

DECEMBER 2020

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND STUDENT SAFETY IN THE PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

**A Research Report from the Center for Youth
& Community Leadership in Education at
Roger Williams University and the Providence
Alliance for Student Safety**



Acknowledgements

We want to thank the adult and youth leaders of the Providence Alliance for Student Safety – the Providence Student Union (PSU), the Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians (ARISE), Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM), Young Voices, and Rhode Island Urban Debate League – for providing on-the ground information and feedback and for helping us schedule interviews and focus groups with students and staff. We would also like to thank all of the individuals interviewed for this report for providing thoughtful and timely information on school discipline and student supports in the Providence Public School District. Special thanks to The Communities for Just Schools Fund for supporting the development of this report.

Authors

Tracie Potochnik, Associate Director for Research and Learning, CYCLE

Vianna Mercedes, Program Associate, CYCLE

Joanne Thompson, Research and Communications Associate, CYCLE

Communications

Nichole Smith, Communications and Program Coordinator, CYCLE

CYCLE is the Center for Youth & Community Leadership in Education at Roger Williams University. Learn more at <https://cycle-rwu.org>.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary	4
2. Introduction.....	7
3. Literature Review.....	9
4. Providence Public Schools Context.....	12
5. Findings Part I: School Discipline and School Resource Officers.....	13
5.1. SRO History and Background in PPSD	13
5.2. PPSD Student Arrest Data	15
5.3 Interview Themes	18
5.4 Student Survey Findings.....	21
6. Findings Part II: Student Supports	24
6.1. Background and Context	24
6.2. Support Staffing in Providence Public Schools.....	25
6.3 Interview Themes	26
6.4 Student Survey Findings.....	29
7. Recommendations	32
8. Endnotes	35
9. Appendices	39
9.1. Appendix A: Interview / Focus Group Stakeholder Categories	39
9.2. Appendix B: Analysis Notes for Student Arrest Data	39
9.3 Appendix C: Student Survey Demographic Data	40

1. Executive Summary

The Providence Alliance for Student Safety (PASS), which fights for safe and healthy schools that treat youth with dignity and respect, partnered with the Center for Youth & Community Leadership in Education (CYCLE) at Roger Williams University to develop a research report on issues of school discipline and student supports in the Providence Public School District (PPSD). This includes the roles and perceived impact of school resource officers, existing and needed school-based supports for students, and the visions that participants have for safe and supportive schools. Methods for the study included a combination of document review, review of student arrest and discipline data, stakeholder interviews, and a student survey.

School Discipline and School Resource Officers in the Providence Public School District

The Providence Police Department has provided SROs to PPSD since the 1990s, and the partnership was formally codified in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in 2014. The MOU frames SRO role as “to help foster a positive school climate by demonstrating respect for students’ rights and protecting the safety of the school environment.” While SROs are mentioned in PPSD’s Code of Conduct, the Code does not give specific information about when and how they intervene in disciplinary issues. Over the past four years, an average of eight SROs have been assigned to nine Providence Public middle and high schools.

An analysis of PPSD student arrest data from the 2016-17 to 2018-19 academic years shows that:

- Over 230 student arrests occurred over that time, resulting in 316 total charges
- Students as young as 11 years old have been arrested, and students ages 11-13 account for about 19% of arrests.
- Black students are disproportionately represented in student arrests, making up 16% of overall PPSD enrollment and 30% of all student arrests. Black male students in particular are disproportionately represented. Black (non-Latinx/Hispanic) male students make up 8% of overall PPSD enrollment, and 19% of all student arrests. Hispanic/Latinx male and Black female students are also disproportionately represented in arrests.
- Over one-third (36%) of student arrests were for “Disorderly Conduct,” and 23% were for “Simple Assault/Battery.”

Additionally, the following themes and perceptions emerged from survey and interview data:

- From school to school and across student populations there are inconsistencies in disciplinary structures, SRO roles and responsibilities, how SROs respond to infractions, and the consequences of those infractions. These practices are often defined by building administrators, and in some cases SROs intervene in a range of discipline issues even though this is not supposed to be their role.
- While some SROs help to build relationships and bridge distrust between police and communities, simply having uniformed, armed officers in schools makes some students – particularly students of color – feel unsafe. 72% of student survey respondents indicated that they were not comfortable with SROs having guns in their school. Additionally, SROs may escalate rather than de-escalate disciplinary situations.
- Involvement with law enforcement and referral to the juvenile justice system has short- and long-term implications, and too many students are being arrested for “things that could be dealt with in other ways.”

Student Supports in the Providence Public School District

Research has shown links between youth trauma, mental health needs, and behavioral issues that too often result in students being disciplined and punished in school when root causes would be better addressed by support professionals. Despite the need for mental health supports, the vast majority of youth – especially youth of color and low-income youth – do not receive mental health services. Those who do receive help are most likely to access it within their schools. Recent research from Rhode Island College’s Social Policy Hub for Equity Research in Education (SPHERE) indicates that PPSD students, particularly students of color, have high exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and a high need for mental health and social-emotional supports, in addition to academic support.

An analysis of PPSD support staffing from academic year 2017-18 shows that while the majority of middle and high schools fall within the recommended 250:1 student to counselor ratio for guidance counselors, only one of Providence’s high schools and no middle schools fall within the recommended ratios for school psychologists (500-700:1), and no Providence middle or high schools fall within the recommended ratio for school social workers (250:1).

Additionally, the following themes and perceptions emerged from survey and interview data:

- Particularly when considering the high need, the number of support professionals in Providence is deeply inadequate, with limited capacity for meeting students’ mental health and social-emotional needs. Nurses, social workers, and psychologists are often part time and stretched across multiple schools, and have limited capacity to meet with students who need help. Additionally, the actual roles played by support professionals may vary from school to school.
- While guidance counselors are more of a presence, they are not necessarily effective at providing or brokering non-academic support. Additionally, students may be unsure about which support staff are in place in their school and how to access them.

Aside from greater numbers of support staff, the following were named as critically needed elements to support PPSD students’ non-academic needs:

- Strategies to build students’ social-emotional skills in areas such as communication, expressing feelings, mediation, and conflict resolution;
- Meaningful relationships with caring adults in schools and robust relationships with community partners;
- Increased training for educators in areas such as trauma, social-emotional supports, and de-escalation and efforts to recruit and retain educators of color who are representative of the student body;
- Adequately supported and resourced restorative justice efforts.

Recommendations

Interview participants held holistic visions for schools that recognize the humanity of both students and educators. Their definitions of safe and supportive schools included: 1) An environment that creates a sense of belonging for students; 2) School buildings with adequate social and emotional support; and 3) Educators who are supported and in turn better support students.

These elements are reflected in the demands of the Providence Alliance for Student Safety, which call upon the City of Providence to:

- Remove all School Resource Officers from Providence schools and use funding currently allocated for SROs within the Providence Police Department to support the hiring of new health and safety staff.
- Hire health and safety staff focused on conflict resolution.
- Increase the number of support staff in schools.

In addition to supporting the visions and demands above, CYCLE recommends the following steps to support implementation:

- Center youth, family, and educator voice in decision-making and expand partnerships with community-based organizations to leverage expertise and resources.
- Expand trauma-informed and cultural inclusivity/humility and other trainings that help teachers to accommodate students' needs.
- Implement an adequately supported and resourced district-wide restorative justice framework that acknowledges students as whole people.
- Increase data collection and transparency of student interactions with, referrals to, and arrests made by SROs and other police officers.
- Connect and align related efforts being made at the community, school district, city, and state levels to realize new visions of school safety and to ensure that any added supports are not only strategic but sustainable, so that much-needed resources are not stripped away as schools are gaining ground.

2. Introduction

The Providence Alliance for Student Safety (PASS) was started in 2019 by the Providence Student Union (PSU), the Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education (ARISE), and Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM) to fight for safe and healthy schools that treat youth with dignity and respect. The Alliance has since grown to include Youth in Action, Young Voices, and Rhode Island Urban Debate League. PASS has initiated a “Counselors Not Cops” campaign to demand that the Providence Public School District 1) remove all School Resource Officers (SROs) from Providence schools; 2) hire health and safety staff focused on alternative measures for conflict resolution; and 3) increase the number of in-school support staff such as guidance counselors, mental health providers, and nurses. While select school board and city council members have shown interest in and potential support for their campaign, PASS sought additional information to inform both their campaign and decision makers at the district, city, and state levels.

In 2019, PASS partnered with the Center for Youth & Community Leadership in Education (CYCLE) at Roger Williams University to develop a research report on issues of student and school safety and discipline in the Providence Public School District (PPSD), including the roles and perceived impact of school resource officers, existing and needed school-based supports for students, and the visions that participants, detailed below, have for safe and supportive schools. The research team sought to answer the following research questions:

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What is the social or educational problem that school resource officers are expected to address in PPSD? How are SROs, in their current capacity, addressing those issues?

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What correlation, if any, is there between SRO assignment and school discipline and culture/climate factors? How do Providence Public Schools students characterize the impact of school resource officers on their educational experience?

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What are Providence Public Schools students’ visions of safe and supportive schools? What resources are needed to achieve this vision?

Methods

The CYCLE research team took a mixed-methods approach to the study that included participant interviews, a student survey, and a review of existing quantitative data. CYCLE staff conducted seven individual and five group interviews with 37 individuals including students, school staff members, district and community leadership, and staff from community-based organizations who work with PPSD students [see Appendix A]. The team developed interview questions designed to solicit participant responses about their perceptions of discipline, SROs, and existing and needed student supports. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in

person, by telephone, or via Zoom, and transcripts were coded and analyzed by the team, with major themes and findings identified and summarized. Key quotes from interviews are included in the report to amplify common themes from participant perspectives.

In addition, the CYCLE team reviewed quantitative data gathered from the Providence Police Department (PPD) and PPSD including student arrests, student and staff demographics, support staff assignments and ratios, suspension rates, chronic absenteeism rates, and graduation and dropout rates. In partnership with PASS, the team also created a survey distributed by PASS to PPSD students that asked about student perspectives on discipline, safety, and supports in PPSD. 71 responses were collected, and select data are included.

Limitations

While the research team had hoped to get interview perspectives from a wide range of PPSD stakeholders, data collection challenges emerged with certain groups of stakeholders. In the midst of CYCLE's data collection efforts, two national events changed both the data collection process and the overall context for the report. First, a novel strain of coronavirus, initially detected in December 2019, spread to the United States in February 2020. By mid-March, schools across the country, including PPSD, had closed, and students and teachers were proceeding with distance learning. Contacting individuals and scheduling interviews became more difficult from a logistics perspective. Notably, additional planned student focus groups were cancelled and unable to be rescheduled virtually, and the team also had great difficulty securing interviews with law enforcement and school administrative staff, despite multiple attempts at outreach. Additionally, the student survey was distributed online only, which may have had an impact on response rate.

Secondly, on May 25, 2020, police in Minneapolis killed George Floyd during a routine arrest. Black Lives Matter protests sprung up in cities across the country, ushering in a national reckoning over police brutality and racial justice. Across the country, student and community groups that had been organizing around police-free schools for years found increasing awareness and attention to their campaigns, and schools in Madison, Minneapolis, Phoenix, Portland, ME, Denver, Portland, OR, and Los Angeles abandoned partnerships with police on campuses, often with support from local teachers unions. These controversial topics related to systemic racism and policing, along with the current public unrest, may have complicated the sampling process and led to skepticism or distrust on the part of law enforcement and school administrators.

As a result, the overall sample for this report is relatively small and not representative of the district as a whole. Additionally, given PASS's role in organizing student focus groups and survey distribution, some student participants may have more background knowledge about these topics than is typical. However, we believe that our research adds to a strong foundation for elevating the voices of students and community members around issues of student safety and discipline and raising up issues that must be addressed as the Providence Public School District moves forward in supporting the health and safety of all students.

3. Literature Review:

The History and Implications of School Policing

This section of the report aims to summarize research around school policing and in-school supports, which will help to situate Providence-specific findings within a broader national context.

History of School Resource Officers

School Resource Officers (SROs) are “sworn law enforcement officers responsible for safety and crime prevention in schools.”¹ Prior to the 1950’s, the concept of an SRO was unknown. In the late 1950s, the first SRO program was started in Flint, Michigan, with the stated goal of improving relationships between police officers and youth.² Officers were assigned to schools full time where they served as teachers and law-related counselors.³ Early opinions of the program were generally positive, and SROs became a model for other communities across the country, where their roles ranged from counselors and coaches to tutors and mentors.⁴ In the 1990s, the role of SROs underwent a dramatic policy shift, largely in response to encouragement and funding from the federal government in three stages.⁵ First, the Safe Schools Act (1994) contributed to the growth of school-police partnerships by allocating federal funds to schools to insure that all schools were safe and free of violence by 2000, with much of the funding going to hiring security or law enforcement officers.⁶ Second, a 1998 amendment to the 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act encouraged school-police partnerships through the SRO model.⁷ Third, in 2000, the Office of Community Oriented Policy Services (COPS) awarded \$68 million in grants to schools to hire SROs. In addition to assigning police to schools, money was used to add security guards, metal detectors, and surveillance cameras to schools.⁸

Consequences of Increased Police Presence in Schools

Greater school police presence and surveillance of students have resulted in an increase in arrests of even young students⁹ for low-level offenses (playground fights, verbal threats, minor drug offenses, etc.).¹⁰ A sharp increase in campus-based law enforcement coincided with the 1999 Columbine High School shootings, which prompted calls for stronger police presence in schools.¹¹ Along with the expansion of zero-tolerance discipline policies in schools, these incidents of mass violence help explain the upsurge in SROs and the change in types of roles that they are expected to play.¹² Despite the fact that the Columbine shooting took place in a suburban, majority white school, the impacts of increased police presence are felt the hardest in schools serving communities of color.¹³ For example, in the 2013-2014 school year, 43% of public schools had some type of security personnel present at least once a week: 29% in elementary schools, 63% in middle schools, and 64% in high schools. Across all levels, schools had 46,290 security personnel working full time and 36,110 working part time at a school.¹⁴ As of 2013, 51% of high schools with majority Black and Latino enrollment had law enforcement officers on campus. And across the country, Black students were more than twice as likely as their white classmates to be referred to law enforcement or arrested in school.¹⁵

Increasingly, advocates for school discipline reform, youth, and community members have expressed concerns over the presence of SROs. In fact, numerous recent studies on SROs and school violence have produced little

evidence that police in schools improve school safety.¹⁶ Many of these studies show that police presence can bring about more issues:

- Police presence in schools has increased over time and contributes to the criminalization of young people. A report published by the Justice Policy Institute, “Education Under Arrest: The Case Against Police in Schools,” concludes that placing SROs and other police in educational spaces leads to interpreting school misbehavior – especially minor infractions – as criminal offenses.¹⁷ For example, a researcher in Tennessee found that schools in the study that had SROs had nearly five times the number of arrests for disorderly conduct as schools without SROs.¹⁸
- Police and SROs can contribute to a criminalizing, unwelcoming, and otherwise unsafe environment in schools.¹⁹ In some schools, there is evidence that SROs create a fearful environment, and some SROs engage in violent and aggressive behavior. The Advancement Project has collected examples of students being harassed by SROs.²⁰ For example, in Birmingham, Alabama, a Black high school student was assaulted by an SRO in a locked cafeteria as punishment for wearing a hat indoors.²¹
- Students of color and students with disabilities are impacted at higher rates by law enforcement in schools. Data from the federal Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) show that Black students are 2.2 times as likely to receive a referral to law enforcement or be subject to school-related arrest as white students.²² Youth with disabilities are also more affected by zero tolerance policies and SROs; a study by the New York Civil Liberties Union found that students with disabilities are four times more likely to be suspended as their peers.²³
- Recent research soon to be published in the journal *Social Problems* shows that in interviews school resource officers expressed that they view their jobs differently depending on how diverse the students are in the districts they serve.²⁴ In interviews, school resource officers in a largely white and affluent school district said they saw their role as protecting the students from outside threats, such as school shooters, and dealing with student behavior like sexting. But their counterparts in an urban district with a higher representation of black and Hispanic students, saw threats as coming from students themselves, who “create chaos” and create a tense and nearly unmanageable atmosphere.²⁵
- The presence of police in schools reflects a larger problem of investing in the juvenile justice system instead of schools and supports for students. In every state, spending on corrections grew at a much higher rate than education spending.²⁶ On average, education spending at state and local levels decreased 28% while spending on corrections increased 44%.

According to the ACLU, in 2020:

- 1.7 million students were in schools with police but no counselors
- 3 million students were in schools with police but no nurses
- 6 million students were in schools with police but no school psychologists
- 10 million students were in schools with police and no social workers
- 14 million students were in schools with police and no counselors, nurses, psychologists, or social workers²⁷
- Black students were more than three times as likely to attend a school with more security personnel than mental health personnel.²⁸

Importance of In-School Supports

Much current research suggests that promoting safety in schools can be accomplished without the presence of law enforcement SROs and their negative impacts.²⁹ There is a growing adolescent mental health crisis in the U.S., with more depression, anxiety, and trauma impacting youth today. Despite the need for mental health supports, the vast majority of youth – especially youth of color and low-income youth – do not receive mental health services. Those who do receive help are most likely to access it within their schools. School-based mental health professionals are typically the first resource for students who are dealing with trauma, experiencing depression or anxiety, or at risk of hurting themselves or others, especially in low-income school

districts where resources are scarce.³⁰ Guidance counselors and school psychologists are trained to be mentors and work with youth and are a more supportive investment in schools than SROs.³¹ But nationally, schools are not fully staffed with these positions. The average student-to-school-counselor ratio is 482-1 – nearly double the 250-1 ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association. Only 1 in 5 children who exhibit symptoms of a mental health disorder receive help.³²

While many believe the school counselor's core functions are to help students with college and career decisions, counselors, as well as social workers, psychologists, community intervention workers, and other related in-school professionals are also responsible for supporting students' social-emotional health, assisting with conflict resolution, intervening in bullying and harassment, and intervening in cases of substance abuse or potential violence.³³ Guidance counselor programs are also shown to promote feelings of safety in both low-income and wealthier schools.³⁴ Studies have shown that schools with more mental health providers see improved attendance, lower rates of suspension and other disciplinary incidents,³⁵ improved academic and career preparation,³⁶ and improved graduation rates.³⁷ In addition, data shows that having these staff improves school safety.³⁸ Lapan, Wells, Peterson, and McCann (2014)³⁹ found that the most positive protection for youth, both in and out of schools, is a connected school environment with responsive counseling services.

Community Advocacy and Organizing

Nationally, organizations such as Dignity in Schools (Counselors not Cops) and the Advancement Project (We Came to Learn) are advocating for ending regular law enforcement presence in schools and for creating safe schools through positive safety and discipline measures. Parent and youth organizing groups are also taking the lead on campaigns aimed at directing resources away from SROs and to more counselors and in-school supports.

4. Providence Public Schools Context

Providence is the capital of and most populous city in Rhode Island. The city is geographically very compact and is among the most densely populated cities in the country. Providence has a racially and ethnically diverse population. In 2010, 37.6% of the population was white (non-Hispanic), 38.1% Hispanic or Latino, 16.0% Black or African-American, and 6.4% Asian.

The Providence Public School District serves approximately 24,000 students in 41 schools. Approximately 65% of students are Latinx, 16% Black, 9% white, 5% Asian, 4% multi-racial, and 1% Native American.⁴⁰ Approximately 31% of students are multilingual learners and about 16% receive special education services. Combined, students and families speak 55 different languages and hail from 91 countries of origin. As of 2017-18, about 81% of PPSD high school students graduated within five years. In 2018-19, at the high school level, student chronic absenteeism rates (defined as missing 18 or more days over the course of the school year) ranged from 23% to 63%, with the bulk of traditional PPSD high schools having chronic absenteeism rates of 50% or more. At the middle school level, chronic absenteeism rates ranged from 29% to 47%.⁴¹

In May 2019, the Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy led a review of PPSD at the invitation of RI Commissioner of Education, Angelica Infante-Green, with support from Governor Gina Raimondo and Mayor Jorge Elorza.⁴² In October 2019, partly in response to this report, the state found that PPSD schools are chronically underperforming, and systemic problems prevent the district from improving. As a result, the state authorized the commissioner to take control over PPSD and its schools and, if necessary, to reconstitute schools.⁴³

5. Findings Part I: School Discipline and School Resource Officers

The information below outlines the history of SROs in Providence and how their role is framed and situated within the district's broader disciplinary structure, as well as perceptions from interviewees and survey respondents about how SROs impact the educational setting and school discipline practices overall. Additionally, this section examines disaggregated student arrest data from 2016-17 to 2019-20.

SRO History and Background in PPSD

School Resource Officers (SROs) in Providence Public Schools are police officers who wear uniforms and carry weapons. They are hired, compensated, and supervised by the Providence Police Department (PPD). PPD uses a vacancy notice system to have officers express interest in specific positions, including school-based SRO positions. According to the recruitment brochure on the PPD website, officers in Providence make anywhere from \$54,786 to \$59,577 per year. SRO salaries come from the police department budget and not that of PPSD. PPD has provided SROs to Providence Public Schools since the mid-1990s. The partnership was formally codified for the first time in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the two entities in 2014. As shown in Table 1, for the past four academic years, there have typically been eight SROs total assigned to the following Providence Public Schools. (Due to a vacancy, as of June 2020 there were seven assigned SROs.)

Table 1: PPSD SRO Assignments 2016-17 through 2019-20

School	SRO Assignments			
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Alvarez High School	X	X	X	X
Central High School	X	X	X	X
Classical High School	X	X	X	X
Del Sesto Middle School	X		X	X
Gilbert Stuart Middle School	X	X	X	X
Hope High School	X	X	X	X
Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex	X	X		
Mt. Pleasant High School	X	X	X	X
Nathan Bishop Middle School			X	X
Providence Career and Technical Academy (PCTA)	X	X	X	X

Source: City of Providence Public Records Request

While the public records request information received indicated that there is an SRO assigned to Classical High School, current and former students we spoke with indicated there is not.

PPSD and PPD have revisited the SRO Memorandum of Understanding several times since its initial signing in 2014. The most recent MOU signed by PPSD and PPD in 2019 is three pages long and sets terms and understandings for oversight and management of the SRO program. The MOU delineates the purpose of the SRO program, the principles upon which the agreement is founded, SRO selection criteria, and reporting.

The MOU states that, “The vast majority of student misconduct can be best addressed through classroom and in-school strategies and by maintaining a positive climate within schools rather than through involvement of the law enforcement community.”

It also states that, “It is the role of principals, teachers, and other educators to administer school discipline in a way that supports personal growth and learning opportunities to all of the District’s students. It is further the goal of the District that school discipline be administered in such a way as to keep students within the classroom setting to the greatest extent possible. Wherever possible, school-based infractions shall be addressed through the use of non-punitive interventions that improve school safety and academic performance (e.g., restorative justice, peer mediation, counseling services, etc.) and not through harsh, exclusionary measure or justice-system intervention.”

With regard to community involvement, the MOU states that SRO selection and evaluation “will include school and community participation,” though it is unclear if this has been actualized. Additionally, the MOU outlines the development of “a detailed and accurate database that tracks incidents with students that result in SRO involvement,” from which information would be shared with the community. As of this writing, it is unclear whether this database is currently in development.

Student Code of Conduct

In addition to the signed MOU between PPSD and PPD, student behavior is governed by a Student Code of Conduct Policy.⁴⁴ While SROs are mentioned in the Code of Conduct, the Code does not give specific information about when and how they intervene in disciplinary issues. The policy states that PPSD uses behavioral interventions, a multi-tiered system of supports, and effective, sustainable partnerships with students, families, and communities to address misconduct. The policy lays out three levels of student infractions and associated interventions.

- Level One infractions include cheating, disorderly conduct, fighting, insubordination, etc. These infractions do not involve law enforcement and are addressed by the principal and/or designee. Level One infractions must be handled at the school level and cannot be referred to the student affairs office. In some instances, a Level One infraction can result in suspension of up to five days.
- Level Two and Level Three infractions may result in a suspension of up to ten days or in some cases expulsion; these infractions may result in referral to the SRO and/or law enforcement. Level Two infractions include bullying, destruction of property, stalking, hate crimes, sexual harassment, etc. Level Three infractions include possession of a weapon, possession of controlled substances, physical assault, sexual assault, etc.

The PPSD/PPD MOU frames PPD’s primary role within the school environment as “to help foster a positive school climate by demonstrating respect for students’ rights and protecting the safety of the school environment.”

Community Efforts to Better Codify SRO Roles and Discipline Policy

Over the past five years, a few efforts have been made to bolster, clarify, and add detail to policies and practices related to school discipline and SRO roles and involvement in PPSD. According to interviewees, between 2014-16, a community stakeholder group, which appears to have been initiated due to community concerns, was formed to revisit the district's Code of Conduct and discipline policy, which included "unpacking" PPSD discipline data related to gender-, race-, and ability-based disparities and discipline offenses. The initial MOU between PPSD and PPD emerged from that work, along with a discipline policy that was adopted by the school board. According to an interviewee, the MOU that the working group drafted was "fairly detailed" in terms of how and when SROs should intervene in disciplinary issues and/or arrest students, however after review and revision by PPSD and PPD, the document became "...a pale vanilla MOU" that was "a good thing to have" but "not what [the working group] wanted." Perhaps due to a leadership change at the superintendent level, there was a sense that "everything [was] dropped" and work begun on a more detailed Code of Conduct was not completed. This led to frustration among working group members since "a lot of good things that were in that initiative were not adopted."

City Council City Council members have created revised, more detailed MOU drafts recently that are designed to clarify what SROs are responsible for, but these drafts have not been moved forward by the City Council or by PPSD and PPD. In addition, in February 2020, two City Council members wrote a resolution asking the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) to replace the city's eight SROs with school counselors. RIDE said in a statement from Commissioner Angelica Infante-Green that eliminating school resource officers is something that needs to be part of a larger conversation with the Providence community.⁴⁵

PPSD Student Arrest Data

Between the 2016-17 and 2019-20 academic years, there were over 230 arrests of PPSD students, resulting in 316 total charges. (Arrest data was sourced via a City of Providence Public Records Request. Please see Appendix B for information on how "student arrests" were defined for purposes of this analysis and limitations of the data set.) An analysis by the research team found that:

- While student arrests dropped from 2017-18 to 2018-19, numbers of student arrests as of February 2020 were set to outpace the previous school year.
- From school years 2016-17 through 2019-20, over one-quarter (28%) of student arrests were made at Providence middle schools; 72% were made at high schools.
- From school years 2016-17 through 2019-20, students as young as 11 years old have been arrested. Students ages 11-13 account for about 19% of student arrests.

Student Arrests by Race, Gender, and Ethnicity

Between 2016-17 to 2019-20, the vast majority of student arrests (about 92%) were of students of color. Chart 1 shows PPSD student arrests broken down by race. As an overall figure, this is about on par with PPSD enrollment.

However, as shown in Chart 2 below, comparing student arrests by race/ethnicity to overall PPSD enrollment (2019-20) shows that Black students are disproportionately represented in student arrests. Black (non-Latinx/Hispanic) students make up 16% of overall PPSD enrollment and 30% of all student arrests.

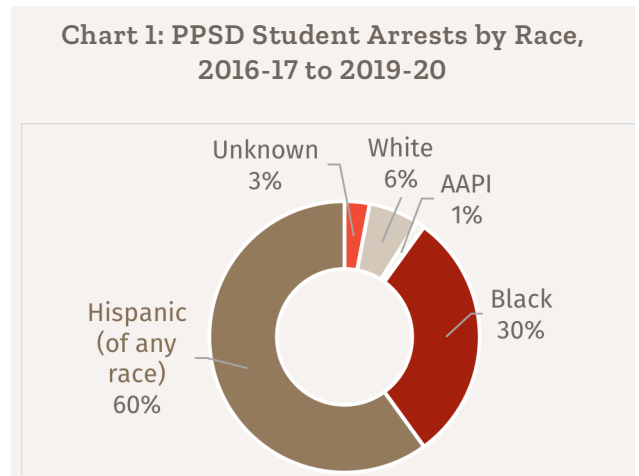
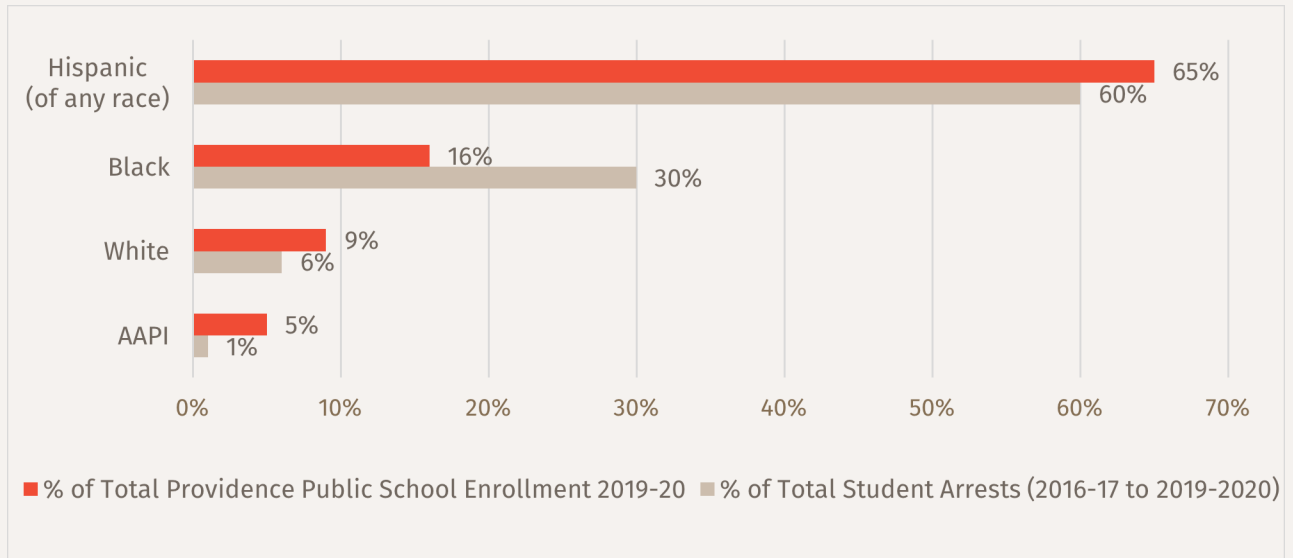
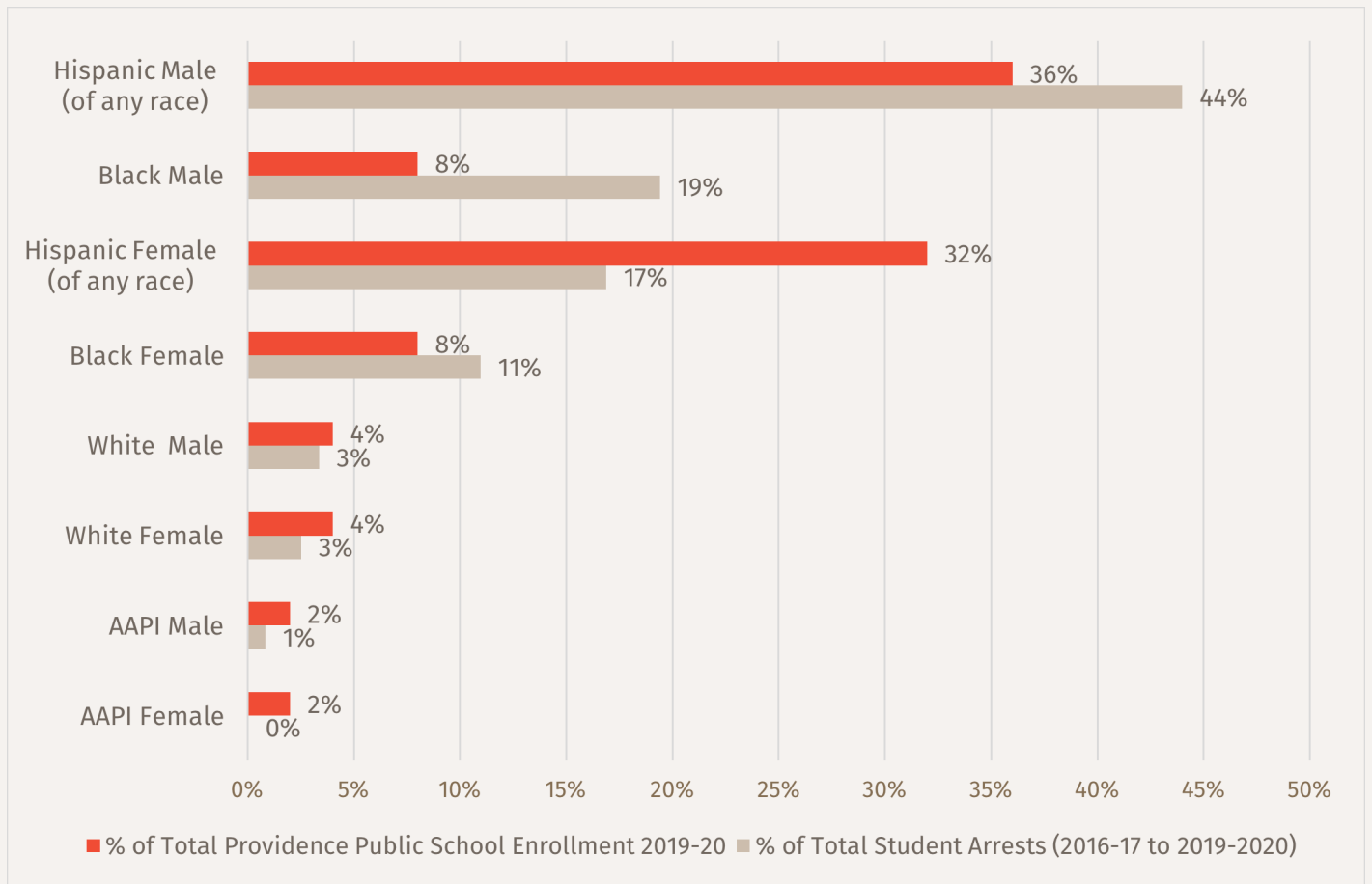


Chart 2: % of Total PPSD Student Arrests (2016-17 to 2019-20) by Race/Ethnicity Compared to PPSD Student Enrollment (2019-20)



Source: City of Providence Public Records Request

Chart 3: % of Total PPSD Student Arrests (2016-17 to 2019-20) by Race, Ethnicity, Gender Compared to PPSD Student Enrollment (2019-20)



Source: City of Providence Public Records Request

As shown in Chart 3, comparing student arrests by race/ethnicity and gender to overall PPSD enrollment (2019-20) shows that Black male students in particular are disproportionately represented in student arrests. Black (non-Latinx/Hispanic) male students make up 8% of overall PPSD enrollment and 19% of all student arrests. Hispanic/Latinx male and Black female students are also disproportionately represented in arrests.

This mirrors race-based disparities found in PPSD out-of-school suspensions. In 2018-19, while suspensions overall had decreased from the previous year, in 6 of 7 PPSD middle schools and 9 of 11 high schools, suspensions per 100 Black students were higher than the school's average and typically higher than suspension rates for Latinx, Asian, and white students. Of the 13 PPSD middle and high schools in which Black students received more than 10 suspensions per 100 students, four schools had similar suspension rates for Black and white students, eight schools had suspension rates for Black students that were two to four times higher than white students, and one school - Nathan Bishop Middle School - had suspension rates for Black students that were nine times higher than that of white students.⁵⁰

Student Arrests by School

From school years 2016-17 through 2019-20, about one-third (33%) of all student arrests (79) took place at Mt. Pleasant High School, by far the largest number of arrests at a Providence school. Seven of the eight schools with more than 10 arrests since 2016-17 were schools with SROs.

Table 2: PPSD Arrests by School, 2016-17 through 2019-20

School (* = school has SRO)	# of Arrests 2016-17 to 2019-20	% of Total Arrests 2016-17 to 2019-20
Mount Pleasant High School*	79	33%
Central High School*	29	12%
Alvarez High School*	22	9%
Roger Williams Middle School	18	8%
Hope High School*	14	6%
Providence Career and Technical Academy (PCTA)*	14	6%
DelSesto Middle School*	12	5%
Gilbert Stuart Middle School*	11	5%
West Broadway Middle School	8	3%
E-Cubed Academy	8	3%
Esek Hopkins Middle School	6	3%
Nathan Bishop Middle School*	6	3%
Nathanel Greene Middle School	5	2%
360/W.B. Cooley High School	3	1%
Classical High School*	2	1%

Source: City of Providence Public Records Request

Arrest data provided did not distinguish whether arresting officers were SROs. The research team was provided with a list of names for SROs in the 2019-20 school year only and thus is not able to analyze numbers of arrests made by SROs over a four-year period. In the 2019-20 school year, at least 60% of arrests (39 total) were made by officers known to be SROs.

Student Arrest Charges

Of the 316 charges for student arrests from 2016-17 to 2019-20, over one-third (36%) were for “Disorderly Conduct.” 23% were for “Simple Assault/Battery.” Table 3 below details the eight most common charges made during student arrests from 2016-17 to 2019-20.

Table 3: PPSD Student Arrest Charges, 2016-17 through 2019-20

Arrest Charge	# of Charges 2016-17 to 2019-20	% of Total Charges 2016-17 to 2019-20
Disorderly Conduct	115	36%
Simple Assault/Battery	72	23%
Possession of Firearms on School Grounds	23	7%
Resisting Legal or Illegal Arrest	19	6%
Weapons Other than Firearms Prohibited	17	6%
Vandalism/Malicious Injury to Property	8	3%
Felony Assault/Dangerous Weapon or Substance	6	2%
Willful Trespass in School Building	6	2%

Source: City of Providence Public Records Request

Interview Themes: School Discipline and School Resource Officers

During our interviews and focus groups, several themes emerged around the topics of student discipline, safety, and SRO roles and responsibilities.

Variation Across Schools

31 of 37 interviewees said that from school to school and across student populations there were inconsistencies in disciplinary structures, SRO roles and responsibilities, how SROs responded to infractions, and the consequences of those infractions. A number of participants said that the individuals most likely to handle major or minor disciplinary issues (teachers, principals, assistant principals, SROs) vary from school to school and were often defined by the building principal. A number of students and one school staff member interviewed reported that administrators and teachers in some schools leave discipline issues up to SROs even though that is not supposed to be their role. A former PPSD student said,

I remember one instance where we were in history class, and whenever students would act up, they would be like, “If you don’t behave, we’re gonna call police officers to come in here.” These were 14-15-

year-olds. They would act up, the police would come, and they would know them by their first name. It was very obvious that they used the police officers for discipline.

It is worth noting that this information heard in interviews differs from student survey results, detailed below, in which 89% of respondents named teachers or administrators as most likely to handle minor disciplinary issues, and 84% of respondents named administrators as most likely to handle serious disciplinary issues.

Another PPSD student shared that a white student drew a swastika on school property and didn't get detention, while a student of color accused of graffitizing the same building was suspended.

This perceived inconsistency leads to resentment from young people. Several participants talked about the wide discrepancies in behavior categorized as disorderly conduct — from “acting difficult” to more serious behavior. An adult participant said,

When you looked at the discipline data, it was not good...something like “disturbance,” “disruption,” “being disrespectful”...a large number of suspensions fell into this category, what you could well imagine that a wide array of behaviors might fall into them. And it was clear that there were things that might get you suspended in one school and not in another, and you had to wonder if there were things that got some kids suspended in a particular school that did not get other kids suspended. And that could vary by gender, race, ethnicity, etc.

“When you walk in, there is an officer right there. Like I am being targeted, like I’m not a student but a criminal. You already get racially profiled in your neighborhood and then you see officers in school. And if you walk away, you are going to look suspicious.”

--Recent PPSD Graduate

In the PPSD Code of Conduct, “Disorderly Conduct” is defined as “any act that substantially disrupts the orderly learning environment or poses a threat to the health, safety, and/or welfare of students, staff or others.⁴⁷ Examples listed include talking, making noise, and throwing objects. It is listed as a Level One infraction, which “[does] not involve law enforcement and [is] addressed by the principal and/or a designee.” However, the Code of Conduct notes that, “More serious [disorderly conduct] incidents may be reported at a different infraction level” such as Levels Two and Three, which may result in suspension of up to 10 days, a referral to the student affairs office, or a referral to law enforcement. Significantly, disorderly conduct is an arrestable offense, and as detailed above disorderly conduct charges account for about one-third of PPSD student arrest charges.

“Those things you see on the news, about police officers targeting people of color. That contributes to the terror. Will they do the same things, too?”

--Current PPSD Student

School Climate

Interviewees also discussed the impact of SROs on school climate, particularly for students of color. A few participants noted that they could name “good” SROs who help build relationships and bridge the distrust, often rooted in their lived experiences in the community, that students have for the police. A school staff member shared that, while he was not a supporter of having SROs in schools, he'd interacted with good SROs: “[SRO name] was bilingual so that helped a lot... If there was a model for an SRO, those would be the people who did the job the

best way. They understood student psychology, they understood human psychology, and they applied it well.” However, a number of interviewees said that, whatever the disposition of individual SROs, simply having uniformed, armed officers in schools makes students feel unsafe.

Other interviewees said that some SROs tend to escalate disciplinary situations in schools. One school staff member said, “I think you have some who are just waiting for an opportunity to arrest. Their first response to a crisis isn’t de-escalation. It’s more like, you want this kid out of here?” This interviewee suggested that, if one goal was to create more trusting relationships between young people and police, a better place for SROs would be in partnerships with outside organizations, running after-school workshops, or programs for youth interested in law enforcement. A current PPSD student added, “Cops escalate the situation....As a person with multiple disabilities, I don’t trust police...I don’t think that if there’s a cop, and an altercation that involves me, that that cop is going to be responsible with me because I have a hard time communicating when tensions run high. And even seeing cops in the office, what happens if I’m that kid? If I’m someone who, where my community has a very bad history with the police? Am I safe? From the people who are supposed to be protecting me?”

Interestingly, two school staff members interviewed noted that they had experienced SROs escalating situations or contributing negatively to school climate but stated that police should not be removed from schools as they were necessary for safety.

Juvenile Justice

A number of adult participants from both the school district and community expressed concerns about the short- and long-term implications for students who are referred to the juvenile justice system, noting that too many students are being arrested for “things that could be dealt with in other ways.” One school staff member said, “Every time they get into a different system, it’s hard for them to get out. And they get criminalized, and they get stigmatized. If we could keep more things at the school level, it would be better, instead of arresting.” Additionally, significant racial disparities exist in terms of which students are being referred to law enforcement or arrested.

One school-based staff member recounted an incident where an SRO was called because a student was wearing a hat and said, “We use all of the justification — [say that it’s] for safety purposes...I think it’s just another way to continue a police state of students. Then you set them up right on the line for the school to prison pipeline.... So you condition them and then you wonder why they react the way they do. And when they react the way they do, you call the police. And then slowly enough, you start trickling that kid into the prison system.”

One interviewee noted that once a police officer (including a School Resource Officer) is involved in a situation, the officer ultimately has the authority to decide consequences for the student, even if a teacher or principal was initially involved. One interviewee gave examples of school administrators not understanding the potential consequences of student arrest,

...I had administrators say to me, if someone gets arrested at school but they’re a juvenile, it’s their juvenile record so it doesn’t matter. And that’s not true. Because people see your juvenile record if you try to go into military service, some government jobs, etc. So I think some of [the] administrators believed...nobody used this language, exactly, but kind of the “scared straight” idea. If [a] student is arrested, that next time he or she might not do this again. Whatever the “this” was. And I think people did not [understand]...there are real consequences here...And then there were differing abilities to, for example, have legal counsel, depending on a family’s circumstances.

“[The] vast majority of kids referred to [Juvenile Court and the Juvenile Hearing Board] are kids of color. There are huge disparities...Know that if you are Black or Hispanic in Providence, you are more likely to be sent to court, two or three times than a child who is white. The disparities are there and everyone knows about them.”

--Community Partner

One practice for diversion from juvenile court is Juvenile Hearing Boards (JHB), which have been implemented in communities throughout Rhode Island. The Providence City Council established the Providence Juvenile Hearing Board (JHB) in 2016 for Providence youth who are accused of minor infractions with a goal of providing youth with community-based alternatives to incarceration. Cases are forwarded to the hearing board by the Providence Police Department. According to an interviewee, for those students who are sent to JHB there is about 10% recidivism rate in comparison to 20-35% when sent to court. However, as one interviewee noted, “A lot of kids who went to JHBs or courts didn’t need to go into either. They shouldn’t have been arrested in the first place.”

In addition to JHB, we heard about select school-based discipline alternatives designed to prevent young people from entering the criminal justice system, including incorporating restorative justice school-wide and developing partnerships with community organizations. However, participants agreed that there’s still a lot of work to be done in these areas.

Student Survey Findings: School Discipline and School Resource Officers

Of 71 student respondents to the student survey, 47 had experiences in schools with SROs. This subset of students with direct SRO experiences answered a series of questions about SROs specifically. All respondents answered the questions about school discipline and student safety that were not SRO-specific. Overall, about 90% of respondents were students of color. Because numbers of respondents in specific demographic categories were relatively low, survey responses could not be reliably disaggregated to better understand differences across race/ethnicity groupings or particular schools. Additional demographic information about survey respondents can be found in Appendix C. The following summarizes highlights from the series of questions about school discipline.

School Resource Officers

- Across most SRO-related questions, about a quarter to a third of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements presented, though there were differences in level of agreement or disagreement across questions.
- Nearly half (49%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, “I like(d) having an SRO at my school.” 21% of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed (see Chart 4, below).
- Respondent opinion was split fairly evenly on the questions of whether SROs have good relationships with students and whether they treat all students with respect across a range of identity categories (race, ethnicity, perceived immigration status, gender, disability status, etc.)
- 57% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, “SROs contribute positively to school culture and climate,” compared to 17% who agreed or strongly agreed.
- Over half (53%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, “I feel safer with an SRO at my school,” compared to 19% who agreed or strongly agreed (see Chart 5, below).
- Of all of the survey questions related to SROs, the question of whether students are comfortable with SROs having guns in their schools elicited the most negative response. 72% of respondents disagreed to some level with the statement, “I am comfortable with SROs having guns in my school,” with 53% strongly disagreeing. 15% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and 13% neither agreed nor disagreed — a much lower percentage than in other SRO-related questions (see Chart 6, below).
- 49% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, “In the event of a conflict or problem, SROs de-escalate (calm down) the situation.” 23% agreed or strongly agreed that SROs do de-escalate (see Chart 7, below).

Select PPSD Student Survey Findings: School Resource Officers

Chart 4: Student Survey

Students' Responses to the Statement, "I like(d) having a School Resource Officer at my school."

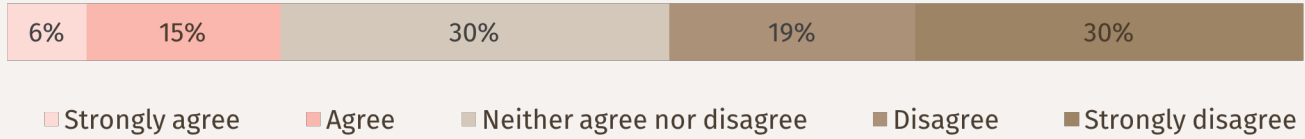


Chart 5: Student Survey

Students' Responses to the Statement, "I feel safer with an SRO at my school."

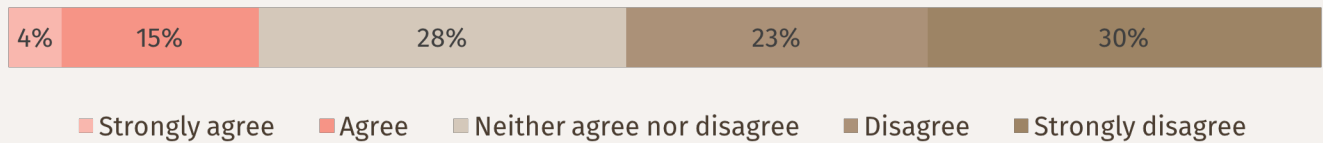


Chart 6: Student Survey

Students' Responses to the Statement, "I am comfortable with SROs having guns in my school."



Chart 7: Student Survey

Students' Responses to the Statement, "In the event of a conflict or problem, SROs de-escalate (calm down) the situation."



School and Student Safety and Discipline

- Teachers and administrators were named most likely to handle minor disciplinary issues by 89% of respondents, with only 4% listing SROs as most likely to handle minor issues (see Chart 8, below).
- 84% of respondents said that school administrators were most likely to handle serious disciplinary issues, with 10% listing SROs as most likely to handle serious issues (see Chart 9, below).
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that outside law enforcement (non-SROs) is only called into schools for very serious situations. 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- About one-fifth (19% of respondents) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I or my friends have worried about the possibility of being arrested at school.”
- Nearly 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I have witnessed or heard about students being arrested at school” (see Chart 10, below).

Select PPSD Student Survey Findings: School and Student Safety and Discipline

Chart 8: Student Survey
Students’ Responses to the Statement, “Who in your school is most likely to handle a MINOR disciplinary issue (language, disrespect, minor fights)?”

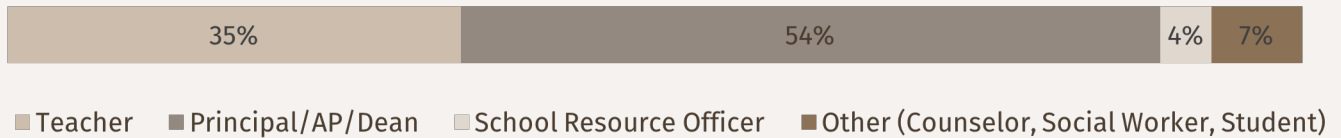


Chart 9: Student Survey
Students’ Responses to the Statement, “Who in your school is most likely to handle a SERIOUS disciplinary issue (assault, harassment, serious fights)?”

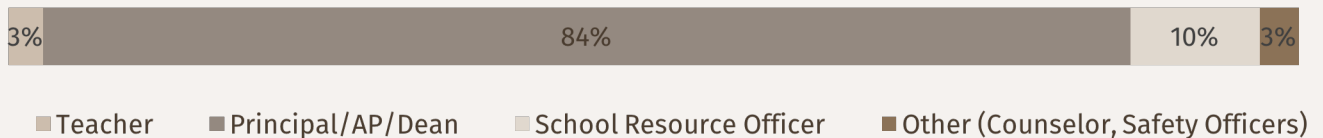


Chart 10: Student Survey
Students’ Responses to the Statement, “I have witnessed or heard about students being arrested at school.”



6. Findings Part II: Student Supports

This section of the report examines the need for and state of in-school student supports in PPSD. It provides background information on the links between youth trauma, mental health needs, and behavioral issues, and includes Rhode Island- and Providence-specific information on youth trauma analyzed by Rhode Island College's Social Policy Hub for Equity Research in Education (SPHERE). Information about the ratios of various support specialists to students is included, along with perceptions from interviewees and survey respondents about the effectiveness of existing supports, as well as supports needed to adequately address student needs.

Background and Context

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood between the ages of 0–17 years old. In addition to experiencing or witnessing violence in the home or community, factors such as living in poverty, high mobility, food insecurity, and systemic racism and racial segregation can cause toxic stress that changes brain development and may affect a child's attention, decision-making, learning, and response to stress.⁴⁸ Studies have shown that children exposed to ACEs and traumatic events are more likely to suffer from academic, behavioral, and social problems.⁴⁹ In terms of behavioral responses specifically, severe, prolonged, and unpredictable stress may cause young people to detect threat even when none is present.⁵⁰⁵¹ This results in the persistent release of stress hormones which may trigger two potential types of responses: 1) "hyper-aroused," which can encompass emotional, aggressive, and lashing out behaviors; and 2) "hypo-aroused," which can encompass shutting down, zoning out, and other dissociative behaviors.⁵² In a school context, both realms can be interpreted as problem behaviors that may lead to disciplinary actions.

In Rhode Island, at least 47% of youth have experienced at least one Adverse Childhood Experience.⁵³ A recent report from Rhode Island College's Social Policy Hub for Equity Research in Education (SPHERE) analyzed the relationship between ACEs, mental health, and student outcomes including academics and behavioral/disciplinary referrals in school for Providence and Rhode Island urban core students. SPHERE's analysis of PPSD's biannual Youth Experiences at the high school level survey showed that:

- 79% of students reported trauma in the form of high degrees of community disorganization and violence in their home neighborhoods.
- Nearly half (45%) of students reported feeling sad or depressed most days.
- Two in ten students (20%) thought about suicide within the last year.
- Students who received mostly D and F grades and students who were suspended or expelled within the past year were more likely to have experienced a range of ACEs.

Additionally, ACEs disproportionately affect students of color. Among first and second generation Latinx students in Rhode Island urban school districts (which includes Providence):

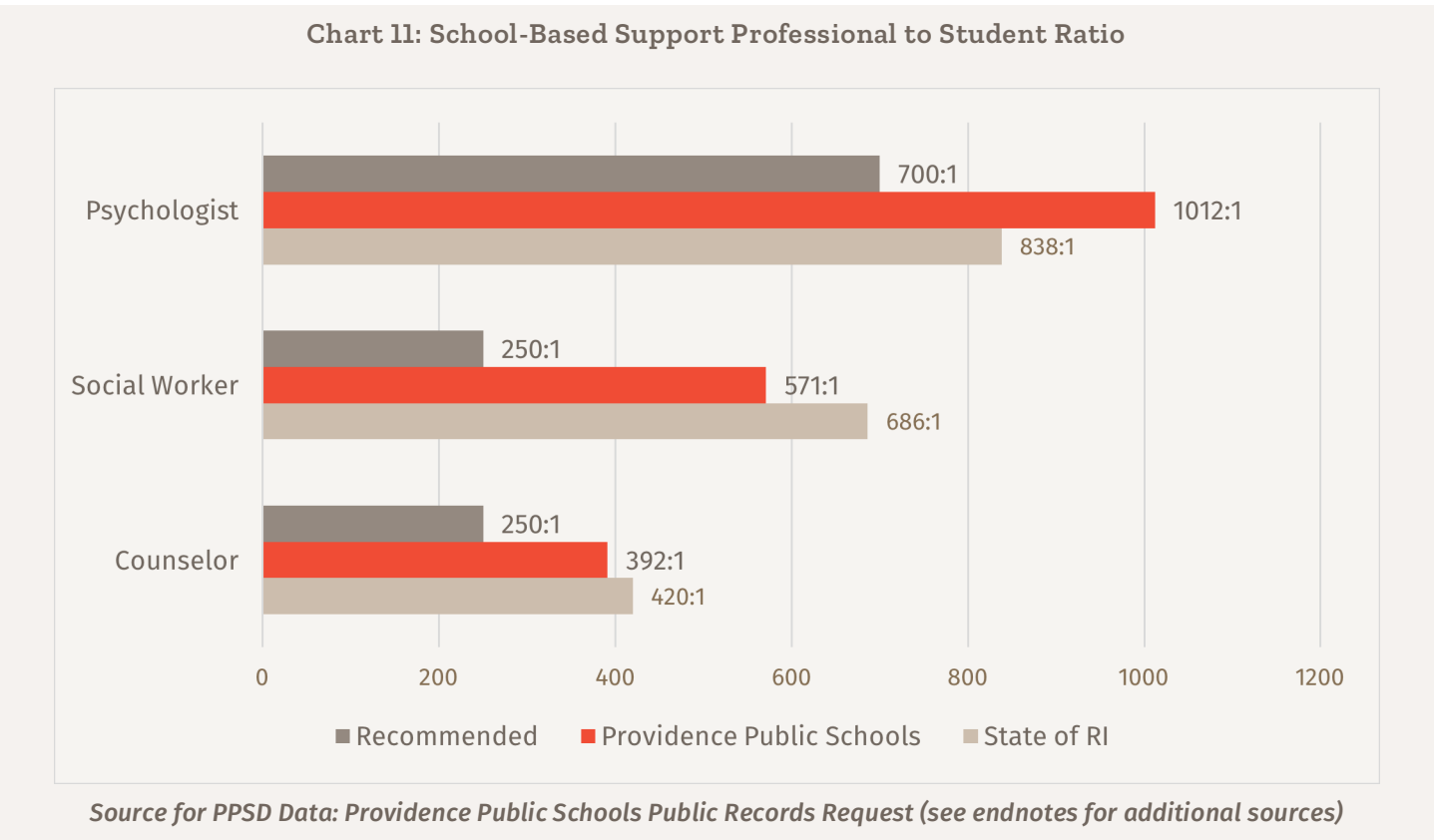
- 49% personally know someone who was deported.
- The average number of lifetime traumatic event experiences was 7.0.
- Over one in two scored within the clinical range of anxiety (64%) and depression (53%).
- One in three scored within the moderate to severe range of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.⁵⁴

The report’s analysis also showed statistically significant relations among ACEs and mental health outcomes among first- and second-generation Latinx students — for example, students experiencing racial discrimination and trauma exposure were likely to report acting out behaviors, substance use, PTSD, anxiety, and depression. Students experiencing exposure to immigration enforcement were also more likely to report anxiety and depression.

These data show clear links between ACEs and behaviors that may lead students to interactions with school disciplinary structures, yet have root causes that are best addressed by support professionals. They also indicate that PPSD students, and particularly students of color, have a high need for mental health and social-emotional supports, in addition to academic support.

Support Staffing in Providence Public Schools

Chart 11 below details recommended support professional to student ratios from The American School Counselor Association,⁵⁵ School Social Work Association of America,⁵⁶ and National Association of School Psychologists,⁵⁷ along with the most recently available existing ratios for the state of Rhode Island⁵⁸ ⁵⁹ and PPSD⁶⁰. While PPSD ratios are slightly better than the state average for counselors and social workers, the data shared above would indicate disproportionately higher need, and in all cases they are much greater than those recommended by these professional organizations.



Analysis of support staffing for all Providence Public Schools in 2017-18⁶¹ shows consistent trends.

- While the majority of middle and high schools fall within the 250:1 range for guidance counselors, only one of Providence’s high schools (Providence Career and Technical Academy) and no middle schools

fall within the recommended ratios for school psychologists, and no Providence middle or high schools fall within the recommended ratio for school social workers.

- 11 of 18 Providence middle and high schools included in the analysis had over three times the recommended ratio of school social workers to students.

In addition to school-based staff, the district's Student Affairs Office employs additional district-level attendance officers, home visitors, social workers, and psychologists. A listing of current support professionals employed by the district can be found on the [PPSD Website](#).

Interview Themes: Student Supports

Interview participants reflected on both the supports that currently exist in PPSD and those that are still needed.

Inadequate Numbers of Support Staff

"I had a friend who went to one of the guidance counselors, they couldn't take a test because something was going on. So the guidance counselor talked to the teacher to move the test, but that's it – they just moved the test, they didn't ask what was wrong or anything like that. So they don't actually...they try to help you, but they don't actually try to understand the situation."

--Current PPSD Student

The number of counselors and other support professionals in Providence is deeply inadequate, with limited capacity for meeting students' mental health and social-emotional needs. About a quarter of interviewees including students, community partners, and one school staff member stated that PPSD does not have enough student support staff. Adult interviewees noted that nurses, social workers, and psychologists are often part time, stretched across multiple schools, and have limited capacity to meet with students who need help. Data from PPSD shows that in 2017-18, 10 of 18 middle and high schools had a school psychologist working 60% time or less. While part-time social workers tended to have higher percentages of time allocated to individual schools, only 7 of 18 middle and high schools had one or more full-time social workers.

Student interviewees were less likely to cite specific staffing figures and in some cases read limited capacity as absence. One student stated, "I think this is the norm in Providence. I've been to three different middle schools. There is nobody. You just have to be on your own." Several interviewees mentioned that Providence Career and Technical Academy, Central, and Classical High Schools – which have a combined total enrollment of nearly 3,000 students – share one nurse.

While guidance counselors are more of a presence, several student interviewees noted that guidance counselors are not necessarily effective at providing or brokering non-academic support. One student said, "I remember my freshman year I tried to talk to my guidance counselor and open up to him about an emotional problem I was having. And he just straight up did not care and changed the subject to college." Even if an immediate issue is handled, root causes for student issues may remain unidentified and unaddressed.

One school-based staff member noted that even when social workers are present in schools, there may be great variation in the role from one school to another, saying, "...we have some new great social workers coming into the district who have never been school social workers, and then administrators mold it into what they feel works for the needs they are missing, which I can honestly tell you oftentimes is Spanish-speaking social workers being translators all day. Some schools have administrators that believe that social workers

function in a certain way. Social workers may disagree but [don't] know how to speak up and just [do] what is said."

While a few school-based staff and community partners noted that the district has made efforts to prioritize student wellbeing, one noted that there is still "a long way to go between having a policy and actually having the stuff in a system to support students."

Uneven Access to Support Staff

The majority of student interviewees expressed difficulty in accessing support staff, whom they view as unavailable, overworked, or focused on crisis management. One student who recently used mental health services at their high school for the first time said, "...they're just horribly, horribly overworked. These are people who, a lot of them genuinely really want to help. There's a crisis worker and a therapist. But they just can't a lot of the time." A few students noted that the state of being overworked leads to a focus on managing crises rather than preventing them.

One school-based staff member expressed a similar sentiment and noted the difficulty of sustaining student support when such high need exists: "A lot of students are going unserved, or they are making contact with me but in a reactive fashion because someone saw something or heard something. I am not able to provide continuous service or follow up enough. The more you get referred, your quality of work becomes less and less."

Additionally, some students discussed being unsure which support staff were in place in their school and how to access them. When asked if their school had social workers or mental health workers, one student said, "Honestly, I don't even know. Because they don't mention it." Another noted that their school has "...one mental health specialist, but no one knows she exists and you can't really go to her, you have to be told to go to her. You can't just pop in."

Needed Student Supports

Across interviewees, there was general agreement that schools need more staff and resources to address students social-emotional and mental health needs. This sentiment is a common one, with the Johns Hopkins University 2019 Review of Providence Public Schools describing "chronic shortages" of social workers and counselors and "widespread agreement that students' social and emotional needs are not being met," even with increased district attention.⁶² Similarly, in its Initial Recommendations and Commitments for Rebuilding Providence Public Schools, the Providence Teachers Union called for increasing school-based counselors/student support staff, as well as professional development for teachers on topics such as understanding trauma and de-escalation tactics.⁶³

In addition to increased staff and resources, interviewees named the items on the following page as critically needed elements in supporting Providence Public School students' non-academic needs.

"You don't get to know about [support services and staff] unless you need it and you're going through it, which is sad. Because it's like, why does it have to get to this extreme point for any support at all? There could have been preventative measures to stop you from having a complete mental breakdown. But it's like, okay, you had a complete mental breakdown? Let me help you now."

--Current PPSD Student

Supporting PPSD Students' Non-Academic Needs

Building Students' Social-Emotional Skills

About a third of student interviewees discussed the need for resources and support in areas such as communication, expressing feelings, mediation, and conflict resolution. Several students noted that exclusionary discipline was used too often in the absence of supports that foster student growth in these areas.

"Teaching kids that it's OK to talk about your feelings even when they're not nice, and how to do that when you feel overwhelmed with emotion and overwhelmed with anger. Because a lot of the punishment that SROs or even administration dish out is just, be quiet, here's your punishment. And that's a lesson that I don't necessarily think needs to be taught."

– Current PPSD Student

Building Meaningful Relationships with Caring Adults

Strong adult-student relationships were mentioned as a key element of social-emotional support by community partners in particular.

"From the outside perspective, I am there for [programmatic work]; the hook [students] need the most is somebody to have their back. What is ailing them...isn't a gap in learning, usually. On behalf of the greater portion of students, what is ailing them is plain old support. If they felt that respect from their teachers that they get from peers, or some get none at all, they would focus more in their classrooms."

– Community Partner

Robust Community Partnerships

Interviewees mentioned youth-serving and community-based organizations and external clinical partners as supports that could bolster schools' capacity.

Given schools' limited capacity to manage a network of community clinicians, the funding of which may come from Medicaid, intermediary organizations such as the Rhode Island Children and Youth Cabinet have and can provide much-needed support and infrastructure.

A Focus on Educators

Adult interviewees noted the need for educator training on trauma, social-emotional supports, and de-escalation.

"[It] isn't necessarily the students who need the interventions and supports, it's sadly the adults who aren't trained, knowledgeable, understanding, and not flexible about approaching students. The more this group of students grows, the more isolated...they feel, the more responsive behaviors you're going to have."

– School Staff Member

Recruiting and Retaining Educators and Staff of Color

About 91% of PPSD students are students of color, while at least 76% of Providence educators are white (for 13% of Providence educators, race was not reported).⁶⁵ A few participants noted the importance of increasing the diversity of PPSD educators and support staff. Retention of educators and staff of color is also key.

"...representation matters. Not to say that non-minority guidance counselors and teachers aren't or can't be responsive. But if I'm a student of color, low socio-economic status...I need somebody who looks like me, who comes from my community, who's familiar with those issues. It's not that [white educators] can't relate, but it goes a lot further in being compassionate and empathetic to student needs."

"Good teachers of color get chased out of the building by administrators. We need to support them as well."

– Community Partners

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice holds promise as an alternative to exclusionary discipline. However, interviewees noted that efforts in the district are "small and scattered," and that without adequate support and resources, restorative practices and other efforts may not be embraced within schools or implemented successfully.

"[When there was a district vote on policy including more restorative approaches] ...There were some teachers who came and...spoke against it, or at least expressed concerns. And...it's really easy to say, oh, well, maybe they're just racist, older teachers, mostly older women, who are afraid of these kids. And there's a part of that that is true. There's also the sad and hard truth that...many of the social service and social emotional supports that kids needed had been systematically stripped out of those schools, as there were worse and worse budget cuts...So I think in part teachers were correctly saying, we don't have the supports needed to support some of these kids."

– Interview Participant

Student Survey Findings: Student Supports

An average of 71 student respondents from PPSD answered a series of questions about student supports in PPSD schools. The following summarizes highlights from their responses.

- About a quarter (27%) of student respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “The social and emotional well-being of students is a priority at my school.” 43% disagreed or strongly disagreed (see Chart 12, below).
- About 42% of students agreed or strongly agreed that, when needed, support staff were available at their school to help them with non-academic problems; 35% disagreed or strongly disagreed (see Chart 13, below).
- 41% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, “If there is a conflict or problem, I trust that the adults in my school will hear my side of the story and take it seriously.” 27% agreed or strongly agreed (see Chart 14, below).
- While just under half of students agreed or strongly agreed that their school had enough guidance counselors, those numbers decreased significantly when asked about other types of support workers. Only 16% agreed or strongly agreed that their school had enough social workers; 14% agreed or strongly agreed that their school had enough nurses; and 6% agreed that their school had enough mental health workers. No respondents strongly agreed that their school had enough mental health workers (see Chart 15, below).

Survey participants were also asked the open-ended question, “What kinds of supports or resources are needed in your school to help students?” As shown in Table 4 below, mental health workers were the most likely to be named, along with college help/advisors. One student wrote, “Why is there such a difference in the ratio of mental health advisors and academic advisors? When I was in high school, we had one singular mental health advisor, and I didn’t even know they existed until 2 months before I graduated — and even then I never went to her because I didn’t know how. That is a poor job on the part of the school.”

Table 4: PPSD Student Survey Findings – Needed Student Supports/Resources

Response	# Mentions
Mental health workers	13
College help / advisors	7
Guidance counselors	5
Social workers	4
Better student-teacher connections / trust	3
Value student voice	3
Nurses	3
Restorative Practices	3
Staff of color	2
De-escalation specialist	1

One student respondent wrote about the need for mental health supports particularly in the context of a school culture focused on policing:

There needs to be more student mental health counselors. There are so many kids who have issues at home or within themselves that have nowhere to turn to. And school can just be another environment that adds to the stressful factors of their lives. If someone could HELP them move through it, WITHOUT immediately turning them into the authorities/guardians and working with them to get to that point on their own, so many students could be in a better place — mentally and socially. Add more mental health advisors, increase the funds for the social-emotional health category in schools. If a school can become an environment in which a student feels safe and protected and understood, they will thrive. School already feels like a jail, why add more officers to solidify that?

Select PPSD Student Survey Findings: School and Student Safety and Discipline

Chart 12: Student Survey
Students' Responses to the Statement,
"The social and emotional well-being of students is a priority at my school."



Chart 13: Student Survey
Students' Responses to the Statement,
"When I am feeling stressed, upset, or having non-academic problems, there are support staff (such as counselors, nurses, mental health workers, social workers) or services at the school to help me."

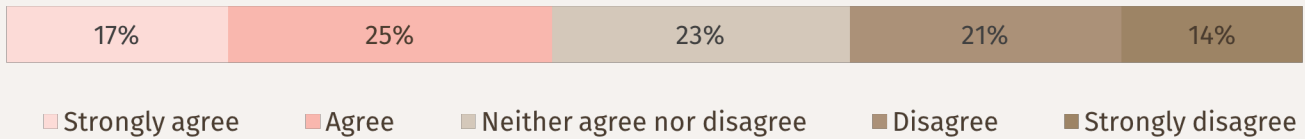


Chart 14: Student Survey
Students' Responses to the Statement, "If there is a conflict or problem, I trust that the adults in my school will hear my side of the story and take it seriously."

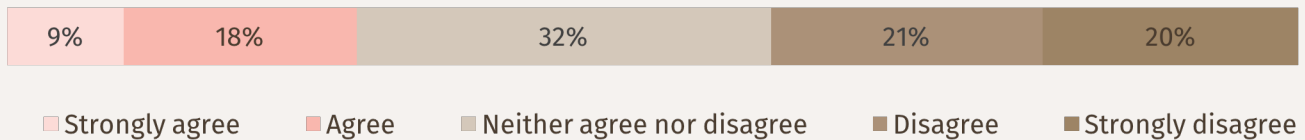
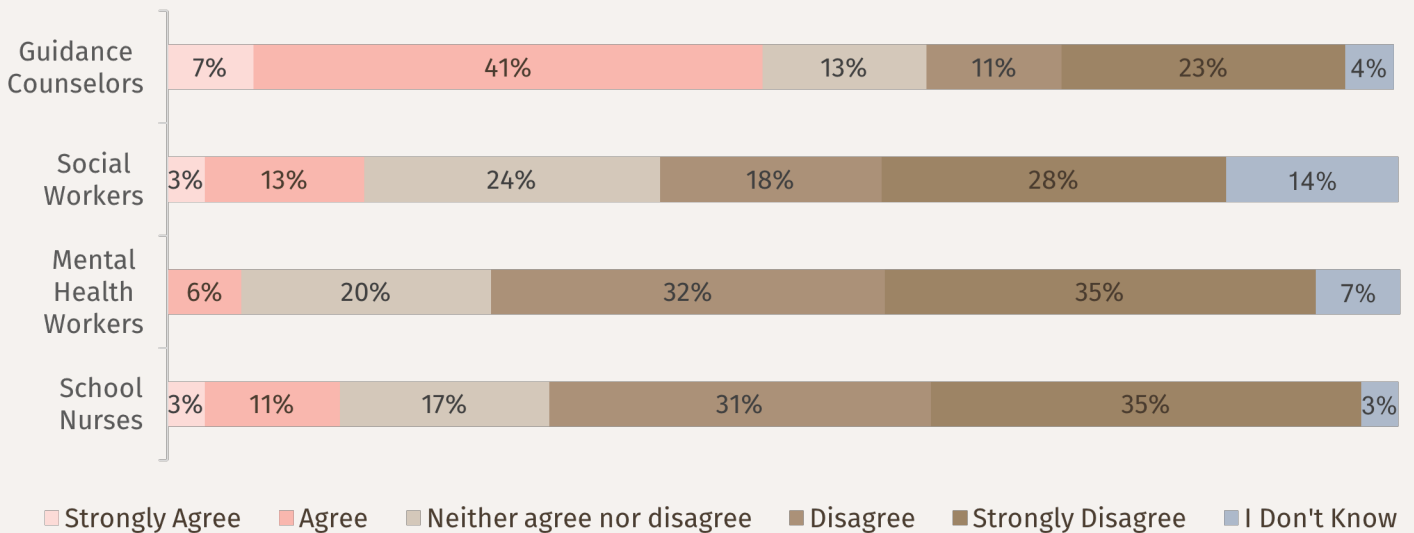


Chart 15: Student Survey
Students' Responses to the Statement, "My school has enough..."



7. Recommendations

Taken together, the data above show 1) significant race-based disparities in student arrests; 2) discipline practices and SRO roles that are inconsistent at best and at worst serve to escalate disciplinary issues and make students feel unsafe and/or criminalized; and 3) schools that are chronically under-resourced and ill-equipped to address students' social, emotional, and mental health needs. These shortcomings are, in part, predicated upon broader notions of school safety that fundamentally serve to criminalize students of color and police their behavior.

While SROs are an expression of and contribute to a culture of policing, which students of color in particular too often experience in both schools and their communities, they are not the creators of that culture. For schools to be safe and successful, racist foundations that drive cultures of exclusionary discipline, policing, and punishment must be rooted out at all levels, with simultaneous investment in anti-racist strategies that are responsive to student needs. These include the social, emotional, and mental health needs that are exacerbated by societal and institutional oppression.

When interview participants were asked to describe their definition of a safe and supportive school, the following elements emerged most often, pointing to a holistic vision of safety and support that recognizes the humanity of both students and educators:

1. *An environment that creates a sense of belonging for students, in which: students are treated with humanity, dignity, and respect; youth and families have a voice in shaping school culture and decisions; and diverse student cultures are reflected.*
2. *School buildings with adequate social emotional support, in which: students have relationships with caring adults including teachers, administrators, building staff, and community partners; attention is paid to student needs beyond narrowly defined academics; efforts are ongoing and sustainable.*
3. *Educators who are supported and in turn better support students: there is a positive school culture that supports educators; educator bias is addressed and educators receive training on trauma-sensitive approaches; educators and support professionals of color are recruited and retained in an effort to have a school staff that is more representative of the community.*

Defining a Safe and Supportive School:

- An environment that creates a sense of belonging for students.
- School buildings with adequate social emotional supports.
- Educators who are supported and in turn better support students.

Providence Alliance for Student Safety (PASS) Demands

The elements above are reflected in the demands of the Providence Alliance for Student Safety (PASS), which call upon the City of Providence to:

1. *Remove all School Resource Officers (SROs) from Providence schools*
 - Prevent armed officers, security officers, and/or police from being stationed in schools.
 - Eliminate the 8 person SRO presence currently rotating among Providence schools under a contract between the Providence Police Department and the Providence School Department.
 - Use funding currently allocated for SROs within the Providence Police Department to support the hiring of the new health and safety staff described below.

2. *Hire health and safety staff focused on alternative measures for conflict resolution*

Create safe and healthy schools through Positive Safety and Conduct strategies, which includes hiring health and safety staff who focus on alternative measures for conflict resolution.

 - Hire community intervention workers, behavior interventionists, and/or restorative justice coordinators for a ratio of 250 students or fewer per health and safety staffer.
 - These health and safety staff will be in charge of creating a unique safety plan based on restorative justice that meets the schools' individual needs. These plans should include a peer mediator component.

3. *Increase the number of support staff in schools*
 - Hire school guidance counselors, nurses and mental health providers each for a ratio of 150 students or fewer per support staff, with specific staffing plans for unique schools.
 - Mental health providers should be available as a resource for teachers as well as students.
 - Support staff must represent and reflect the demographics of the student body.
 - Ensure newly hired school support staff undergo restorative justice training that reflects the Providence Schools Code of Conduct.

CYCLE Recommendations

In addition to supporting the demands above, CYCLE recommends the following steps to support their implementation and move toward the vision for safe and supportive schools expressed by interview participants:

Youth and Community Voice

- Center youth, family, and educator voice in decision-making to create safe and supportive school environments and regularly share relevant data with these groups in accessible and easily understood formats.
- Expand partnerships with community-based organizations working in Providence schools to leverage expertise, resources, and support for students .

Mental and Behavioral Health

- Reallocate SRO funding to hire additional mental and behavioral health workers who can support students and teachers with day-to-day challenges as well as past student traumas, provide proper diagnosis on trauma or behavioral issues, and provide appropriate resources.
- Expand trauma-informed and cultural inclusivity/humility trainings, as well as any additional resources, trainings, and tools that help teachers to accommodate students' needs.
- Implement an adequately resourced district-wide restorative justice framework that acknowledges students as whole people.

Policy, Transparency, and Sustainability

- Increase data collection and community transparency for student interactions with, referrals to, and arrests made by SROs and other police officers. Acknowledge race, gender, and ability-based disproportionality and design plans to address it.
- Connect and align related efforts being made at the community, school district, city, and state levels to realize new visions of school safety, and ensure that any added supports are not only strategic but sustainable, so that much-needed resources are not stripped away as schools are gaining ground
- Reduce student to teacher ratios to help with relationship and trust building.

We are in dire need of reframed thinking and practices in our schools that lift up students and educators as full human beings. Schools can be transformative places of powerful possibility when we challenge ourselves to focus on what supports everyone in them to thrive. Abolishing cultures of exclusion, policing, and punishment in our schools can help us understand how to build a society in which we do the same for our collective uplift and well-being.

8. Endnotes

- [1] U.S. Department of Justice. (n.d.). *Supporting safe schools*. Retrieved 11/03/2020, from <https://cops.usdoj.gov/supportingsafeschools>
- [2] Anderson, M. (September 21, 2015). When schooling meets policing. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/09/when-schooling-meets-policing/406348/>
- [3] Ibid.
- [4] Ibid.
- [5] Monahan, T., and Torres, R. (2010). *Schools under surveillance: Cultures of control in public education*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- [6] Brady, K., Balmer, S., and Phenix, D. (2007). School-police partnership effectiveness in urban schools. *Education and Urban Society*, 39: 455-478.
- [7] Casella, R. (2001). *Being down: Challenging violence in urban schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- [8] Advancement Project. (April 19, 2018). *Race, guns, police and Columbine: Talking points 19 years later*. Retrieved 11/03/2020, from <https://advancementproject.org/resources/race-guns-police-columbine-talking-points-19-years-later/>
- [9] For example, see Zaveri, M. (February 27, 2020). Body camera footage shows arrest by Orlando police of 6-year-old at school." *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/27/us/orlando-6-year-old-arrested.html>
- [10] Advancement Project. (April 19, 2018).
- [11] Ibid.
- [12] Fiddiman, B., Jeffrey, A, and Sargrad, S. (December 19, 2018). *Smart investments for safer schools*. Center for American Progress. Retrieved 11/3/2020, from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2018/12/19/464445/smart-investments-safer-schools/>
- [13] Wilf, R. (March 13, 2012). *Disparities in school discipline move students of color toward prison*. Center for American Progress. Retrieved 11/03/2020, from <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/news/2012/03/13/11350/disparities-in-school-discipline-move-students-of-color-toward-prison/>
- [14] Gray, L., and Lewis, L. (2015). *Public school safety and discipline: 2013–14* (NCES 2015-051). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved 11/03/2020, from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.
- [15] United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. (2016). *2013-2014 Civil rights data collection: A first look*. Retrieved 11/03/2020, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf>

- [16] Fisher, B.W., and Hennessy, E.A. (2016). School resource officers and exclusionary discipline: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Adolescent Research Review*, 1, 217–233.
- [17] Petteruti, A. (November 15, 2011). *Education under arrest: The case against police in schools*. Justice Policy Institute. <http://www.justicepolicy.org/research/3177>
- [18] Theriot, M. (2009). School resource officers and the criminalization of student behavior. *Criminal Justice*, 37, 280-287
- [19] Meyer, M., and Leone, P. (1999). A structural analysis of school violence and disruption: Implications for creating safer schools. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 22(3), 333-352.
- [20] The Advancement Project. (n.d.). *We came to learn: A call to action for police-free schools*. <https://advancementproject.org/wecametolearn/>
- [21] Gettys, T. (September 21, 2016). *Alabama police covered up cop's attack on black student behind locked doors family says*. Raw Story. <https://www.rawstory.com/2016/09/alabama-police-covered-up-cops-attack-on-black-student-behind-locked-doors-family-says/>
- [22] United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. (2016).
- [23] New York Civil Liberties Union. (January 25, 2011). *Education interrupted: The growing use of suspensions in New York City's public schools*. https://www.nyclu.org/sites/default/files/publications/Suspension_Report_FINAL_noSpreads.pdf
- [24] Samuels, C. (June 12, 2020). Where's the threat? School resource officers' views differ based on district racial makeup. *Education Week*. https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/inside-school-research/2020/06/school_resource_officers_and_student_threat.html
- [25] Ibid.
- [26] Stullich, S., Morgan, I., and Schak, O. (July 2016). *Trends in state and local expenditures on corrections and education*. The Policy and Program Studies Service in the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development. <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/other/expenditures-corrections-education/brief.pdf>
- [27] American Civil Liberties Union. (2020). *Cops and no counselors: How the lack of school mental health staff is harming students*. <https://www.aclu.org/issues/juvenile-justice/school-prison-pipeline/cops-and-no-counselors>
- [28] United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. (2016).
- [29] Petteruti, A. (November 15, 2011).
- [30] Brabeck, K. (2020). *School-based mental health support for Rhode Island youth: Policy recommendations to address students' exposure to adverse childhood experiences*. Social Policy Hub for Equity Research in Education.
- [31] American School Counselor Association. (n.d.). *Press fact sheet*. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Press%20releases/Press-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
- [32] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013). *Key findings: Children's mental health report*. <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/features/kf-childrens-mental-health-report.html>
- [33] American School Counselor Association. (Adopted 1994, revised 2016). *The school counselor and the promotion of safe schools through conflict resolution and bullying/harassment prevention*. https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/PositionStatements/PS_Bullying.pdf

- [34] Lapan, R.T., Gysbers, N.C., and Petroski, G.F. (2007). Helping seventh graders be safe and successful: A statewide study of the impact of comprehensive guidance and counselor programs. *ASCA* 6(3), 186-197.
- [35] Lapan, R., Whitcomb, S., and Aleman, N. (2012). Connecticut professional school counselors: College and career counseling services and smaller ratios benefit students. *Professional School Counseling*, 16(2), 117-124.
- [36] Lapan, R.T., Gysbers, N.C., and Sun, Y. (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students: A statewide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 75(4), 292-302.
- [37] Tan, K., Battle, S., Mumm, M., Eschmann, R., and Alvarez, M. (2015). The impact of school social workers on high school freshman graduation among the one hundred largest school districts in the United States. *School Social Work Journal*, 39(2), 1-14.
- [38] American Civil Liberties Union. (2020).
- [39] Lapan, R., Wells, R., Peterson, J., and McCann, L. (June 13, 2014). Stand tall to protect students: School counselors strengthening school connectedness. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 92, 304-315.
- [40] Providence Public Schools. (n.d.). *Who we are, Who we serve*. Retrieved 11/03/2020 from <https://www.providenceschools.org/domain/49>
- [41] Rhode Island Department of Education. (n.d.). Report cards 2018-19. Retrieved from <https://reportcard.ride.ri.gov/>
- [42] Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy. (June, 2019). *Providence Public School District: A review*. <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/62961/ppsd-revised-final.pdf>
- [43] Commissioner of Education, State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. (October 15, 2019). *Decision establishing control over the Providence Public School District and reconstituting Providence Public Schools*. http://media.ride.ri.gov/commissioner/Decision-And-Order_FINAL.pdf
- [44] Providence Public Schools. (n.d.). *Student code of conduct policy, Grades PK-12*. Retrieved from <https://www.providenceschools.org/cms/lib/RI01900003/Centricity/Domain/138/CodeofConduct-Amended-10.11.2017-Final%20as%20approved.pdf>
- [45] Cyrus, C. (February 20, 2020). Resolution seeks to eliminate school resource officers in Providence Schools. *WJAR Turnto10*. <https://turnto10.com/news/local/resolution-seeks-to-eliminate-school-resource-officers-in-providence-schools>
- [46] Rhode Island Department of Education. (n.d.). Report cards 2018-19.
- [47] Providence Public Schools. (n.d.). *Student code of conduct policy, Grades PK-12*.
- [48] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *Violence prevention: Adverse childhood experience fast facts*. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/fastfact.html>
- [49] Blodgett, C, and Lanigan, J.D. (2018). The association between adverse childhood experience (ACE) and school success in elementary school children. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 33(1), 137-146.
- [50] Larson, S., Chapman, S., Spetz, J., and Brindis, C.D. (2017). Chronic childhood trauma, mental health, academic achievement, and school-based health center mental health services. *Journal of School Health*, 87(9), 675-686.
- [51] Zelazo, P.D., Blair, C.B., and Willoughby, M.T. (2016). *Executive function: Implications for education*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.
- [52] Brabeck, K. (2020).

- [53] Child Trends. (2019). *Adverse childhood experiences*. <https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/adverse-experiences>
- [54] Brabeck, K. (2020).
- [55] American School Counselor Association. (n.d.). *Student-to-school-counselor-ratio 2018-2019*. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/Ratios18-19.pdf>
- [56] School Social Work Association of America. (n.d.). *School social workers helping students succeed: Recommended school social worker to student ratio*. https://aab82939-3e7b-497d-8f30-a85373757e29.filesusr.com/ugd/426a18_20108ba1b7444cada772fdabbbb79dfe.pdf
- [57] Griffith, M. (October 17, 2018). What is the cost of providing students with adequate psychological support? *National Association of School Psychologists, Policy Matters Blog*. <https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/policy-matters-blog/what-is-the-cost-of-providing-students-with-adequate-psychological-support>
- [58] American Civil Liberties Union. (2020).
- [59] United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (n.d.) *Civil rights data collection*. Retrieved 07/20/2020 from <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/>
- [60] Providence Public Schools public records request.
- [61] Providence Public Schools public records request.
- [62] Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy. (June, 2019).
- [63] Providence Teachers Union. (n.d.). *The Providence Teachers Union's initial recommendations and commitments for rebuilding Providence Public Schools*. <http://proteun.org/ptu/images/PTU/PDF/Providence-Plan-July-28-To-Group.pdf>
- [64] Rhode Island Department of Education. (n.d.) Report cards 2018-19.

9. Appendices

Appendix A: Interview / Focus Group Stakeholder Categories

Stakeholder Category	Number of Individuals in Interview/Focus Groups
PPSD Students	19
District and Community Leadership	2
School Staff	3
Staff from Community Based Organizations	13
Total	37

Appendix B: Analysis Notes for Student Arrest Data

Arrest data covers 2016-17 through 2019-20 school years. 2019-20 data is through February 29, 2020. Information about student arrests comes from a listing of all arrests that took place at Providence Public School addresses, acquired through a public records request. On the data spreadsheet, it was noted that that some arrests may have taken place on public rights of way in front of the school and not on school property. The research team thus cleaned the data based on the following assumptions:

- Records of individuals over 19 years of age were removed from the original data set.
- The analysis included arrests that took place in the traditional school/afterschool hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 a.m. An exception to this is a block of 51 arrests where time was coded at 12:00 a.m. The ages of students in this block are consistent with student arrests, and the majority (42) were made by one officer at the same school who was identified as a School Resource Officer. It is the research team’s assumption that these are student arrests, and that the precise time of the student arrest was either unavailable or not recorded.
- Three arrests that took place in the summer months were excluded from the analysis, though it’s possible that these took place during summer school.

These figures are for arrests that take place on school grounds. They are not the number of unique students arrested, and thus may reflect students who have been arrested more than once. Arrest data provided did not distinguish whether arresting officers were SROs. The research team was provided with a list of names for SROs in the 2019-20 school year only, and thus is not able to analyze numbers of arrests made by SROs over a four-year period. Information is provided for the 2019-20 school year.

The data spreadsheet received contained individual records for each charge given during an arrest. An “Arrest ID” number indicates where there were multiple charges given to an individual for the same incident.

Appendix C: Student Survey Demographic Data

Overall survey response:

- Average **47 responses** to the set of questions about experiences with School Resource Officers, and **71 responses** to the set of questions about general student safety/discipline and school-based supports
- Responses were eliminated: 1) if respondents did not complete a majority of responses in at least one section of the questionnaire; 2) if there was evidence that respondents were not currently or never had been students in Providence Public Schools.
- Responses were received from individuals who attend or had attended the following PPSD schools:
 - > *High Schools:* 360 HS, Alvarez HS, Central HS, Classical HS, Evolutions HS, Hope HS, Mt. Pleasant HS, Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex
 - > *Middle Schools:* Nathan Bishop MS, Delsesto MS, Nathaniel Greene MS, Esek Hopkins MS, Gilbert Stuart MS, West Broadway MS, Roger Williams MS.
- The two schools attended by the most respondents were Classical (34% of responses) and Central (11% of responses).

Grade Level

Grade Level	% of Survey Respondents
High school	74%
Alumni	21%
Middle school	3%
Other	1%

Gender

Grade Level	% of Survey Respondents
Female	69%
Male	23%
Transgender/non-binary	3%
Prefer not to say	3%
Other	3%

Additional Demographic Groups

Group	% of Survey Respondents
IEP/504/Learning Disability	17%
LGBTQIA	17%
English Learner	13%

Race/Ethnicity*

Race/Ethnicity	% of Survey Respondents
Hispanic/Latinx	38%
Black/African-American	35%
Southeast Asian	11%
White	11%
Biracial/Multiracial	10%
Asian	9%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	7%
Middle Eastern/ North African	7%
Prefer Not to Say	4%

**About 90% of respondents were students of color. Students had the option to choose as many race/ethnicity groups as applied, so percentages don't add up to 100%, and don't capture nuances of those who selected multiple options.*

**CENTER FOR YOUTH & COMMUNITY
LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION**

Roger Williams University
1 Empire Plaza, Suite 513
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 276-4891
cycle-rwu.org

**PROVIDENCE ALLIANCE FOR
STUDENT SAFETY**

Providence Student Union
pvdstudentunion.org

**Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast
Asians for Education**
ariseducation.org

Providence Youth Student Movement
prysm.us

Youth in Action
youthinactionri.org

Young Voices
youngvoicesri.org

Rhode Island Urban Debate League
riudl.org

