim. The response values of these four factors were rated by the participants as “5,” which means that all of the participants deem these factors as “extremely important” to their decision of

whether to arrest a student for alleged misbehavior in the school environment. These results are somewhat consistent with the seminal research findings of Donald Black (1971) regarding police officers' arrest decisions. When researching the social situations under which police officers make an arrest, Black found that there are a variety of factors affecting their arrest decisions (Black, 1971). They include the quality of evidence, the seriousness of the incident or crime, the relational distance between the victim and the suspect, and the behavior of the suspect toward the police officer (Black, 1971).

The results of this study reflect the findings of Black's study in that all of the participants ranked the quality of evidence, the seriousness of the incident or crime, and the relational distance between the victim and the suspect as the most important factors affecting the arrest decision in school. The behavior of the suspect toward the police officer was not included in the most important factors by the participants in this study. The participants ranked this factor as number eight out of 13 factors in number of importance. This may be linked to later research completed by Black affirming how police deal with specific incidents is contingent on the responding police officer and their relationship with those involved (1980). The unique circumstances surrounding SROs/SBPOs in the school environment and their relationship with the school administrators and the students may provide an explanation as to why the suspects' behavior did not rank very high for a reason to make an arrest in the school setting for these participants. The suspects for the SROs/SBPOs in the school setting are usually the students with whom they interact on a day-to-day basis.

The participants ranked the expectations of whether the student will continue to misbehave, the student's history of misbehavior, and the wishes of the victim's parent/guardian as the fifth, sixth, and seventh most important factors. The importance of the victim's wishes regarding arrest has remained an important and consistent finding in arrest decision making

research. According to Smith and Visher (1981), police officers regularly consider the victims' requests for either leniency or arrest of the suspect.

The survey participants ranked the factors relating to the school setting as unimportant when looking at the rest of the factors in the survey. The wishes of the school administrators, the student's academic achievements, the need to ensure that the student is punished, and the wishes of the teachers were the least important factors according to the survey participants. Although the extant research regarding the role of SROs in schools states that the SRO/SBPO should work toward the suppression of criminal elements in the school environment that could jeopardize the students' educational program (Jackson, 2002), the SROs/SBPOs who participated in the survey, ranked the arrest decision making factor of student academic achievements as second to the last in terms of importance.

Although the survey may show that the school setting is relatively unimportant for the SROs/SBPOs in their arrest decision making, the next section exposes the survey participants' overwhelming belief that arrest decisions in the school setting are very different than arrest decisions made on the street. There were several factors the participants discussed as part of their rationales.

School Resource Officer Perceptions of the Effect of the School Setting on Arrests

The School Resource Officers and School Based Police Officers who participated in the survey were asked if the arrest decision making process is different when they are in the school setting compared to when they are on the street. All of the survey participants answered, "yes," that they believe the arrest decisions made in school are different than those on the street. Some officers suggested that they would not arrest as often in schools as "there are other avenues for discipline depending on the crime." Another officer added: "there are fewer options on the street where different accountability exists." Another respondent suggests that the school environment

is not as exigent as on the street. This participant said: “The street calls for more immediate action where in the school environment you have more time.” These responses suggest that the SROs/SBPOs consult and collaborate with the administrators and other staff within the school environment to work on alternative forms of punishment or assistance for students in lieu of arresting students in the school environment.

This information ties directly to the police interviews in which the SROs and SBPOs related that their work in schools is a collaborative process among building level administrators, central office administrators, and support staff. They also expanded on their ability to follow up on student incidents in the school setting due to the fact that students always come back to school the next day, whereas they cannot do that on the street.

The other factors the participants mentioned were the students’ age or ability to understand the consequences of their behavior and the lack of discretion in the school compared to on the street. One respondent felt that they had more autonomy on the street with juveniles rather than in the school setting. The officer explained that they must face stronger consequences in the school setting than on the street for accountability purposes to the parents. Another officer stated that “most students don’t know the laws and what they are doing is illegal.”

It is important to note that the SROs/SBPOs who participated in the survey have varied backgrounds and experiences from which to draw their perspectives. They all have unique views on the arrest decision process that occur in both settings. Although the arrest decisions made in the school setting and on the street share some commonalities, the distinctive climate within the school environment may affect arrest decisions in different ways.

Training Regarding Arrest Decisions

The School Resource Officers and the School Based Police Officers who participated in the survey were asked several questions on the survey related to training they have received

relative to the arrest decision making process in schools. All of the respondents noted that they sought guidance from school administrators, fellow SROs, and probation officers when deciding whether to arrest a student for an offense in the school setting. Two of the respondents said that they would ask teachers for guidance (SRO_A1; SBPO_B1), although it was ranked as the least important factors for arrest decision making in the school setting (Table 2). Three out of the four survey participants said they would seek guidance from their superior officers and the District Attorney's office when making an arrest of an offending student in the school setting (SRO_A1; SBPO_B1; SBPO_B2). Others who the SROs/SBPOs sought guidance from when making an arrest in the school setting included students, victims, and the victims' parents.

In terms of training that the SROs/SBPOs received regarding the arrest decision making process in the school environment, the formal on-the-job training was ranked as the most helpful to the survey respondents. Formal training was ranked as moderately helpful but as a participant clearly stated: "There is no formal training for the arrest making process in schools..." The survey results revealed that police officers in schools have a responsibility to two cultures everyday – the school culture and the law enforcement culture – when met with offending students. There are a large number of factors and members of the school and law enforcement communities who influence the arrest decisions of the individual police officers in the school setting.

The extant literature reflects this viewpoint in that several researchers have shown law enforcement organizational approaches have been influential on police behavior. The size of the police organization or the type of leadership from the police organization may determine the police behavior including demeanor and arrest decisions (Wilson, 1968; Black, 1980; Mastrofki, Ritti, & Hoffmaster, 1987).

Review of Student Exclusion Data

Student Arrest Rates

Student arrest rates and discipline rates were gathered from two school years – 2014-15 and 2015-16 – to determine how zero tolerance approaches may influence these data in the two high schools participating in the study that utilize either School Resource Officers or School Based Police Officers on their campus. Research question number two was used as a guide when examining the data:

- How do zero tolerance approaches influence student arrest rates and student exclusionary discipline rates in schools that utilize School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers?

Site A is a secondary school, which utilizes School Resource Officers as part of a permanent assignment within the high school. The School Resource Officers assigned to Site A are police officers supervised by the police department by which they are employed; they are assigned to work within the high school but are not employed by the school district. There were a total of 1,345 students enrolled at Site A during the 2014-15 school year with SRO_A1 assigned for the first half of the school year and SRO_A2 assigned for the second half of the school year.

Site B is a high school, which utilizes School Based Police Officers. They are school district employees and are commonly supervised by the school principals. There were a total of 1,372 students enrolled in Site B during the 2014-15 school year with SBPO_B1 and SBPO_B2 both assigned to this site during the school year.

The student data gathered from Site A during the 2014-15 school year showed a total of 25 law enforcement referrals made to the SROs with 17 arrests made by the police officers. The student arrest rate at Site A during the 2014-15 school year equaled about 1.3 percent of the high school. Figure 2 shows offenses students were arrested for by SRO_A1 and SRO_A2 in the

2014-15 school year. The three most common offenses were: fighting, disorderly conduct, and drug related offenses .

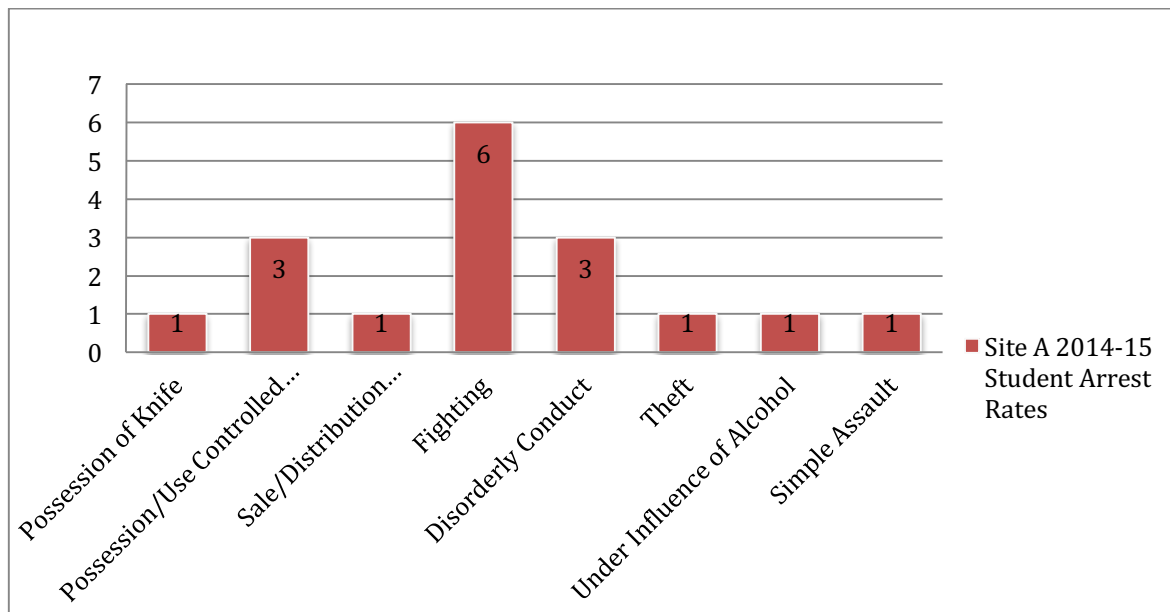


Figure 2. Site A Student Arrest Rates: 2014-15 School Year

When examining the data further, it is important to note that the majority of the student arrests were for summary offenses for minor misconduct – disorderly conduct, fighting, under the influence of alcohol, and assault.

The student data from Site B during the 2014-15 school year showed that there were 29 arrests made by the School Based Police Officers. The student arrest rate at Site B during the 2014-15 school year was about two percent of the population of the high school. Figure 3 shows the offenses that students were arrested for by SBPO_B1 and SBPO_B2 in the 2014-15 school year. The three most common offenses were: fighting, possession/use of a controlled substance, and simple assault.

Examination of the data further reveals that the majority of the student arrests made at Site B during the 2014-15 school year were for summary offenses for minor misconduct. These

minor offenses included fighting, reckless endangering, minor altercation, disorderly conduct, all other forms of harassment, and possibly vandalism.

Interestingly, although the two sites from the study are from two different school districts, the two high schools share similar arrest rate percentages in terms of misdemeanor and felonious arrests, regardless of the police model used – SRO and SBPO. The top three offenses that students were arrested for were different offenses but the arrest rates were similar.

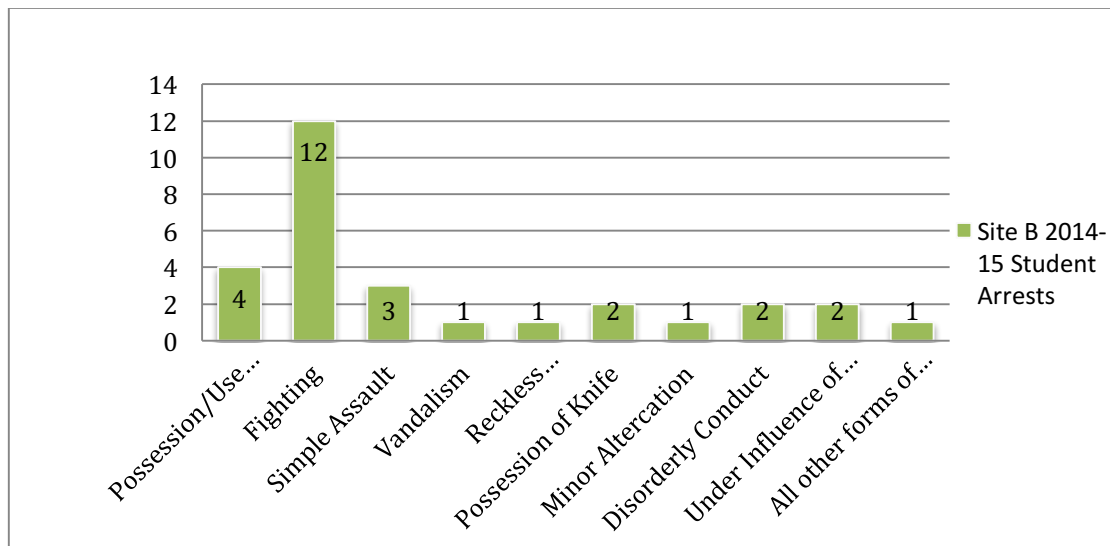


Figure 3. Site B Student Arrest Rates: 2014-15 School Year

The extant research regarding police officers in schools and increasing student arrest rates for minor misconduct while serious and violent crime is decreasing corresponds to the data found for both Site A and Site B for the 2014-15 school year. Theriot’s study compared two schools – one with an SRO and one without an SRO (2009). In the school with the SRO, there were 216 more arrests than in the school without the SRO. The most common charges in the school with the SRO were disorderly conduct, other, and drug-related. The charges listed in the “other” category were trespassing, theft, and vandalism. In the school without the SRO, the most common charges were drug related offenses, disorderly conduct, and possession/under the

influence of alcohol. The data from Site A and Site B are closely aligned with the school with the SRO in Theriot's study in that the most common arrest charges included disorderly conduct, theft, and vandalism; however, Theriot's study, like this one, also found that the most serious and violent offenses were rare incidents (2009).

Although the enrollment numbers decreased at Site A during the 2015-16 school year from 1,345 to 1,320, the arrest rates increased by seven students. The student arrest rate was 17 students in the 2014-15 school year, however, it increased to 24 students in 2015-16. During the 2015-16 school year, only one SRO was assigned to Site A – SRO_A2. There was also a change in the high school administrative staff between the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years.

The enrollment numbers increased slightly at Site B during the 2015-16 school year from 1,372 to 1,376; however, the arrest rates decreased by 10 students. The student arrest rate was 29 students in the 2014-15 school year and decreased to 19 students in the 2015-16 school year. Again, both SBPO_B1 and SBPO_B2 were both assigned to Site B during this school year.

The student data gathered from Site A during the 2015-16 school year showed a total of 29 law enforcement referrals made to the SROs with 24 arrests made by the police officers. The student arrest rate at Site A during the 2015-16 school year equaled about 1.7 percent of the high school. This is a slight increase from the previous school year of about four-tenths of a percent. Figure 4 shows the offenses that students were arrested for at Site A during the 2015-16 school year. The three most common offenses were: fighting, drug related offenses, and possession of a knife. During this school year, there were higher level offenses, including misdemeanors and felonies. The misdemeanor level arrests included weapons and theft offenses while the felony level arrests included drug related offenses. The summary offenses included fighting, disorderly conduct, and alcohol possession.

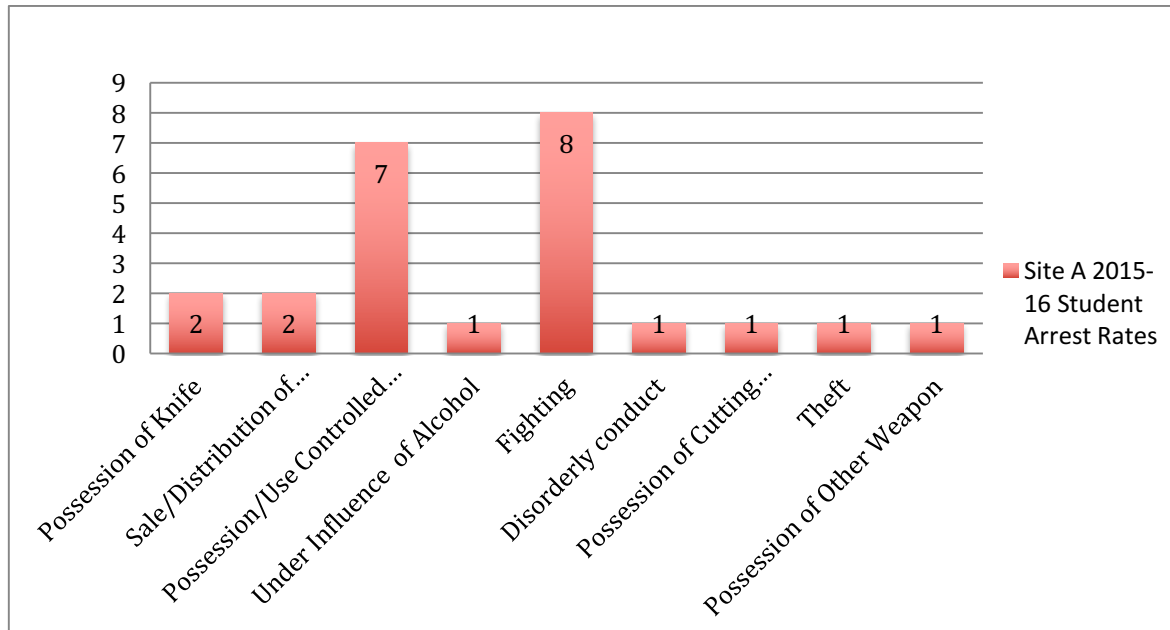


Figure 4. Site A Student Arrest Rates: 2015-16 School Year

The student data from Site B during the 2015-16 school year showed that there were 19 arrests made by the School Based Police Officers. The student arrest rate at Site B during the 2015-16 school year was about 1.3 percent of the population of the high school. This was a decrease from the previous school year by about seven-tenths of a percent. Figure 5 shows the offenses that students were arrested for by SBPO_B1 and SBPO_B2 in the 2015-16 school year. The three most common offenses were: possession/use of a controlled substance, theft, and sale/distribution of a controlled substance. Similarly to Site A during the 2015-16 school year, the amount of more serious level offenses outnumbered the amount of summary level offenses at Site B. The majority of arrests made at Site B during the 2015-16 school year were drug related, weapons related, or arrests related to violent incidents. No arrests were made at Site B in the 2015-16 school year for fighting or disorderly conduct.

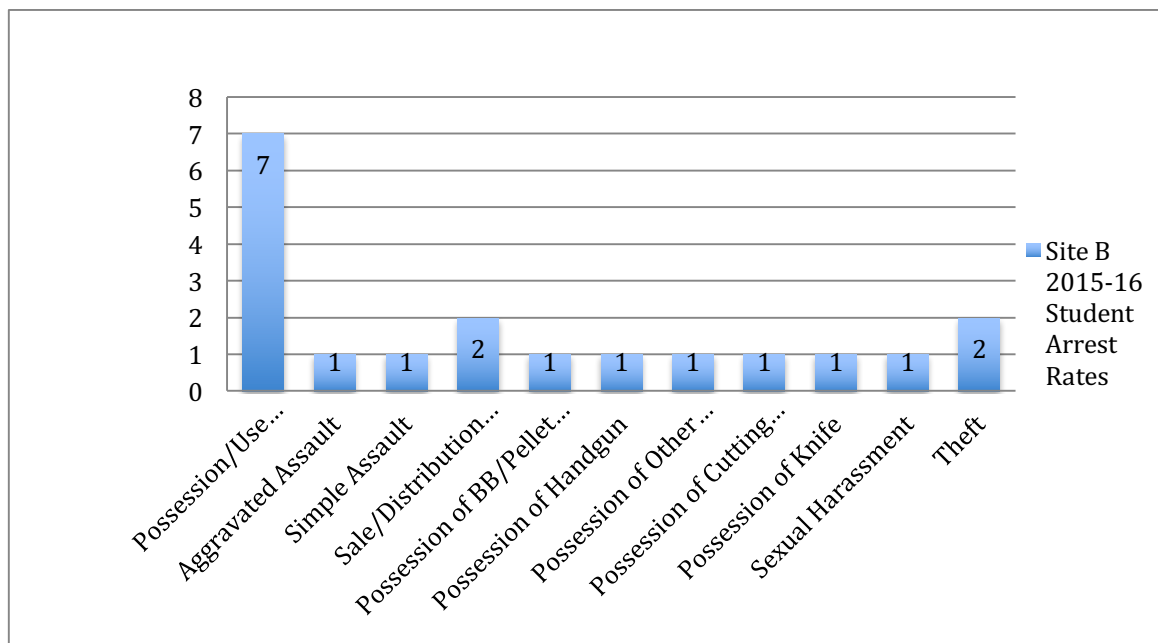


Figure 5. Site B Student Arrest Rates: 2015-16 School Year

The second year of data gathering at both sites is in direct contrast to the first year of data gathering at both sites regarding summary offenses, misdemeanors, and felonious arrest rates. Likewise, the data in this study in the 2015-16 school year is in conflict with the current research on police in schools and student offense types in schools. Several studies reported that incidents of violence and crime have been decreasing since the 1990s and police in schools have been arresting students for seemingly disruptive rather than dangerous behavior. In the 2004-05 school year, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice reported that 76 percent of student law enforcement referrals were for misdemeanors such as trespassing, disorderly conduct or fighting; these referrals were not for violent offenses (Browne, Dixon, Freeman, Harper, Koroma, & Williams, 2006). A similar report was found in Jefferson County, Alabama where students were being arrested in school for disorderly conduct and fighting rather than for more serious offenses such as weapons and drug related offenses (Huff, 2011). This study reflects this data in the first year of the data gathering at both sites in that the data showed the majority of student arrests

made for minor misconduct, however, it is in direct conflict for the second year of the data gathering in which both sites showed the majority of student arrests for felony level offenses.

Student Exclusion Rates

The student exclusion rates were gathered from both Site A and Site B from both the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. The exclusions included out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and alternative education assignments. All of the exclusions discussed in this section were assigned by the school administrators employed by the respective school districts in the study. Figures 6 and 7 illustrate the results of the exclusion rates at Site A and Site B for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years.

Site A had a higher rate of out-of-school suspensions in the 2014-15 school year than Site B. The school administrators at Site A suspended students out-of-school 136 times whereas Site B suspended students out-of-school 85 times. The 2015-16 school year had a slight decrease in

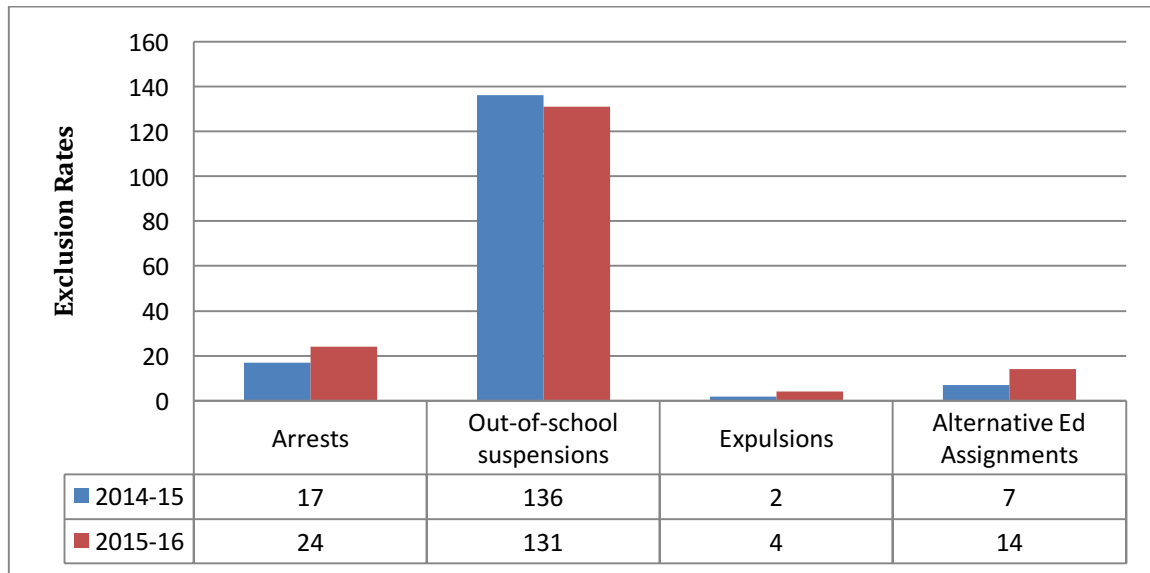


Figure 6. Site A Student Exclusion Rates: 2014-15 vs. 2015-16 School Years

in suspensions at Site A. The out-of-school suspensions at Site A totaled 131; the out-of-school suspensions at Site B equaled 86.

The expulsion rates for both years for Site B totaled zero. This is reflective of the administrative interviews whereby the three high school administrators described the former superintendent did not wish expulsions to be used as a form of student discipline. Figure 7 shows that high school administrators at Site B assigned alternative education assignments to eight students in 2014-15 and increased to 10 students in the 2015-16 school year.

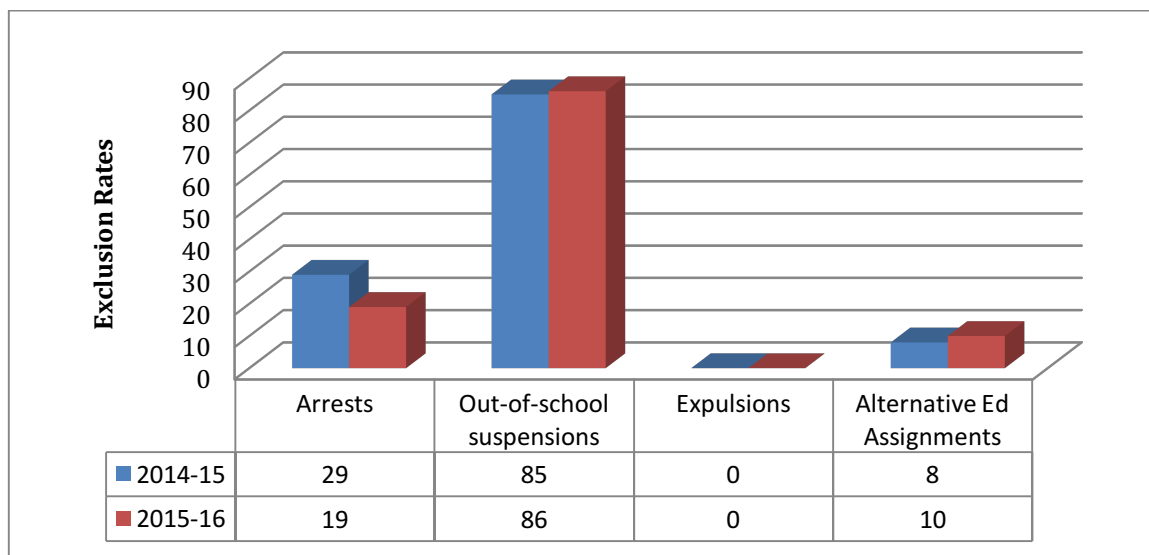


Figure 7. Site B Student Exclusion Rates: 2014-15 vs. 2015-16 School Years

The expulsion rates for Site A doubled from two students in the 2014-15 school year to four students in the 2015-16 school year. It is important to note that alternative education assignments can be utilized in place of expulsions for students but they do not commonly appear in the data sets. The alternative education assignments shown in the data gathering for Site A for the two school years also doubled – from seven students in the 2014-15 school year to fourteen students in the 2015-16 school year.

The type and amount of offenses that led to student alternative education assignments were not consistent from school year to school year for both Site A and Site B with the exception of drug related offenses for Site A. This could be related to differences in administrative interpretation of the discipline policies, administrative discretion to discipline students differently from year to year, and a change in administrative staff over the course of the two school years. It is important to note that alternative education assignments have been used in the place of expulsions in the school setting. Students are removed from the regular education environment ranging from 45 days to more than a full calendar year and placed in an alternative education environment without the requirement of an expulsion waiver or an expulsion hearing.

Students at Site A were assigned to an alternative education location based on a variety of factors including behavior after a one-time incident, such as a drug-related or weapons-related offense, or a culmination of behaviors over the course of a school year, such as in the case of truancy or insubordination. Figure 8 shows the itemization of the alternative education assignments at Site A and the student offenses which appeared to be the catalyst for the placements. The highest percentage of alternative education placements for both school years at Site A was for drug related offenses with three students in 2014-15 and three students in 2015-16. The second highest offense type in the 2014-15 school year was for threatening a school official; however, the second highest offense type in the 2015-16 school year was for weapons offenses.

For evaluation purposes, there were four students arrested for drug related offenses in the 2014-15 school year at Site A. Out of those students, three were placed in an alternative education assignment and one was expelled. In 2015-16, there were nine students arrested for drug related offenses at Site A. Out of those nine students, five were placed at alternative

education assignments and two were expelled. The other two students either stayed in the regular education setting at Site A or withdrew and went to another school district.

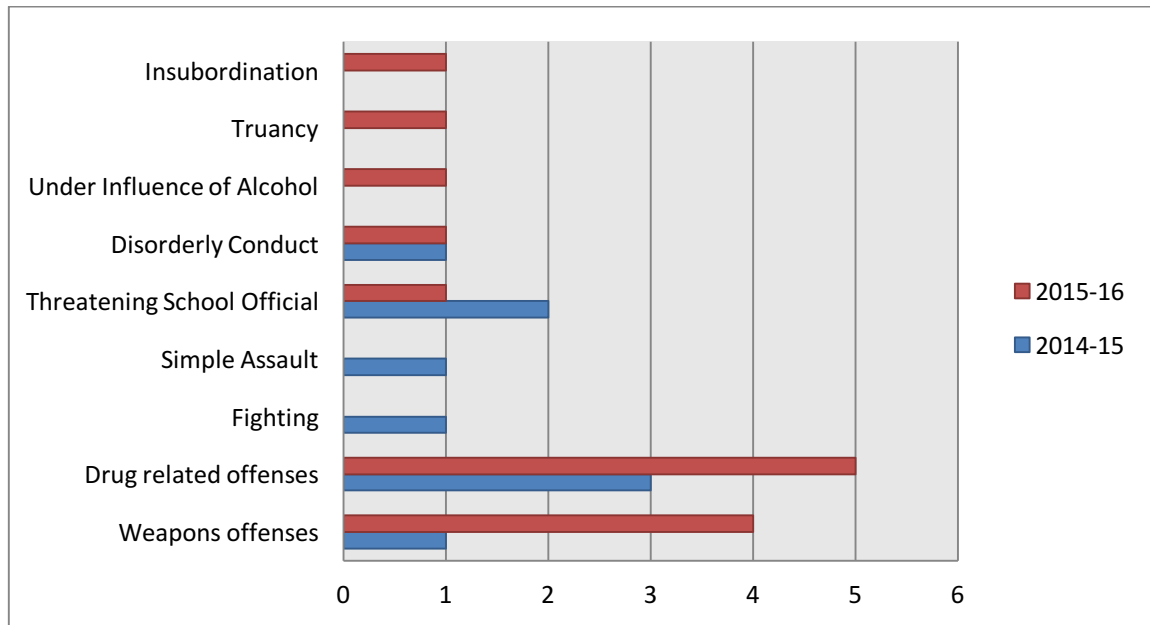


Figure 8. Site A Alternative Education Assignments: 2014-15 and 2015-16 School Years

In some cases, some offense types only occurred in one school year or the other at both site locations. Due to the lack of consistency in placements from administrator to administrator and possibly the change in administrative staff, it is not possible to review offense types year to year. It is interesting to include this data set, however, as the number of student expulsions appears low when reviewing to the number of students placed out of the districts due to disciplinary reasons.

In reviewing Figure 9, Site B has very few consistent disciplinary offenses from one school year to another. The highest offense rates in the 2014-15 school are shared equally between weapons related offenses and fighting. However, in the 2015-16 school year, the highest offense rate are for drug related offenses, which equals seven students. The amount of drug related arrests made at Site B during the 2015-16 school year totaled nine students. Examining

the data in its totality, this means that out of the nine students who were arrested for drug related offenses in the 2015-16 school year at Site B, seven of them were placed in alternative education assignments; two of the arrested students either stayed in the regular education environment or withdrew to another school district location, since this site experienced no expulsions for either school year.

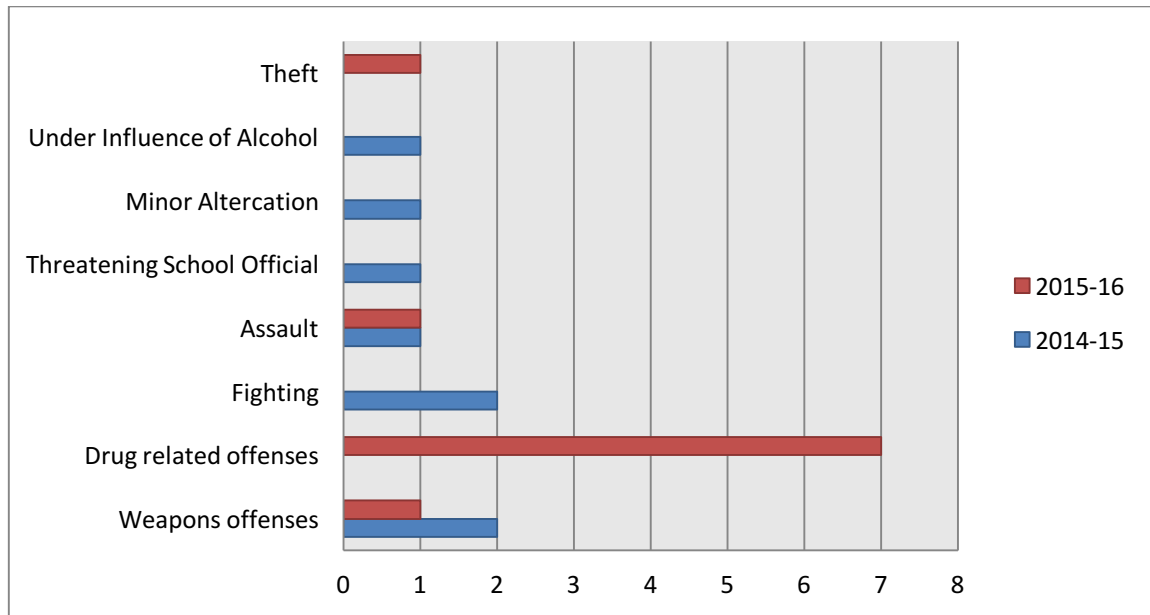


Figure 9. Site B Alternative Education Assignments: 2014-15 and 2015-16 School Years

The number of student arrests and the number of student placements is disproportionate at both locations for both school years. Meaning, the amount of arrests that have been made at both Site A and Site B in both school years were much higher than the amount of alternative education assignments and in the case of Site A, the combination of alternative education assignments and expulsion numbers. Students were referred to law enforcement by the school administrators for offenses listed under the Pennsylvania Safe Schools Act of 1995 (Act 26) including violence, weapons, drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

School Administrator Interviews Analysis

There were four school administrators interviewed from Site A who were responsible for assigning exclusionary discipline during one or both school years in the study – 2014-15 and 2015-16. These administrators worked in the high school where the School Resource Officers were assigned – SRO_A1 and SRO_A2 were assigned to Site A during the 2014-15 school year and SRO_A2 was assigned to Site A during the 2015-16 school year.

There were three school administrators interviewed from Site B who were responsible for assigning exclusionary discipline during one or both school years in the study – 2014-15 and 2015-16. These administrators worked in the high school where the School Based Police Officers were assigned – SBPO_B1 and SBPO_B2 worked at Site B during both the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. These administrators have varying levels of experience as educators and administrators both in the public education system in Pennsylvania as well as at Site B.

The School Administrator Interview (Appendix C) was used as the interview protocol for the semi-structured interviews for both site locations. Research question number two provided the framework for the analysis of the school administrator interview data.

- How do zero tolerance approaches influence student arrest rates and student exclusionary discipline rates in schools that utilize School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers?

The seven participants were interviewed face-to-face and the interviews were audiotaped. The interviews were later transcribed and the interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis in order to locate common themes and patterns in the interview data. The interviewees were all asked to first define zero tolerance as a precursor to beginning the interview. This laid the foundation for the remainder of the interview questions and as a basis for the interview themes. The three main themes were: Student Behavior/Offense Types, Interaction, and Type of

Leadership. Several sub-themes also emerged from the data under each overarching theme. Under the theme, “Student Behavior/Offense Types,” the two sub-themes were: “Time Spent” and “Response to Offenses;” under the theme, “Interaction,” the two sub-themes were: “Collaboration” and “Safety;” and, under the theme, “Type of Leadership,” the sub-theme was “Accountability.”

Zero Tolerance

The administrators defined zero tolerance similarly dependent on their site location. Site A administrators defined zero tolerance commonly among each other and likewise, two of the Site B administrators defined zero tolerance commonly among each other with one administrator in disagreement with the other two administrators’ definitions. Site A and Site B, however, do not share common definitions of zero tolerance with each other even though they are both high schools in northeastern Pennsylvania.

The school administrators at Site A all generally agreed that zero tolerance is defined as violations including drugs, alcohol, weapons, and violence with serious bodily injury. Zero tolerance according to administrators at Site A were “suspendable, with possible expulsion, and referral to law enforcement.” Admin_A4 expounded upon the response and included “if you do something wrong, there’s a consequence for it.”

The school administrators at Site B all generally agreed that the phrase, “zero tolerance,” does not get used in their school district. They would prefer not to use that term because according to Admin_B1 “zero tolerance implies that no matter what happens, this is what’s done and there’s no discussion and we’re thankful that’s not what we live under.” Admin_B1 goes on to say, “obviously, we don’t have tolerance for fighting or drugs or that type of thing...but I’ve never used the term zero tolerance with any parent that’s come in here.”

Another administrator at Site B stated that “I don’t think we’ve ever had true zero tolerance...Policy guides us...we look at everything that’s happened and most of those students get placed alternatively.” Admin_B3 described zero tolerance as “steps we follow in the handbook as far as procedures and meetings for drugs, threats, and weapons.”

The student exclusionary discipline data showing alternative education placements at Site B reveals that eight students were alternatively placed in the 2014-15 school year and ten students were placed in alternative assignments in the 2015-16 school year. Although Admin_B2 explained in the definition of zero tolerance that “most of the students get placed alternatively,” the data shows that in the 2014-15 school year, out of 29 students arrested and 85 students suspended, eight students were alternatively placed; and, in the 2015-16 school year, out of 19 students arrested and 86 students suspended, ten students were placed.

Student Behavior/Offense Types

Depending on the administrative role that the participant played in the high school, their perception of the most common disciplinary issue varied. The administrators who worked regularly with students on discipline all shared common viewpoints dependent on their site location. All of the Site A administrators shared that insubordination and dress code were their most prevalent discipline problems. Site B administrators all agreed that drug related offenses were their most prevalent discipline problem; however, the one administrator who willingly admitted to not spending any time on discipline shared that in his opinion, cell phone usage in the high school is one of the largest discipline problems.

Looking at the student exclusionary discipline and arrest data, fewer than half of the students arrested at Site B in the 2015-16 school year were for drug related offenses and the majority of students arrested at Site B in the 2014-15 school year was for fighting. The

suspension offenses at both locations were not available. It is not possible to determine the most prevalent form of discipline utilizing suspension data at this time.

Time spent. The time spent on responding and completing zero tolerance violations can affect the exclusionary discipline rates and arrest rates depending on who responds and how much effort they are willing to expend on the violation or incident. Site A administrators explained that it was dependent on how major or minor the violation was. It can take between one hour and one full day. Admin_A4 explained that “you have to find the facts... you’re investigating, you’re calling the kids down. Then once you get the information...it’s issuing the discipline. Calling the parents, bringing the parents in...It could take a good six to seven hours. If it happens later in the day...you’re staying until five or six because it’s going to take that long.”

The Site B administrators explained that responding to zero tolerance violations take them between ten percent of their day to “hours and hours and hours.” Another Site B administrator responded “I don’t respond to them personally.”

Response to offenses. How the various school administrators react to zero tolerance violations seems to have little to do with their own personal paradigm, rather it is an extension of either the school district’s policy or the school administration’s directive of how they will respond. In most cases, there are guidelines in place that dictate how the administrators will respond to an incident. This is either outlined in their policy handbook or followed by the state and federal guidelines.

In the interviews, the administrators at Site A all followed the same or similar pattern of time and contacts in a specific event related to zero tolerance. For example, Admin_A1 stated that “we follow Board policy, the student is called down, searches are conducted, we communicate with parents, consequences are imposed, and then we turn it over to law

enforcement.” Admin_A3 responded to the same question by saying, “we respond immediately to the situation; you find the student, you secure the student, begin the investigation, conduct the search, and communicate with the student and the parent. If there is a suspicion of a weapon or drugs, we involve the SRO immediately.”

The administrators at Site B had some commonalities but were not as definite in their procedures for zero tolerance violations. Admin_B1 stated that if it were an immediate safety issue, such as drugs or weapons “the school police officer would be alerted.” If it were not an immediate safety issue, the security guard would be sent to retrieve the student from a classroom instead. “When the student comes to the office, we tell them why they’re here. And give them a chance to talk about what’s going on. A search is usually the next step and then a parent contacted.” During the search at Site B, the school police officer is almost always there “in case we were to find anything or the student to become angry or upset about something, and then he would intervene.”

Another administrator at Site B had a slightly different take on the procedures for these types of violations. Admin_B2 stated “I get a call from a teacher that a student has drugs on them. I immediately contact security, security gets the student, and in the meantime, I am in touch with our police officer (SBPO). It all happens very quickly.” Although, it is a slight variation, it is an important difference. Security guards and School Based Police Officers play two different roles in a school environment. It appears as if the school administrators at Site B are not using the same protocol for response to zero tolerance violations.

Interaction

The one major difference between having a School Resource Officer at Site A and having School Based Police Officers at Site B is the way in which they respond or are expected to respond to zero tolerance incidents. The school administrators provided their perspective on what

it's like to have either an SRO or an SBPO working with them or for them in their school environment.

Admin_A1 explained the benefits of having an SRO. They not only act as a deterrent factor for any criminal activity attempting to enter the school building but they also assist in deterring future behaviors by other students by arresting/citing students who misbehave. The administrator described in the interview that having an SRO has assisted the high school “because the students know that...[certain] things will be turned over to law enforcement. It has cut down...fighting. Before an SRO, we charged students 10 days out of school suspension which really means nothing for these kids who get into fights. But now that we press charges and a few hundred dollar fine, we've had very few fights.”

Admin_B1, on the other hand, describes what it is like to have School Based Police in the Site B location since they are school district employees and are generally supervised by the school administrators. If a school discipline incident occurs, in which the school administrator wants the student charged with disorderly conduct, the administrator sits with the police officer and tells them what the charge will be and hears what the police officer has to say. “Sometimes, if it's a drug issue, we will sit down and discuss...and he will give me a little bit more insight of what would fit better in that space [drug paraphernalia charge or disorderly conduct]...but generally, it is initiated through administration.”

In terms of a difference of interaction with SBPOs and SROs with the school administrators, one administrator who had experiences with both models explained that the SRO had accountability to their employer and seemed to be more responsive to the needs of their law enforcement agency instead of the school district. The disconnect of the SRO working in the school district but not working for the school district was expressed by this administrator with two questions used by the SROs versus SBPOs. The SROs would say, “I could use some help

with this,” whereas the SBPOs would say, “Can I help you with this?” The approach this administrator described continued into their interactions with students when the administrator is involved in a conversation or discipline incident with a student; the SBPO is sometimes invited in the office to talk with the student along with the administrator even though it may not have anything to do with a law enforcement issue but rather as a relationship building component.

There are three important items to be taken from these interviews. One is that the SROs at Site A are employed and supervised by an outside law enforcement agency and are assigned to work within the confines of that high school. They are the police officers that determine who, what and how the student offenders will be charged, whereas at Site B, where the SBPOs are employed, the school administrators are initiating the police charges against students. The Site B administrators are the SBPOs’ supervisors although they are not law enforcement supervisors and all of these participants are school district employees. The SBPOs, according to the school administrator interviews, do not initiate their own police charges against student offenders using their own police discretion.

This information is important in that it ties back to the School Resource Officer Survey data whereby the SROs/SBPOs ranked the 13 factors that affected their arrest decisions in the school setting. The factor titled, “Wishes of the School Administrators” was ranked number eight out of 13 by the participants including the SBPOs. Using this interview data, the arrests do not occur at Site B without the initial approval of the school administrators. With this information in mind, this factor should be ranked number one by the SBPOs.

Lastly, it is important to remember that although the SBPOs are school district employees, they are still police officers by law in Pennsylvania. According to at least one interview, the SBPOs are invited into conversations with school administrators to talk with the student since they may know the student personally. Although building rapport between students

and police seem to be important, it may be equally important to maintain role responsibilities, especially when working with students.

Collaboration. Regardless of the model of school policing used – School Resource Officer or School Based Police Officer – the school administrators shared that they collaborate as a team in their respective site locations when faced with student discipline incidents. They all stated that they rely on each other first as a school administrative team including assistant principals and principals, they will contact the superintendent of schools depending on the seriousness of the event, and they call upon both the School Resource Officer and the School Based Police Officer – dependent on location – as well as their security officers as supplemental assistance. This did not matter who was being interviewed; meaning, their role in the administrative structure or their level of experience in education or at their specific site as an administrator. Collaboration and a team approach to ensuring discipline and the appropriate level of consequences and follow through was a common thread for every interviewee. All of the interviewees also included other levels of assistance for student support during discipline incidents including guidance counselors, probation officers, nurses, and case managers.

Safety. The views on safety between Site A and Site B are very different among the administrators. The interviewees at the respective sites were similar to each other; however, Site A administrators were different compared to Site B administrators. The striking difference between the two site locations regarding overall safety was the training provided to all administrators, staff, and faculty at Site A compared to training provided to only a select group at Site B which seemed to only include a select number of administrators.

The administrators who participated in the interviews at Site A indicated that having either the police vehicle prominently located in front of the school building or simply having the School Resource Officer himself in the building serves as a deterrent for criminal behavior from

either entering the building or occurring regularly within the confines of the building. Admin_A4 stated that, “We have a police officer at my school with a gun. If something would happen, he’d be there in a flash. If someone had to call 911, it would take a while for [a response.] With an SRO, we only have 30 seconds to a minute before our SRO gets there – it changes everything.”

Site A administrators described the training program they’ve received over the course of several years in which all of the school district’s employees are trained in certain safety measures and responses. Admin_A3 stated that, “I can honestly say that I have... never felt unsafe [in the school.] We live in a world where something may happen and it’s a matter of how you respond to that. Our staff has had hours of training and now they can take measures to protect themselves.”

The Site B administrators, however, had a different perspective when talking about safety in schools. One administrator recalls a time in education that was not filled with as much fear. Admin_B2 explains, “We’ve moved from worrying about testing, curriculum, the kids’ graduating... nothing matters unless we’re safe. All those other things that were so important – kids getting their homework done, coming to school on time – now I can’t help but think, ‘Is everyone safe?’”

The other overarching concern regarding safety that appeared in the data at Site B was the personal safety of the administrators when dealing with discipline incidents. Two of the administrators explained that they have security guards posted nearby in the main office area to assist them “for extra protection” and “for safety...if you have a student under the influence or if they are about to commit a crime.”

Admin_B3 explained that the safety training offered by Site B was only given to select administrators and has not yet been offered to all of the building administrators or to the teaching staff. This may explain the difference in the safety concerns between Site A and Site B.

Type of Leadership

Most school administrators do not receive formal training in discipline. Although the majority of an assistant principal's the time is spent on disciplining students, they receive no prior training on discipline procedures before starting their job role and function (Kindelan, 2011). It is important to note that extant research states that the principal is the person who sets the tone for discipline in the school building and as new administrators, assistant principals should be working with the principal to learn these procedures (Daresh, 2006).

The interviews with the school administrators showed the same results. At Site A, one of the school administrators stated clearly, "you want to follow the discipline that your principal has in place. The only training you get is from the school that you're working in." Another administrator at Site A further clarified that "one of the best parts of working here... you learn a lot of different things, what you can and can't do." Admin _A1 expanded upon their experience with leadership in schools and added that the superintendent is involved in many disciplinary decisions, especially expulsions.

At Site B, the school administrators interviewed provided a variety of perspectives on types of leadership in schools and its effect on discipline. Admin_B3 stated that when their school principal arrived to their building several years prior "it was a lot more out of control than it is now...I saw the change occur during [their] tenure...the examples and the role models are there." Admin_B1 talked about the people that are important to them in their close network. It is not their fellow administrators, but rather the School Based Police Officers. Admin_B1 explained that when the SBPOs leave to go to another job "it hurts more than an assistant principal because you...know each other's thinking and you do work together. That is someone I rely heavily on." Admin_B2 talked about a transition in leadership in central administration and how that may change the high school's response to expulsions and zero tolerance type behaviors.

The type of leadership styles seems to have an impact on the way that zero tolerance is employed or not. It appears to be dependent on not only the school building administrator's views and policies but also on the school district's superintendent's views and policies as seen in the study's interviews.

Accountability. The school administrators at both site locations described the increasing accountability that has been placed on schools by parents and the school community to maintain a safe environment for students everyday. Admin_B2 said “everyday I come in here and realize the grave responsibility I have...that parents are relying on me to keep their kids safe...and that's got to be number one...it's got to be!” Another administrator at the Site B location explained that whenever a serious incident occurs – locally or otherwise – they look at their procedures and policies and determine what they might do in that situation. Admin_B1 describes the increased accountability on schools as being derived from the consumer through various media accounts of serious school violence incidents. They go on to say that “it has raised [their] expectation...that if the school district has police, they will be citing and arresting or excluding. It sometimes puts the school district in a difficult position to exercise discretion.”

The administrators at Site A also agree that increased accountability by parents and the school community has been heightened with media and social media. Admin_A1 said that “parents see...what's happening [on the news] and their expectation when they send their kids to school is that they will be safe. Parents let us know all the time what is going on with social media... The information is out there... The expectation is that we take care of it and it is our responsibility.” Admin_A2 went on to say that parents' reactions provide perspective on how to deal with incidents and helps you explain situations to them.

It is important to note that although it is not explicitly mentioned in the interview protocol, the administrators spoke about increased accountability and its impact on the student

arrests and student discipline in today's school environment. Administrators at both site locations had similar perspectives and shared parallel descriptions of these accounts.

Police Officer Interviews Analysis

There were two School Resource Officers interviewed from Site A, who also participated in the School Resource Officer Survey. These officers were assigned to Site A as SROs during one or both school years in the study – 2014-15 and 2015-16. These SROs have varying levels of experience as both police officers as well as SROs. As School Resource Officers, they are employed by a separate law enforcement agency and are assigned to work everyday in the high school as a School Resource Officer. They have an assigned office and work with the students and staff of that particular building and/or campus. SRO_A1 was assigned to Site A during 2014-15 and half of 2015-16 for the purposes of this study and SRO_A2 was assigned to Site A during the second half of the 2015-16 school year.

There were two School Based Police Officers interviewed from Site B, who also participated in the School Resource Officer Survey. These officers were assigned to Site B as SBPOs during both school years in the study – 2014-15 and 2015-16. These SBPOs have varying levels of experience as police officers and SBPOs. As SBPOs, they are employed by the school district – Site B – and are assigned to work everyday in the high school as a School Based Police Officer. SBPO_B1 and SBPO_B2 were both assigned to Site B during both of the school years used in the data collection – 2014-15 and 2015-16.

The Police Officer Interview (Appendix D) was used as the interview protocol for the semi-structured interviews for both site locations. Research question number three was used as a guideline for the analysis of the police officer interview data:

- What role do the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers have in the school environment?

The four participants were interviewed face-to-face and the interviews were audiotaped. The interviews were later transcribed and the interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis in order to locate common themes and patterns in the interview data. The interviewees were all asked to first define their mission as the SRO/SBPO in the school environment at the beginning of the interview. This provided a structure for the remainder of the interview questions and a base for the interview themes. The three main themes were: Role, Interaction, and Training. Several sub-themes also emerged from the data under each overarching theme. Under the theme, “Role,” the two sub-themes were: “Triad Model” and “Other Activities;” under the theme, “Interaction,” the sub-themes were: “Arrest Decisions,” and “Collaboration;” and, the third theme, “Training,” had no sub-themes.

Mission

The police officers defined their mission in the school environment dependent on their specific role as either a School Resource Officer (SRO) or School Based Police Officer (SBPO). The definitions varied and were not consistent among the officers and between the SRO and SBPO models.

For example, SRO_A1 from Site A defined his mission in the school environment as a law enforcement entity and as a liaison between the school district and the police department. He felt that his mission was to break down barriers that may exist between the police and the students based on preconceived notions. SRO_A2 who is also assigned to Site A explained that the mission as an SRO in the school environment is to “protect kids from outside threats.” He went on to say that the number one focus of the SRO is safety and security.

The SBPOs who are assigned to Site B had other definitions and perspectives of what their mission is as a police officer in the school environment. SBPO_B1 said that his mission is to “secure the safety of the school district, staff and students...create relationships between the

student and the police officer.” He further explained that he feels that they are proactive about everything in the school district. SBPO_B2 defined the police officer’s mission in the school setting as building a rapport with students and teaching them how to deal with outside officers and agencies as regular citizens.

Role

The role of the police officer in the school environment is an elusive concept in that every police officer has a different viewpoint of what their role should encompass. The police officers who participated in the interview did provide dichotomous perspectives on how they viewed themselves in concert with the school district community.

SRO_A2 explained from his perspective that the role of the School Resource Officer in the school environment is prevention. They are there to “keep kids safe.” He further explained that they patrol the hallways and outside grounds “looking for suspicious people.” Regarding the activities of the SRO in the school, SRO_A2 said that they train the staff on safety, teach students on various topics, are proactive instead of responsive, and are able to follow up on incidents with students “since they come back everyday.” He said that he has time to sit down, counsel the students, talk to them, and explain how life works in the real world. When describing how the SRO’s position fits in with the rest of the school community, he explained, “It’s my campus. I pretty much handle everything on campus.”

SRO_A1 described that the SRO “mirrors the street cop” in that they “roam the hallways, do casework, work on investigations, speak in classrooms, and go to faculty meetings.” When describing how the SRO’s position fits in with the rest of the school community, he explained, “...you now have this ownership...it’s almost like the students and staff here were mine.”

The SBPO_B1 clarified several times that the focus of the SBPO in schools was prevention – not arrest. He explained that they are the support mechanism of the school

community and the community overall. He went on to say that they are not there to “replace the local police...[his] intention is to assist them. We keep them from coming to school everyday for the nonsense stuff.” Regarding the main role of the SBPO, he explained that it is safety and security and being proactive. The follow up with students after an incident is very important. “It’s not about the arrest; it’s more about finding out what the problem is with the student.”

The main difference between the two models – SRO and SBPO – regarding how they see their role in the school setting is that the SROs seem to take an incongruous ownership to the school district in which they are assigned but not employed; whereas, the SBPO appears to take a position regarding their role in the school community of support that is much more in accord with educational expectations (Jordan, 2015).

Triad concept. School Resource Officers (SRO) and School Based Police Officers (SBPO) have three main roles within the school environment. They act as a law enforcement officer, while serving as a liaison between the school and other agencies; they teach and demonstrate topics related to law enforcement to students; and, they act as an informal counselor or mentor to students (Finn et.al, 2005). These roles are referred to as the TRIAD concept, which divide the SROs’ responsibilities into the three areas of teacher, counselor/mentor and law enforcement officer (Center for the Prevention of School Violence).

The SROs and SBPOs who were interviewed provided various examples of the TRIAD concept present in their role at their site locations. SBPO_B2 described counseling students and staff when needed. The staff occasionally goes to him asking for his opinions and advice on various topics related to law enforcement. He also provides counseling or mentoring to students either formally or informally as he is working with them on disciplinary type incidents or participating in activities such as playing basketball after school and acting as an informal mentor or role model. He also described teaching activities that he provides to the high school

students including presentations for health classes and drivers' education classes. The topics included basic knowledge of drug and alcohol identification as well as information for beginning drivers who may deal with outside law enforcement agencies.

SRO_A1 described teaching opportunities that he participated in at Site A. There were topics such as the second amendment and personal safety that he taught to classrooms of students at the high school on an informal basis when invited by the classroom teachers. Occasionally, he would present information to the middle school level students on topics such as cyber safety, personal safety, and weapons safety. SRO_A2 expanded upon the role of counseling in his position and added that he can "talk to kids more [in the school] than on the street." He also spoke about teaching in the schools with presentations on cyber bullying and safety training to all of the district employees including administrators, teachers, students, and support staff.

Other activities. The police officers explained that there are other or extra activities that they all participate in regardless of whether they are School Resource Officers (SRO) or School Based Police Officers (SBPO). The police officers who are assigned to Site B (SBPOs) described being involved in truancy and home visit activities to determine where students are located when they are not attending school regularly. They also have been involved in fundraising activities to assist local families in need around the holidays. These fundraisers have not been associated with the school district but rather with the School Based Police Department.

The School Resource Officers described participating in sporting events after school such as football games, baseball games and basketball games as well as board meetings. They also have participated in other events such as Holiday Shows as musical performers in the high school and other formal events at the school district's elementary schools.

Interaction

The police officers and administrators interact with each other in the school environment everyday. Dependent on the police model – School Resource Officer (SRO) or School Based Police Officer (SBPO) – the interactions may occur differently since the organizations for whom the officers work for have different expectations. The current literature shows that the integration of two different agencies within one environment – law enforcement and education – can bring a multitude of issues based on differing missions and organizational cultures (Moore, 2001).

The SROs assigned to Site A were clear in their explanations that their employer is their law enforcement agency and they are simply assigned to the school district. They are willing to work with the school administrators but they were adamant in clarifying that they do not work for them. SRO_A2 stated that, “If I have a good reason to not make an arrest, I’ll tell administration what my reason might be and obviously, they don’t have the power to arrest.” He went on to say that his powers of arrest are just like on the street. “I make my own decision in the end... I have total discretion.” SRO_A1 added, “If administration pursues their own discipline, that’s great, have it. I always tell everyone, I work with the school, but not for them.”

The SBPOs assigned to Site B, however, do not have the same perspective nor the same autonomy since the school district is their employer. SBPO_B1 explained the interactions on both sides between the SBPOs and the school administrators. “I have the latitude to say, ‘We’re going to deal with this,’ and I haven’t had push back from the principals – they tend to work with us...Nine times out of ten, an assistant principal will hand something to an officer and say, ‘Look, this kid needs to be cited.’”

It is clear that the two sites and the different policing models have dichotomous approaches to the interactions and decisions made within the school environment. It originates

with who employs the police officer since the SROs/SBPOs were clear that who they report to determines their arrest decisions.

Arrest decision making. The arrest decision making responses within the semi-structured interviews with the police officers complemented the School Resource Officer Survey responses since they were the same participants who ranked the 13 factors affecting arrest decisions.

Three out of the four interviewees were adamant in saying that the wishes of the victim of an incident or crime would be the main reason that they made an arrest. However, when reviewing their responses to the survey only one of those three respondents ranked that factor (wishes of the victim) as being extremely important. There were many other factors that took precedence over this one including the *quality of evidence, guidelines provided by law, the nature of the behavior*, and so on. During the interviews, the SROs were also clear that the wishes of the administrators were not important. These answers were reflective of their responses on the survey.

SRO_A1 assigned to Site A said that if any crime of violence, threat of violence or arrestable offense occurred that would be a reason for him to make an arrest in the school setting. He did further explain that all incidents were reviewed on a “case by case basis” and he “was not a fan of zero tolerance.” He also believes that arresting a student in the school environment is not a deterrent for other students to not misbehave in a high school setting. This opinion corresponds to his response on the SRO survey regarding arrest scenarios shown in Table 1 where the officers were asked to rank statements regarding school situations in which an arrest may take place. They had to answer “never,” “rarely,” or “frequently.” SRO_A1 responded that he never arrested a student to calm down a group of other students in the school setting.

SRO_A2 said that if the type of crime is violent or causes an injury is reason for him to make an arrest in the school environment. The wishes of the administrators or the parents are not important. The wishes of the victims carry the most weight. He said, “the school really doesn’t matter when it comes to arrest decision making.”

The School Based Police Officers assigned to Site B described that drugs and fighting will cause them to look at a possible student arrest. They will look at the total circumstances first and if there are no injuries, they will re-assess. The wishes of the family and the victim are the most important.

Collaboration. Although there are two perspectives on interaction in the school setting, the collaborative process still occurs with both police models. The School Resource Officers at Site A describe similar experiences of working with the assistant principals, principals, superintendent, security, secretaries, guidance counselors, probation officer, and custodians. SRO_A1 explains that they are part of the district safety committee and are asked their opinions ranging from security cameras to training opportunities and protocols.

The SBPOs also have similar experiences to each other in that they work with the school administrators, superintendent, but also transportation and the child accounting department since they transport students when needed and provide assistance with truancy issues. They explained that they are the “middleman between security and administration.” They are also involved in meetings with assistant principals and students for discipline events. SBPO_B1 stated that “the school is so much - if not everything to the community.”

Training

The training that occurs at the two different school districts appears to have a top-down approach in that the superintendents of the respective school districts determine what is disseminated district-wide and what is not. Both site locations have gone through a transition of

leadership in the superintendent's office. The training that has occurred in both districts is a reflection of different styles of leadership that may or may not be present in the district due to the transitions.

Site A utilizes the School Resource Officers. Both of the SROs have been trained in the NASRO (National Association of School Resource Officer) training courses for police officers working in schools with school administrators. They also have both been assigned to the same safety training as the Site A school administrators and have assisted in the training of the remaining staff and students at the school district. The school district's goal was to have everyone in the district trained in the same safety procedures.

Site B utilizes the School Based Police Officers. Both of the SBPOs explained that the training they have received has been on-the-job training only. SBPO_B1 described further that he has had training on responding to emergency incidents. The staff and students have not received the same safety training due to the former superintendent's request. The high school participates in regular safety drills but may not share the same information with all of the building sites within the school district. This might have an effect on the perception of building and personal safety by the administrators, staff, and students.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research findings for this descriptive qualitative research study. The findings from this study both support and conflict with the extant research. The data described in this chapter were interpreted from the School Resource Officer surveys, the School Resource Officer/School Based Police Officer interviews, the School Administrator interviews, and the student arrest and exclusionary discipline data.

The data revealed four main factors affecting arrest decisions in the school environment for all of the police officers surveyed: quality of evidence, guidelines provided by laws, nature of

the misbehavior, and the impact the misbehavior had on the victim. The information further showed that the SROs/SBPOs arrested the majority of students in the school setting for minor misconduct in the first year of data collection; however, they arrested the majority of students for serious offenses in the second year of data collection. This is in direct conflict with the extant research.

The interviewees shared that their interactions and role within the school community between administrators and the SROs/SBPOs are dependent on which police model is being used on the school campus. The supervisors of the SROs/SBPOs seemed to be a determining factor in how the officers made their arrest decisions in the school setting.

These findings are further discussed in the next chapter. The research conclusions and their implications are presented along with suggestions for future research that may build upon the current research surrounding the topic of how SROs/SBPOs make the decision to arrest students in the school environment.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to describe the factors influencing the arrest decisions of School Resource Officers and School Based Police Officers and their impact on student arrest rates, and school administrator imposed exclusionary discipline rates in two different secondary schools. Furthermore, the study examined the role of the SROs/SBPOs in the school setting.

Data was gathered from several sources including school district discipline and arrest data, School Resource Officer surveys, SRO/SBPO interviews and school administrator interviews. Four police officers were purposively selected based on their assignment as either School Resource Officers or School Based Police Officers in two high schools. The school administrators were selected based on their assignment to the same high school as the SROs/SBPOs. The criterion for the administrators included the assignment of exclusionary discipline to students during the two school years of the data collection at the respective site locations.

The selection sample for the participants of the study was small due to the nature of this study as well as the criteria of the participants themselves. Descriptive qualitative research requires rich descriptions of the experience of the participants utilizing interview data and other collection methods. In addition, the SROs and SBPOs assigned to schools in Pennsylvania are usually assigned one to a school building or one to a campus. Since this study used two site locations over the course of two data collection years, having four police officers as participants is an appropriate number for data verification among participants.

Conclusions

Discussion of Research Question 1

Arrest decision making – surveys. The first research question asked what factors contributed to the School Resource Officers’/School Based Police Officers’ decisions of whether to arrest students in the school setting. Data from the School Resource Officer Survey was tabulated to determine which factors were ranked as the most important to the SROs/SBPOs when making a student arrest in the school setting. There were 13 factors that were ranked according to a Likert scale: “1” indicating “not important” to “5” indicating “extremely important.” The four participants included two SROs from Site A in which they are employed by a local law enforcement agency as municipal police officers but are assigned to the high school campus of that school district. The other two participants were SBPOs from Site B where they are employed as police officers by the school district – meaning, they are school district employees.

According to the survey results, the four most important factors contributing to the police officers’ decisions of whether to arrest students in a school setting are: the quality of evidence; guidelines provided by laws, rules and regulations; the nature of the misbehavior; and, the impact the misbehavior had on the victim. For the SBPOs, the “expectations of whether the student will continue to misbehave” is just as important, however, the SROs did not agree with that statement. There were many inconsistencies in how the SROs and SBPOs answered after those initial statements.

These results are reasonably consistent with Black’s research of police officers’ arrest decisions (1971). They include the quality of evidence, the seriousness of the incident or crime, the relationship between the victim and the suspect, and the behavior of the suspect toward the police officer (Black, 1971).

Table 2

Factors Affecting the Arrest Decision Making

Factors	SRO_A1	SRO_A2	SBPO_B1	SBPO_B2
Quality of Evidence	5	5	5	5
Guidelines Provided by Applicable Laws, Rules, and Regulations	5	5	5	5
Nature of the Alleged Misbehavior	5	5	5	5
The Impact the Behavior Had on the Victim	5	5	5	5
Expectations of Whether Student Will Continue to Misbehave	3	4	5	5
The Student's History of Misbehavior	4	3	3	5
The Wishes of the Victims' Parent/Guardian	3	2	3	5
The Wishes of School Administrators	2	3	2	4
The Student's Attitude When Approached about the Alleged Misbehavior	3	1	1	5
The Student's Academic Achievements	2	1	3	3
The Need to Ensure the Student is Punished for Misbehavior	1	3	2	1
The Wishes of Teachers	2	3	1	1
The Potential Consequences of the Student's Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System	1	3	4	4

The results of this study are to similar to Black's study in that all of the participants ranked the quality of evidence, the seriousness of the incident or crime, and the impact of the incident on the victim as the most important factors affecting the arrest decision in school. The behavior of the suspect toward the police officer was not included in the most important factors by the participants in this study. The participants ranked this factor as number eight out of 13

factors in number of importance as seen listed in Table 2. This may have a connection to the research completed by Black several years later that discussed how police deal with certain incidents depends on their relationship with those involved (1980). The unique circumstances surrounding SROs/SBPOs in the school environment and their relationship with the school administrators and the students may provide an explanation as to why the suspects' behavior did not rank very high for a reason to make an arrest in the school setting for these participants. The suspects for the SROs/SBPOs in the school setting are usually the students with whom they interact with on a day-to-day basis.

The wishes of the victim and the wishes of the parent remain an important factor. Although this factor did not rank very high on the scale, it was consistently an important factor to all of the participants throughout the Police Officer interviews. The SROs ranked this factor as a “3” and a “2,” the SBPOs ranked this factor as a “3” and a “5,” on the SRO Survey.

Similarly, although the factor “wishes of school administrators” was ranked moderately low, with the SBPOs ranking this factor at a “2” and a “4” on the SRO Survey, it was made clear throughout the School Administrator interviews and the Police Officer interviews that this factor is of the utmost importance at Site B. These two factors, “wishes of the victim,” and “wishes of the administrators,” did not necessarily reflect the data collected from all of the participants on all of the instruments.

Arrest decision making –interviews. During the School Police interviews, more detailed information was revealed regarding arrest decision making in the school setting. It was apparent that the wishes of the victim and the family were the most important factors to consider according to the SROs and SBPOs who were interviewed. The wishes of the administrators and teachers were the least important factors when making the arrest decision according to the

interviewed officers. One of the SROs stated “the school really doesn’t matter when it comes to arrest decision making.”

The arrest decision making also rested on the severity of the incident according to the SROs and SBPOs. For example, if there were severe injuries or major violence, that would be enough to cause the SROs and SBPOs to make an arrest. Other types of incidents, such as, drug offenses or incidents involving fights would cause them to potentially make an arrest. They all explained that they look at the totality of the circumstances and weigh everything. It is not a zero tolerance type of environment or event for either law enforcement model. They were clear that they utilize their discretion when necessary.

Lastly, it is important to mention the administrators’ perspective from Site B who supervise the SBPOs since they describe their organization as one in which the administrators determine who gets arrested and when; not the SBPOs making the arrest decisions. The Site A administrators’ comments regarding the arrest decisions in their school revolved around the deterrent factor SROs bring when they cite students for various offenses, including fighting.

Discussion of Research Question 2

Student exclusion data – arrests and suspensions. The second research question examined how zero tolerance approaches influence student arrest rates and student exclusionary discipline rates in schools that utilize School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers. Data was gathered from Site A and Site B to determine the amount of arrests and the type of offenses students were arrested for during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. At Site A for both school years, the offense students were arrested for the most was fighting. At Site A during the 2014-15 school year, the second highest offense students were arrested for was disorderly conduct. Other offenses included theft, weapons possession, drug offenses, and students being under the influence of alcohol.

At Site B, during the 2014-15 school year, students were arrested most for fighting as well; however, in the 2015-16 school year, students were arrested most for drug offenses (possession and sale of controlled substances.) Other offenses included vandalism, reckless endangering, and students being under the influence of alcohol. No arrests were made at Site B during the 2015-16 school year for fighting or disorderly conduct. It is difficult to link the interview data with the arrest data in that the arrest data does not include details. It is not possible to know the circumstances behind the arrests nor is it possible to know if a student should have been arrested and was not. The only data set that exists is from Site A providing the comparison of law enforcement referrals to actual arrests for both school years: 2014-15 – law enforcement referrals totaled 34 and student arrests totaled 17; 2015-16 – law enforcement referrals totaled 29 and student arrests totaled 24. Those numbers do show discretion on the part of the SROs since they are receiving a certain number of referrals from administrators but are not arresting the same number of students referred.

The important data that may be revealed from this section is the consistency of the data in 2014-15 from both sites to the extant literature. The data showed a propensity for students to be arrested at both sites for summary offenses of minor misconduct. However, in the following year – 2015-16, the majority of students arrested were for higher level offenses, including misdemeanors and felonies at both site locations, which is in direct conflict with the literature. This could be related to a transition in administrative staff at the building levels at the sites over the course of the data collection years as well as a change in the SROs at Site A during the data collection years. The potential difference in the interpretation of law, policy, and procedures from person to person can make a difference in arrest decisions.

Student out-of-school suspension rates for Site A were much higher than Site B. Figure 6 shows the breakdown of the exclusion rate at Site A for both school years and Figure 7 shows the breakdown of the exclusion rate at Site B for both school years.

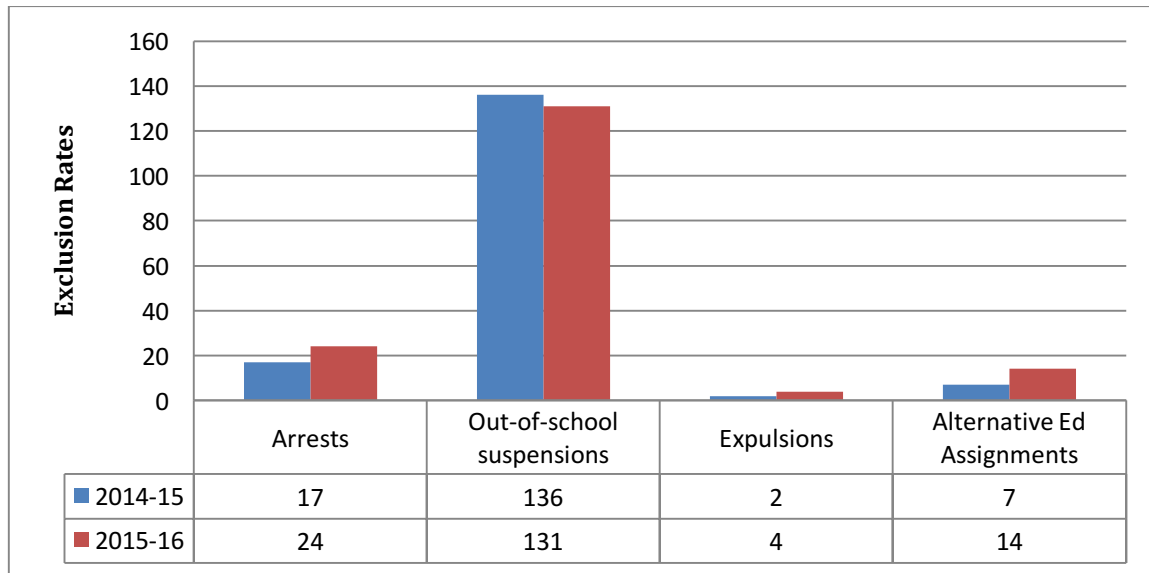


Figure 6. Site A Student Exclusion Rates: 2014-15 vs. 2015-16 School Years

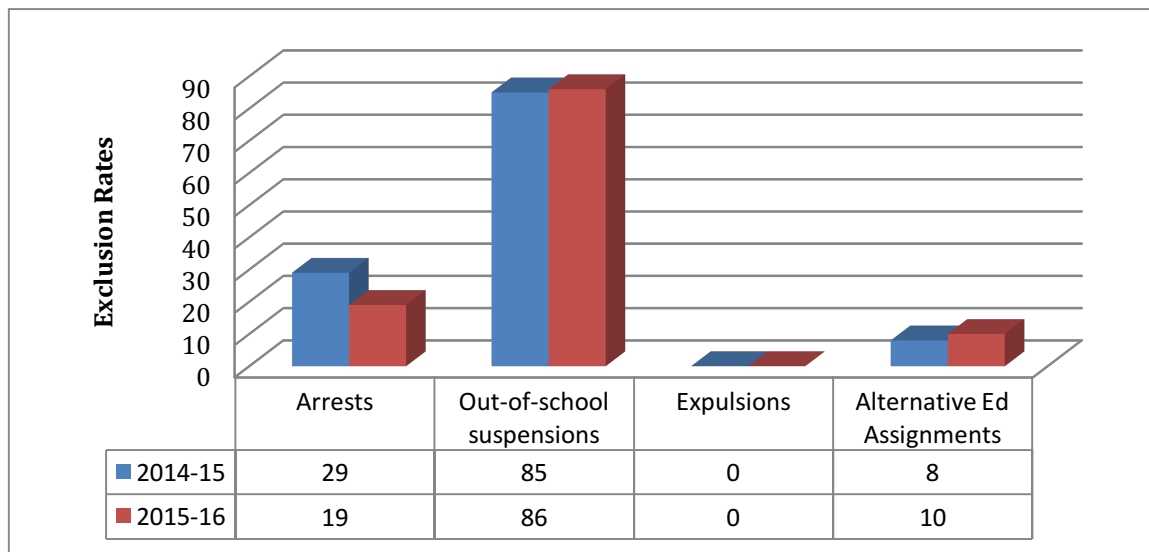


Figure 7. Site B Student Exclusion Rates: 2014-15 vs. 2015-16 School Years

The suspension rates seem to have little to do with the fact that there are SROs and SBPOs assigned to the school campuses and much more to do with the type of administrative

leadership related to zero tolerance approaches within the respective school districts. The School Administrator interviews revealed information surrounding their respective school districts and school buildings regarding discipline and how it is assigned. The Site A administrators shared that the discipline the principal has in place is what is followed. They further described that they have learned what they can and can't do within their building as administrators. The superintendent is involved in many disciplinary decisions, especially expulsions. The Site B administrators were varied in their responses, however, they shared that their central office administration was transitioning and that, in itself, may cause the high school to change their response to zero tolerance type offenses in the future.

Administrative leadership in the school district seems to have an impact on the way that zero tolerance is employed or not. It may be dependent on the school principal's views and policies as well as on the school district's superintendent's views and policies. The distinctive levels of out-of-suspensions between the two site locations imply that the different views on discipline at both sites may influence the suspension rates.

Student exclusion data – alternative education assignments. The type and amount of offenses that led to student alternative education assignments were not consistent from school year to school year for both Site A and Site B with the exception of drug related offenses for Site A. This could be related to differences in administrative interpretation of the discipline policies, administrative discretion to discipline students differently from year to year, and a change in administrative staff over the course of the two school years. It is important to note that alternative education assignments have been used in the place of expulsions in the school setting.

Reviewing both the students who were arrested and the students who were placed at both site locations provides a larger picture of possibly why the students were placed and/or expelled.

Looking at the drug related arrests for both sites, four students were arrested for drug related

offenses in the 2014-15 school year at Site A. Out of those students, three were placed in an alternative education assignment and one was expelled. In 2015-16, there were nine students arrested for drug related offenses at Site A. Out of those nine students, five were placed at alternative education assignments and two were expelled. The other two students either stayed in the regular education setting at Site A or withdrew and went to another school district.

There were nine drug related arrests made at Site B during the 2015-16 school year. Out of those nine students, seven of them were placed in alternative education assignments; two of the arrested students either stayed in the regular education environment or withdrew to another school district location, since this site experienced no expulsions for either school year.

Discussion of Research Question 3

The third research question sought to determine what role the School Resource Officers/School Based Police Officers have in the school environment. The roles of the School Resource Officers and the School Based Police Officers have some commonalities but are very dichotomous in other aspects. During the interviews, the School Resource Officers described their role in the school as providing safety and security to the students and staff but as a mirror of the law enforcement community on the street. They explained that they patrol the hallways and the outside perimeter of the buildings as well as conduct casework and investigations. They expanded on their role to include teaching opportunities within the classrooms as well as mentoring students and staff. The SROs have additional roles and responsibilities including providing a security detail at athletic events and school board meetings. They were clear in stating that they work in the school, but not for the school. They collaborate with the staff in the school district but the SROs themselves make the decisions regarding arrests within the school setting.

The School Based Police Officers shared some common viewpoints as the SROs regarding their role in the school environment such as providing safety and security to the staff and the students. However, they see their role as prevention, not arrest. The SBPOs described themselves as the support mechanism of the school community, whereas the SROs said that the school was their building and their campus. The SROs described themselves as the focal point of the school and the SBPOs described themselves as the support network in the background. The SBPOs also explained that they were involved in student transports and truancy issues, including home visits. The SROs and SBPOs were also involved in fundraisers and extra holiday type events to build rapport with the larger school community.

The two models of policing in schools – School Resource Officers and School Based Police Officers – demonstrate that there are two distinctive levels of connection within the school environment. Since the SROs are contracted law enforcement personnel assigned to the school building to perform a service, they appear to have less connectivity to the school as an organization and less accountability to the administrators, teachers, and parents. Their connectivity seems to remain with their law enforcement agency and their accountability lies with their police supervisors. Likewise, the SBPOs, who are employed by the school district and perform other types of activities outlined by the district, including home visits and transports, seem to have a connection and accountability to the school environment that is reflected in their arrest making decisions and overall interactions with the school administrators and students with whom they work with everyday.

Limitations

Several limitations associated with this study have been identified in previous chapters. Two of the limitations that must be considered after the review and analysis of the data are the sample size and the potential for researcher bias. The generalization of this study is limited due

to the small sample size of the participants. Due to the nature of the research methodology and the criteria for the participant sample, however, the sample was appropriate for this study. This type of qualitative research emphasized in-depth information and rich descriptive data (Patton, 2001) rather than increasing the numbers of participants and becoming saturated with information. The study's restrictive criteria used to select the sites and the participants also created an exclusive population within the study.

The potential for researcher bias exists for any qualitative study, especially when participants are interviewed as part of the qualitative data gathering process. Since this researcher was essentially the human qualitative research instrument regarding the interview data collection and eventually the qualitative data analysis, it is important to recognize and confirm the researcher's background and knowledge of the topic and, in some cases, the participants themselves. Although this researcher's knowledge and experience can act as a hindrance in terms of bias, it can also be a positive influence on the study regarding knowledge of police culture and arrest decision making in certain situations.

In terms of mitigating the bias for future studies, frequent debriefing sessions can be held between the researcher and the research committee to discuss a variety of experiences and perceptions of the project and its progress. The meetings can provide the researcher with a means to examine their ideas and possible interpretations of the data and seek assistance from the others to recognize and alleviate their bias and potential preferences in the study. Another possible method to mitigate the potential bias is to utilize an objective interviewer who is not associated with the project and have them ask the questions of the participants and record the data. Lastly, the researcher can develop a reflective commentary as they progress through the research. The commentary can monitor the researcher's reactions, developing theories, and ultimately, the emerging patterns of data from the qualitative data analysis.

Implications for Practice

There are several implications for practice supported by the data from the study. These implications are important for discussion:

- Due to a lack of understanding of a common mission among the various police officers in the school building as well as an inconsistent and sometimes incongruous perception of their roles, the school administrators and law enforcement administrators should meet regularly to determine the objective and clear duties for the police officers in the school setting. The study showed wide-ranging inconsistencies from the police officers regarding their mission and roles.
- In order to reduce the amount of out-of-school suspensions that occur in the schools, it may be appropriate to use a proactive approach to managing student misbehavior such as a Positive Behavior Support Program (PBIS) rather than solely a punitive discipline approach, especially when dealing with student misbehavior that may not rise to the level of suspensions. SROs/SBPOs as well as school personnel should be trained in a proactive approach to misbehavior such as PBIS. Positive Behavior Support is a program utilized in schools to educate students about what type of behavior is expected of them and to respond positively when students behave (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008). A proactive approach to misbehavior was not utilized at either site location and it can be used in place of a zero tolerance approach.
- Safety training should be more consistent across both school districts. It was mentioned specifically by the school administrators as a need since some staff members were trained in certain safety procedures and protocol, while others were not. This remains an important component of school discipline, school policing and an overall positive school climate.

- The School Resource Officer program should be developed more fully into a school-based program similar to a School Based Police Officer program as a means of becoming a more comprehensive program for schools. Currently, it resembles placing a street cop in the school environment, rather than having them fully enveloped or involved in the school environment. The SROs clearly stated in the study that they make arrest decisions alone and they are the focal point of the school rather than being a support mechanism. The communication issues and cultural barriers that have been discussed in the literature between law enforcement and the school environment may be caused due to these perceptions.
- The law enforcement and school organizations should consider training the SROs/SBPOs related to interactions with misbehaving students. While the SROs/SBPOs arrested a majority of students for fighting and disorderly conduct, they also should understand the negative outcomes arrests can have on their academic growth. By training the officers on the negative outcomes that arrests can have on students, this may change their arrest decision making behavior.

The findings of this study indicate that SRO and SBPO programs need to be more consistent and uniform in their creation and implementation. The lack of consistency in the understanding of the roles the SROs and SBPOs play in the school environment is concerning. This results in conflicting duties and how officers decide to arrest students in the school environment. The collaboration and regular communication of those in the school community – school administrators and the police officers – is necessary to ensure the positive contribution of police in schools.

Recommendations for Future Study

Further research related to School Resource Officers in the K-12 school environment needs to continue. Since this was the first study to use the School Resource Officer survey with two police models – School Resource Officers and School Based Police Officers – it is important for this study’s test results to be replicated. Continued investigations of police officer arrest decision making in schools should occur. In addition, the survey data did not have a large sample; therefore, it would be important to have a larger population size to provide more data with additional longitudinal school data.

Another recommendation for future study is to study schools with and without School Resource Officers to determine if there were any differences in arrest rates or exclusionary discipline rates. Research has shown that as the presence of SROs in schools has increased over time, minor incidents are intensified into criminal issues (Hirschfield, 2008). It is important to determine if a rise in referrals for minor misconduct is related to an easily accessible SRO.

A third recommendation is to study a secondary school that has implemented a Positive Behavior Intervention Support program with a School Resource Officer program and determine their rates of student arrest and student exclusionary discipline. The data should be compared with another secondary school with a School Resource Officer program without a Positive Behavior Intervention Support program.

A fourth recommendation to study is to include student interview data along with School Resource Officer, School Based Police Officer, and school administrator interview data to get a comprehensive examination of the information. Since the student arrest data and student exclusionary data does not include details regarding why or how many times a student received this form of zero tolerance level discipline, it is important to include this form of the data to a future study.

The fifth recommendation is to study a multitude of School Resource Officer and School Based Police Officer programs and compare them for a variety of factors including arrest decision making, arrest rates, communication and networking differences in the school context, and student interactions. Since this study showed a divide between the two policing models, it is important to determine if this is a common phenomenon or one found only in the context of these two site locations.

The sixth and final recommendation is to complete a comprehensive qualitative case study of both types of policing models in order to gain a full understanding of the interactions among the students, administration, police officers, guidance counselors, nurses, secretaries, probation officers, and other personnel that regularly work together in these two distinct working environments.

Conclusion

The safety and security of the American school campus has become one of the paramount concerns of today's society. The introduction of zero tolerance policies, including the use of School Resource Officers and School Based Police Officers, has been an answer to keeping students safe everyday at school. Concerns were raised when the students who were meant to be protected were being arrested and expelled instead.

This study found that although police officers in schools can be utilized in a variety of ways, their main role is to be a law enforcement officer. The arrest decision making behaviors and their connection to the school community are solely dependent on the police model used in the school district they are assigned to.

The alignment of the mission, vision, and goals of the SROs/SBPOs with the schools and the school district is an important outcome that this study revealed. The American school should remain the place where students come to learn everyday, not where their minor misbehavior

leads them to arrest and exclusion from the educational environment. Schools must change their approach to safety and security to include positive programming where students can learn from their misbehavior. School police officers can contribute with this plan; however, they will need to change their arrest decision making behaviors and their interactions with school personnel.

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Appendix A

Superintendent, Law Enforcement Administrator, Police Officer, School Administrator

Sample Consent Letters

October, 2016

Stroudsburg Area School District
123 Linden Street
Stroudsburg, PA 18360

Dear Dr. Curry:

This letter is being written to request your permission for me to conduct research at your institution.

I am conducting a research study entitled "A Descriptive Study of Law Enforcement Arrest Decisions, Administrative Actions, and Their Impact on Students' Exclusionary Outcomes in the Secondary School Environment." The purpose of this study is to describe the factors influencing the arrest decisions of School Resource Officers versus School Based Police Officers and their impact on the frequency and type of student arrests, and school administrator imposed exclusionary discipline rates in two secondary schools. The study is being conducted with School Resource Officers who have been assigned to the Stroudsburg High School as well as some of the administrators who have assigned exclusionary discipline at the Stroudsburg High School during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. The study also requires data collection of student exclusionary discipline and arrest rates during these two school years from the Stroudsburg High School.

This study is being done in partial fulfillment of a doctoral degree in Administration and Leadership offered by East Stroudsburg University. By granting me permission to survey and interview the School Resource Officers and interview the administrators selected in the purposive sampling process, you will be contributing to the body of knowledge of safety and security in the K-12 learning environment. The findings of this study may be instrumental in determining the impact of School Resource Officer programs in secondary schools. Your agreement to permit your administrators and the School Resource Officers to participate in the study is voluntary.

There is no compensation for your institution's participation in the study.

The researcher will be working with the secondary-level administrators in the high school and the School Resource Officers assigned to the high school during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. The researcher will indicate to them that their participation is voluntary.

The SRO surveys will occur only one time. Each survey will only take approximately 15 minutes depending on the responses of the participants. The SROs will also be interviewed; this will also occur only one time. The interviews will occur via telephone and will take approximately 15 minutes depending on the interview responses. The administrators will also be interviewed via telephone. The interviews will also occur only one time. They will only take approximately 15-10 minutes depending on the interview responses. All interviews will be recorded for accuracy.

Any information collected in relationship to this study will be kept confidential. The research records will be kept private and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office. Only the researcher will have access to the research records.

In order for me to move forward in this process, the East Stroudsburg University IRB is requesting receipt of a signed consent form on your institution's letterhead. The original letter should be sent to: Richard A. Ruck Jr., East Stroudsburg University, 200 Prospect St, Stroud 407d, E. Stroudsburg, PA 18301.

My ability to conduct and complete this study is dependent on the cooperation of individuals such as you. I want to thank you in advance for your sincere consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Ruck, Jr.

October, 2016

East Stroudsburg Area School District
50 Vine Street
East Stroudsburg, PA 18301

Dear Dr. Riker:

This letter is being written to request your permission for me to conduct research at your institution.

I am conducting a research study entitled "A Descriptive Study of Law Enforcement Arrest Decisions, Administrative Actions, and Their Impact on Students' Exclusionary Outcomes in the Secondary School Environment." The purpose of this study is to describe the factors influencing the arrest decisions of School Resource Officers versus School Based Police Officers and their impact on the frequency and type of student arrests, and school administrator imposed exclusionary discipline rates in two secondary schools. The study is being conducted with School Based Police Officers who have been assigned to the East Stroudsburg South High School as well as some of the administrators who have assigned exclusionary discipline at the East Stroudsburg South High School during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. The study also requires data collection of student exclusionary discipline and arrest rates during these two school years from the East Stroudsburg South High School.

This study is being done in partial fulfillment of a doctoral degree in Administration and Leadership offered by East Stroudsburg University. By granting me permission to survey and interview the police officers and interview the administrators selected in the purposive sampling process, you will be contributing to the body of knowledge of safety and security in the K-12 learning environment. The findings of this study may be instrumental in determining the impact of School Based Police Officer programs in secondary schools. Your agreement to permit your administrators and the School Based Police Officers to participate in the study is voluntary.

There is no compensation for your institution's participation in the study.

The researcher will be working with the secondary-level administrators in the high school and the School Based Police Officers assigned to the high school during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. The researcher will indicate to them that their participation is voluntary.

The SRO surveys will occur only one time. Each survey will only take approximately 15 minutes depending on the responses of the participants. The police officers will also be interviewed; this will also occur only one time. The interviews will occur via telephone and will take approximately 15 minutes depending on the interview responses. The administrators will also be interviewed via telephone. The interviews will also occur only one time. They will only take approximately 15-10 minutes depending on the interview responses. All interviews will be recorded for accuracy.

Any information collected in relationship to this study will be kept confidential. The research records will be kept private and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office. Only the researcher will have access to the research records.

In order for me to move forward in this process, the East Stroudsburg University IRB is requesting receipt of a signed consent form on your institution's letterhead. The original letter should be sent to: Richard A. Ruck Jr., East Stroudsburg University, 200 Prospect St, Stroud 407d, E. Stroudsburg, PA 18301.

My ability to conduct and complete this study is dependent on the cooperation of individuals such as you. I want to thank you in advance for your sincere consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Ruck, Jr.

October, 2016

Stroud Area Regional Police Department
Street
East Stroudsburg, PA 18301

Dear Chief Ward:

This letter is being written to request your permission for me to conduct research with officers from your police department.

I am conducting a research study entitled "A Descriptive Study of Law Enforcement Arrest Decisions, Administrative Actions, and Their Impact on Students' Exclusionary Outcomes in the Secondary School Environment." The purpose of this study is to describe the factors influencing the arrest decisions of School Resource Officers versus School Based Police Officers and their impact on the frequency and type of student arrests, and school administrator imposed exclusionary discipline rates in two secondary schools. The study is being conducted with School Resource Officers who have been assigned to the Stroudsburg High School as well as some of the administrators who have assigned exclusionary discipline at the Stroudsburg High School during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. The study also requires data collection of student exclusionary discipline and arrest rates during these two school years from the Stroudsburg High School.

This study is being done in partial fulfillment of a doctoral degree in Administration and Leadership offered by East Stroudsburg University. By granting me permission to survey and interview the School Resource Officers, you will be contributing to the body of knowledge of safety and security in the K-12 learning environment. The findings of this study may be instrumental in determining the impact of School Resource Officer programs in secondary schools. Your agreement to permit the School Resource Officers to participate in the study is voluntary.

There is no compensation for your organization's participation in the study.

The researcher will be working with the secondary-level administrators in the high school and the School Resource Officers assigned to the high school during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. The researcher will indicate to them that their participation is voluntary.

The SRO surveys will occur only one time. Each survey will only take approximately 15 minutes depending on the responses of the participants. The SROs will also be interviewed; this will also occur only one time. The interviews will occur via telephone and will take approximately 15 minutes depending on the interview responses. All interviews will be recorded for accuracy.

Any information collected in relationship to this study will be kept confidential. The research records will be kept private and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office. Only the researcher will have access to the research records.

In order for me to move forward in this process, the East Stroudsburg University IRB is requesting receipt of a signed consent form on your organization's letterhead. The original letter should be sent to: Richard A. Ruck Jr., East Stroudsburg University, 200 Prospect St, Stroud 407d, E. Stroudsburg, PA 18301.

My ability to conduct and complete this study is dependent on the cooperation of individuals such as you. I want to thank you in advance for your sincere consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Ruck, Jr.

INFORMED CONSENT – SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER/SCHOOL BASED POLICE OFFICER
For a Research Study entitled
“A Descriptive Study of Law Enforcement Arrest Decisions, Administrative Actions, and Their Impact on
Students’ Exclusionary Outcomes in the Secondary School Environment.”

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Richard A. Ruck Jr., a doctoral student in the Administration and Leadership program at East Stroudsburg University. The intent of the study is to describe the factors influencing the arrest decisions of School Resource Officers versus School Based Police Officers and their impact on the frequency and type of student arrests, and school administrator imposed exclusionary discipline rates in two secondary schools. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a School Resource Officer/School Based Police Officer who is or was assigned to the participating high school during the 2014-15 and/or 2015-16 school years.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will participate in a survey and an interview. The survey will consist of approximately 43 questions. The survey is a paper-and-pencil type survey and will only occur one time. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes depending on your responses. Please note that some of the questions are open-ended and they require a narrative response. I encourage you to complete the survey and feel free to ask questions at any time. During the survey, you will be asked questions about your arrest decision making capacity in a school environment.

The interview will consist of approximately seven questions. The interview is via telephone and will only occur one time. The interviews will be recorded and later transcribed for analysis. During the interview, you will be asked questions about your role as a police officer in the school setting. A copy of the completed research project will be available upon your request.

I do not anticipate the risks associated with answering the questions to be greater than any risks you encounter on a day-to-day basis. Your participation will be instrumental in determining the impact of School Resource Officer/School Based Police Officer programs in secondary schools and add to the literature of safety and security measures in the K-12 learning environment.

There is no compensation for your participation in the study.

Any information you provide as part of your participation in this study will be kept confidential. The research records will be kept private and will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s office. Only the researcher will have access to the research records.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision as to whether or not you participate will not affect your future relations with ESU, your school, or your employer. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

This project has been approved by the East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. If you have any questions about the study, please ask them now or contact Richard A. Ruck Jr. by phone 484-866-5277 or by e-mail at rruck@esu.edu. You may also contact his faculty advisor, Dr. Lare by e-mail at dlare@po-box.esu.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the East Stroudsburg University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by phone 570-422-3336 or e-mail at sdavis@esu.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Participant Name (printed) _____

Principal Investigator Signature _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator Name (printed) _____

INFORMED CONSENT – ADMINISTRATOR

For a Research Study entitled

“A Descriptive Study of Law Enforcement Arrest Decisions, Administrative Actions, and Their Impact on Students’ Exclusionary Outcomes in the Secondary School Environment.”

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Richard A. Ruck Jr., a doctoral student in the Administration and Leadership program at East Stroudsburg University. The intent of the study is to describe the factors influencing the arrest decisions of School Resource Officers versus School Based Police Officers and their impact on the frequency and type of student arrests, and school administrator imposed exclusionary discipline rates in two secondary schools. You were selected as a possible participant because you are an administrator who is or was assigned to the participating high school during the 2014-15 and/or 2015-16 school years.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to participate in an interview. The interview will consist of approximately 10 questions. The interview is via telephone and will only occur one time. The interviews will be recorded and later transcribed for analysis. A copy of the completed research project will be available upon your request.

The interview will take approximately 15-20 minutes depending on your responses. Please note that the questions are all open-ended. I encourage you to complete the interview and feel free to ask questions at any time.

During the interview, you will be asked questions about school discipline and zero tolerance policies in a school environment. I do not anticipate the risks associated with answering the questions to be greater than any risks you encounter on a day-to-day basis. Your participation will be instrumental in determining the impact of School Resource Officer programs in secondary schools and add to the literature of safety and security measures in the K-12 learning environment.

There is no compensation for your participation in the study.

Any information you provide as part of your participation in this study will be kept confidential. The research records will be kept private and will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s office. Only the researcher will have access to the research records.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision as to whether or not you participate will not affect your future relations with ESU, your school, or your principal. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

This project has been approved by the East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. If you have any questions about the study, please ask them now or contact Richard A. Ruck Jr. by phone 484-866-5277 or by e-mail at rruck@esu.edu. You may also contact his faculty advisor, Dr. Lare by e-mail at dlare@po-box.esu.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the East Stroudsburg University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by phone 570-422-3336 or e-mail at sdavis@esu.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Participant Name (printed) _____

Principal Investigator Signature _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator Name (printed) _____

Appendix B

School Resource Officer Survey Instrument

School Resource Officer Survey Instrument

Factors Affecting the Arrest Decision in School:

For the following factors, please indicate how important each factor is to your decision of whether to arrest a student for alleged misbehavior. Please respond using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "Not important at all" and 5 indicating "Extremely Important."

Question	(Not important at all): 1	2	3	4	(Extremely important): 5	I don't know
1. How important to the arrest decisions are guidelines provided by applicable laws, rules and regulations?						
2. How important to the arrest decision is the nature of the alleged misbehavior?						
3. When there is an identifiable victim, how important to the arrest decision is the impact the behavior had on the victim?						
4. How important to the arrest decision is the student's attitude when you approach him or her about the alleged misbehavior?						
5. How important to the arrest decision is the student's history of misbehavior?						
6. How important to the arrest decision are the student's academic achievements?						
7. How important to the arrest decision are your expectations of whether the student will continue to misbehave?						
8. How important to the arrest decision are the wishes of school administrators?						
9. How important to the arrest decision are the wishes of teachers?						
10. When there is an identifiable victim, how important to the arrest decision are the wishes of the victim's parent/guardian?						
11. How important to the arrest decision is the need to ensure that the student is punished for his or her misbehavior?						
12. How important to the arrest decision are the potential consequences of the student's involvement in the juvenile justice system?						
13. How important to the arrest decision is the quality of the evidence against the student?						

14. Please list any factors, not listed above, that are important considerations when you are deciding whether to arrest a student for alleged misbehavior.

Previous Experience with Arrests:

The following questions ask about your previous experiences with students who have misbehaved. For the following scenarios, please indicate how often each has occurred in the past by choosing "This has never occurred," "This has rarely occurred," or "This has frequently occurred."

Question	This has never occurred	This has rarely occurred	This has frequently occurred	I don't know	I would prefer not to answer
15. In the past, I have arrested a student who was acting in a disorderly manner because it was the only way to calm the student down.					
16. In the past, I have arrested a student for a relatively minor offense because a teacher wanted the student to be arrested.					
17. In the past, I have arrested a student for a relatively minor offense to show the student that actions have consequences.					
18. In the past, I have arrested a student because it was the only way to calm a group of students down who were disrupting classes.					

19. In the past, I have decided NOT to arrest a student who had committed an arrestable offense because that student had never been in trouble before.					
20. In the past, I have decided NOT to arrest a student who had committed an arrestable offense because the student cooperated with my investigation.					
21. In the past, I have decided NOT to arrest a student who had committed an arrestable offense because the student promised to stop misbehaving.					
22. In the past, I have decided NOT to arrest a group of students who had been involved in a fight because they demonstrated to me that their fight was over.					

For the following statements about the juvenile justice system and school discipline, please rate the extent to which you agree with each statement, with 1 indicating "Strongly disagree" and 5 indicating "Strongly agree."

Question	(Strongly disagree): 1	2	3	4	(Strongly agree): 5	I don't know
23. Involvement in the juvenile justice system deters misbehaving students from future misbehavior.						
24. Seeing a student arrested for misbehavior deters other students from misbehaving.						
25. Services provided by the juvenile justice system can help prevent students from misbehaving in the future.						
26. Arresting students when they misbehave is an effective way of preserving order in the school.						

27. Arresting students when they misbehave allows other students to focus on learning.						
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Answer the following question using the statements provided on the range from 1-5:

28. What effect does involvement in the juvenile justice system have on misbehaving students?

- 1 - Involvement in the juvenile justice system always harms misbehaving students.
- 2
- 3 – Involvement in the juvenile justice system benefits misbehaving students to the same extent it harms misbehaving students.
- 4
- 5 - Involvement in the juvenile justice system always benefits misbehaving students.
- I don't know

General Thoughts:

The following questions ask for your general thoughts on making arrests in school.

29. Is the arrest decision making process different when you are in school than when you are on the street?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

30. If you answered "Yes" to the question above, please briefly explain your answer.

31. When you have strong evidence that a student has committed an arrestable offense in school, how often do you arrest the student?

- 100% of the time
- 80 % of the time
- 60 % of the time
- 40 % of the time
- 20 % of the time
- Never
- I don't know

Training:

The following questions ask you about the training you have received regarding the arrest decision making process.

32. To the best of your recollection, please list all training sessions you have completed that have dealt directly with the arrest decision making process in schools.

33. To the best of your recollection, please list all training sessions you have completed that have dealt directly with the arrest decision making process in general.

Training for Arrest Decision Making in the School Setting:

For the following training types, please indicate the extent to which each has been helpful to your arrest decision making when you are in the school setting. Please indicate the extent to which the training type has been helpful using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "Not helpful at all" and 5 being "Extremely helpful."

Question	(Not helpful at all): 1	2	3	4	(Extremely helpful): 5	I don't know	I prefer not to answer
34. Formal training (e.g., academy classes, etc.)							
35. Informal "on-the-job" training							
36. Information/training from the Municipal Police Officers' Education & Training Commission (MPOETC)							

In the past, when deciding whether to arrest a student for alleged misbehavior, have you sought guidance from any of the following?

Question	Yes	No	I don't know
37. School administrators			
38. Superior officers			
39. Fellow SROs			
40. Teachers			
41. District Attorney's Office			
42. Probation Officers			

43. If you have sought guidance from any individuals not listed in the previous question, please list them here:

Demographic Information:

Please provide the following demographic information:

In what year were you born? _____

What is your gender?

Male

Female

I would prefer not to answer

Approximately how long have you served as a police officer? _____

Approximately how long have you served as a School Resource Officer?

Approximately how long have you been assigned to your present school(s)?

What is your present rank? _____

THANK YOU!

You have completed the School Resource Officer Survey. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Richard A. Ruck, Jr. at rruck@esu.edu. Thank you very much for your time and effort -- it is greatly appreciated.

Appendix C

School Administrator Interview Protocol

School Administrator Interview Questions

The following protocol will be used for the school administrator interview:

Date:

Time:

Place:

Interviewer:

The following statement will be read to each interviewee: *This interview is being conducted for the purpose of research. Information obtained during this interview will be analyzed and included in the findings of this study. Do you consent to the recording of this interview?*

Please state your name and position. I will ask you a series of questions. Please feel free to make additional comments if you feel they will enhance the answers to the questions. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Interview Questions:

1. In your own words describe the current zero tolerance policy for your school or district?
2. In your opinion what is the most prevalent disciplinary problem in your school or district?
3. How frequently during a week, month, or school year do you respond to zero tolerance violations?
4. How much time do you spend on reporting or responding to violations?
5. How do you respond to zero tolerance violations?
6. Do you respond to zero tolerance violations in collaboration with anyone else in your school?
7. Have you received specific training in recognizing and responding to zero tolerance infractions?
8. Have there been any changes since your tenure as a (n) (administrator) in the way zero tolerance is viewed and enforced? If so, describe the changes?
9. Has your opinion, perceptions, or the way you respond to zero tolerance changed over time? If so, describe?
10. In your opinion, what impact (if any) has high profile school violence incidents have on the enforcement of zero tolerance policies in your school or district?

Thank you for your participation. Do you have any questions or comments before the taping ends?

Questions 1-4 and 7-10 developed by Jannell Wood (2008)

Appendix D

Police Officer Interview Protocol

Police Officer Interview Questions

The following protocol will be used for the police officer interview:

Date:

Time:

Place:

Interviewer:

The following statement will be read to each interviewee: *This interview is being conducted for the purpose of research. Information obtained during this interview will be analyzed and included in the findings of this study. Do you consent to the recording of this interview?*

Please state your name and position. I will ask you a series of questions. Please feel free to make additional comments if you feel they will enhance the answers to the questions. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Interview Questions:

1. What is your mission as the SRO/school-based police officer in the school environment?
2. What problems are you currently addressing as the SRO/school-based police officer?
3. What law enforcement activities do you perform as the SRO/school-based police officer?
4. Do you provide mentoring/counseling to the students and staff, as the SRO/school-based police officer? If so, provide examples.
5. What topics do you teach in the school, as the SRO/school-based police officer?
6. Do you, as the SRO/school-based police officer, engage in any other activities?
7. Who do you work with regularly in your role as the SRO/school-based police officer?
8. Do you, as the SRO/school-based police officer, engage in problem-solving activities (identifying underlying causes of crime or disorder problems in schools)? If so, provide some examples. If not, why not?

Thank you for your participation. Do you have any questions or comments before the taping ends?

Questions 1-7 developed by Jack McDevitt and Peter Finn