



Evalumetrics Research

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**Impact of
School Resource Officers
in
Wayne County Schools**

**Utilization
Student Perception
and
Results from the
Evalumetrics Youth Survey**

August 2020

Evalumetrics Research Report WC-2020-5

Summary of Findings –

Analysis of multiple data sources provided significant support for the positive benefits of School Resource Officers (SRO) in Wayne County schools. Results of analyses indicate:

SRO Service -

- Between January 2019 and March 2020, School Resource Officers provided over 2,000 hours of service in schools.
- SROs spent 30% of their service time patrolling school buildings, monitoring student arrivals, and ensuring order.
- More than 10 percent of SRO service hours were dedicated to conflict resolution and student advising.
- Less than three percent of SRO service hours were spent in criminal investigation. Juvenile referrals, or arrests.

Student SRO Survey Results -

- More than nine of 10 (93.2%) of 5th and 6th grade students in schools with an SRO said that most police officers can be trusted and only 19.6% believed that police would rather catch you doing something wrong than try to help you.
- More than half (52.4%) of 5th and 6th graders said there is a need for a violence reduction program in their school.
- More than three of four (78.2%) said having a police officer in school reduces violence.
- More than half (54.0%) said that if they had a serious conflict or argument with another student at school, they would go to the SRO (Police Officer in the School) for help.
- Among students in grades 7 through 12 in schools with an SRO, 84.0% said most police officers can be trusted.
- More than half, (52.6%) of 7th to 12th grade students believe there is a need for a program to reduce violence in school.
- Nearly two of three (63.2%) said that having a police officer in schools reduces violence.

- More than four of 10 (42.4%) said if they had a serious conflict or argument with another student at school, they would go to the SRO (Police Officer in the School) for help.

Evalumetrics Youth Survey (EYS) Results -

- Between the 2015 EYS (prior to SROs being placed in schools) and 2019 EYS, in general, fewer students reported feeling safe in school. However, EYS results indicate that compared to students in Wayne County schools without an SRO, middle students in schools with an SRO showed a much smaller change.
- Among high school students, the decrease in feeling safe was six times greater in schools without an SRO.
- Among non-white students, the proportion feeling safe increased in SRO schools while it decreased in schools without an SRO.
- Compared to 2017, students in schools with an SRO reported 23% fewer absences in 2019 while students in schools without an SRO showed 5.2% increase in absences.

Introduction –

Placement of School Resource Officers (SRO) in schools is meant to address three goals. First, SROs provide protection for students from threats within and from outside the school. Second, SROs provide social-emotional support for students in need. Third, the presence of a uniformed police officer providing support and friendly interactions with students promotes a positive image and enhances students' positive perceptions of law enforcement.

Over the past several years, five school districts in Wayne County placed SROs in schools.

This report presents findings from utilization records, student opinion surveys, and the Evalumetrics Youth Survey (EYS).

SRO Utilization Summary-

The table below shows the hours of service provided for each of several categories. Between January 2019 and March 2020, SROs provide 2,032 hours of service in the schools. Nearly a third of service hours (30.0%) were allocated to patrol at school including monitoring arrivals, patrolling halls and classrooms, and building and door checks. Most interventions required no follow-up, 11.7% included providing assistance, and one in 10 (9.2%) involved conflict resolution. SROs spent 147 hours in criminal investigations which, combined with time spent in arrests and juvenile referrals, constituted less than three percent of the SROs' efforts.

SRO Service Hours

Patrol School	2,032	30.0%
No follow-up needed	1,701	25.1%
Assistance	793	11.7%
Conflict Resolution	625	9.2%
Planning/Administrative	205	3.0%
Referred to Admin	195	2.9%
Educational Opportunity	180	2.7%
Advise Student	158	2.3%
Follow-up needed	152	2.2%
Criminal Investigation	147	2.2%
Safety Concern	133	2.0%
Safety Meeting	97	1.4%
Planning	96	1.4%
Safety Drill	70	1.0%
After School Activity	63	0.9%
Appears Safe	42	0.6%
Training	35	0.5%
Juvenile Referral	31	0.5%
Arrest	9	0.1%
Incident Report	9	0.1%
Hearing	4	0.1%
Total Hours	6,777	100.0%

Student Opinion Survey -

In the spring of 2019, students in grades 5 to 12 in schools with an SRO completed a survey to assess their perceptions of SROs, school safety, and other issues. The following tables provide the results for the survey.

Results for Grades 5 and 6

3. Most Police Officers can be trusted.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	2.3%	10
Disagree	4.5%	20
Agree	52.1%	231
Strongly agree	41.1%	182
Totals		443

4.The Police would rather catch you doing something wrong than try to help you.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	35.4%	157
Disagree	45.0%	200
Agree	16.4%	73
Strongly agree	3.2%	14
Totals		444

5.There is a need for a program to reduce violence in our school.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	5.8%	25
Disagree	32.9%	143
Agree	43.0%	187
Strongly agree	18.4%	80
Totals		435

6.I think that having a Police Officer in the school reduces violence.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	6.1%	27
Disagree	15.7%	69
Agree	54.6%	240
Strongly agree	23.6%	104
Totals		440

7.I feel safe in school.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	5.7%	25
Disagree	17.5%	77
Agree	51.2%	226
Strongly agree	25.6%	113
Totals		441

8.If I had a serious conflict or argument with another student at school, I would go to the SRO (Police Officer in the School) for help.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	9.9%	43
Disagree	35.1%	153
Agree	40.1%	175
Strongly agree	14.9%	65
Totals		436

9.If I had a serious conflict or argument with another student outside of school, I would go to the SRO (Police Officer in the School) for help.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	18.5%	81
Disagree	45.0%	197
Agree	26.9%	118
Strongly agree	9.6%	42
Totals		438

10.In the past month I have gone to a Police Officer for help with a problem.

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	4.1%	18
No	95.9%	422
Totals		440

11.In the past month I have gone to a School Resource Officer for help with a problem.

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	5.6%	24
No	94.4%	407
Totals		431

12.I think there is a bullying problem in our district.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	5.9%	26
Disagree	36.2%	158
Agree	37.5%	164
Strongly agree	20.4%	89
Totals		437

13.How many students at your school feel safe?

Value	Percent	Count
None	2.8%	12
About 1 out of 4 (25%)	4.6%	20
About half (50%)	25.7%	112
About 3 out of 4 (75%)	33.9%	148
All or almost all	33.0%	144
Totals		436

Results for Grades 7 through 12

3. Most Police Officers can be trusted.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	6.0%	62
Disagree	10.0%	104
Agree	51.6%	535
Strongly agree	32.4%	336
Totals		1037

4. The Police would rather catch you doing something wrong than try to help you.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	20.3%	210
Disagree	51.7%	534
Agree	22.0%	227
Strongly agree	5.9%	61
Totals		1032

5. There is a need for a program to reduce violence in our school.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	11.0%	112
Disagree	36.4%	372
Agree	39.5%	404
Strongly agree	13.1%	134
Totals		1022

6.I think that having a Police Officer in the school reduces violence.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	9.2%	95
Disagree	27.6%	284
Agree	46.9%	483
Strongly agree	16.3%	168
Totals		1030

7.I feel safe in school.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	9.5%	98
Disagree	17.5%	180
Agree	53.8%	554
Strongly agree	19.2%	198
Totals		1030

8.If I had a serious conflict or argument with another student at school, I would go to the SRO (Police Officer in the School) for help.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	19.2%	197
Disagree	38.5%	395
Agree	34.4%	353
Strongly agree	8.0%	82
Totals		1027

9.If I had a serious conflict or argument with another student outside of school, I would go to the SRO (Police Officer in the School) for help.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	24.6%	252
Disagree	43.1%	442
Agree	25.0%	256
Strongly agree	7.4%	76
Totals		1026

10.In the past month I have gone to a Police Officer for help with a problem.

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	5.4%	56
No	94.6%	978
Totals		1034

11.In the past month I have gone to a School Resource Officer for help with a problem.

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	6.0%	62
No	94.0%	970
Totals		1032

12.I think there is a problem with drug use in our district.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	10.3%	106
Disagree	29.3%	302
Agree	36.1%	372
Strongly agree	24.3%	250
Totals		1030

13.I think there is a problem with underage drinking in our district.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	12.4%	127
Disagree	36.9%	379
Agree	32.5%	334
Strongly agree	18.2%	187
Totals		1027

14.I think there is a problem with bullying in our district.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	9.0%	92
Disagree	35.4%	362
Agree	35.8%	367
Strongly agree	19.8%	203
Totals		1024

15.How many students at your school feel safe?

Value	Percent	Count
None	5.7%	58
About 1 out of 4 (25%)	12.0%	123
About half (50%)	30.5%	312
About 3 out of 4 (75%)	32.6%	334
All or almost all	19.2%	196
Totals		1023

EYS Results Summary –

Nearly one in four students said they would go to a School Resource Officer (SRO) for help with an emotional problem. The presence of an SRO is related to a positive impact on students’ reports of feeling safe at school. This effect was most pronounced among non-white students. The presence of an SRO is also related to better attendance at school.

Method -

Data from the 2015 and 2019 Evalumetrics Youth Surveys (EYS) were analyzed to determine differences between schools with a School Resource Officer (SRO) and schools without one. In 2015, no schools in the sample had a full-time SRO. By 2019, three schools, Sodus, NRW, and Wayne Central had added SROs.¹ All schools in Wayne County were influenced by external factors including national media coverage for several tragic school shootings and violent acts involving local students. These factors would be expected to decrease students’ sense of safety at school. School Resource Officers are intended to increase school safety, serve as a trusted adult counselor, and promote a positive image of law enforcement.

Results -

Students in middle and high school are hesitant to go to any adult for help with a personal problem. Most reported they rely on friends or the internet and one in four say they either would not go to anyone or they do not know where to go for help. However, more than one in five (28.9%) middle school students in schools with an SRO would go to the SRO for help. More than one in five (22.7%) high school students would go to an SRO. Non-white students in

¹ Clyde-Savannah and Red Creek schools added SROs in early 2019 but are included in the comparison group as they would not have been in place long enough to influence the outcomes measured in the February 2019 EYS.

middle school were slightly less likely to go to the SRO (22.6%) while minority high school students are more likely (23.7%) to go to the SRO for help.

Would Go to SRO for Help	Proportion
All Middle School Students	28.6%
Non-White Middle School	22.6%
All High School Students	22.7%
Non-White High School	23.7%

The EYS asks students if they feel safe at school. In 2015, prior to placing SROs in some schools, 79.7% of middle school students in schools that would eventually get an SRO said they feel safe at school. That proportion decreased to 69.5% in 2019, a 14.7% decline. However, the negative influence of the external factors discussed above is apparent in the non-SRO schools in which the proportion of students who felt safe decreased from 79.6% to 68.9%, a 15.5% decline. Among non-white middle school students, the difference is far more dramatic. The proportion of students who felt safe in SRO schools declined from 65.3% to 65.1%, a .03% difference. However, among non-white students in middle schools without an SRO, those who felt safe decreased from 70.9% to 61.6%, a 15.5% decline. Similar patterns were found for high school students. Perceived safety decreased from 75.9% to 73.8%, a 2.8% decline for students in SRO schools but from 80.4% to 70.6%, a 13.9% decline for non-SRO schools. Among minority high school students, the difference is much greater. The proportion of minority high school students in SRO school who felt safe increased from 66.6% to 67.8%, a 1.8% increase while non-SRO school students decreased from 71.3% to 54.2%, a 31.5% decline.

	With SRO			Without SRO		
	Pre-SRO (2015)	Post SRO (2019)	Change	Pre-SRO (2015)	Post SRO (2019)	Change
Feel Safe at School						
All Middle School Students	79.7%	69.5%	-14.7%	79.6%	68.9%	-15.5%
Non-White Middle School	65.3%	65.1%	-0.3%	70.9%	61.6%	-15.1%
All High School Students	75.9%	73.8%	-2.8%	80.4%	70.6%	-13.9%
Non-White High School	66.6%	67.8%	1.8%	71.3%	54.2%	-31.5%

**Change in Proportion That Feel Safe
at School
2015 vs. 2019**

Feel Safe at School	With SRO	No SRO	% difference
All Middle School Students	-14.7%	-15.5%	5.5%
Non-White Middle School	-0.3%	-15.1%	98.0%
All High School Students	-2.8%	-13.9%	79.5%
Non-White High School	1.5%	-31.5%	104.7%

Another measure of students' comfort at school is regular attendance. Students were asked how many days they had been absent in the past for weeks. In 2015, middle school students in schools that would eventually get an SRO reported an average 3.4 days absent in the previous month. In 2019, with the SRO in place, the average dropped to 2.8 days, a decrease of 23.0%. In the non-SRO middle schools, the average absent days increased from 2.7 to 2.9, a 5.2% increase. Among non-white middle school students there was a 62.6% decrease in absences in SRO schools compared to 1.5% in non-SRO schools. While high school students reported an increase in absences, the increase was far less for students in schools with an SRO.

Mean Days Absent in Past Month	With SRO			Without SRO		
	Pre- SRO (2015)	Post- SRO (2019)	Change	Pre- SRO (2015)	Post- SRO (2019)	Change
All Middle School Students	3.4	2.8	-23.0%	2.7	2.9	5.2%
Non-White Middle School	9.7	6.0	-62.6%	5.5	5.4	-1.5%
All High School Students	3.0	3.3	9.3%	6.3	7.3	13.1%
Non-White High School	6.3	7.3	13.0%	6.3	7.5	15.5%

**Change in Mean Number of Days
Absent
2015 vs. 2019**

Mean Days Absent in Past Month	School With SRO	No SRO	% difference
All Middle School Students	-23.0%	5.2%	545.2%
Non-White Middle School	-62.6%	-1.5%	-3952.8%
All High School Students	9.3%	14.1%	34.1%
Non-White High School	13.1%	15.5%	15.0%