

Securing Safety: A Comparison of the Impact of SROs and Restorative Justice on Students' Feelings of Safety and School Environment

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Abstract

This study explored the question: To what extent can restorative justice be considered a viable complete replacement for SROs in terms of students' feelings of safety and school environment in all CPS high schools? Currently, CPS directs a large budget towards SROs, however, stakeholders doubt the effectiveness of SROs and warn of their disproportionately negative effect on marginalized students and students who have experienced trauma. CPS has begun to implement restorative justice, but there is doubt surrounding its effectiveness. This study used qualitative semi-structured interviews and quantitative surveys with experts and members of Local School Councils surrounding opinions of the effects of SROs and interest in restorative justice. The findings of this study revealed that SROs provide few benefits to a school environment, while restorative justice is successful in preventing violence and safety concerns in schools. Generally, stakeholders felt that replacing SROs with restorative justice has the capacity to benefit student safety and school environment if schools are properly prepared to make the change. The results of this study support the policy recommendation that SROs should gradually be removed and replaced by restorative justice in all CPS high schools, in conjunction with the implementation of trust initiatives between students and staff and a safety plan involving community partnerships.

Introduction

In 2010 alone, 5,500 students under 18 years old were arrested by police officers on Chicago Public Schools (CPS) property. Those arrested were disproportionately marginalized students – 74% were arrests of Black youth (Kaba and Edwards 2012, p. 13). In 2003, CPS referred 8,000 students to law enforcement, and, in 2010, 20% of juvenile arrests still occurred on CPS grounds (Kaba and Edwards, 2012, p. 5, 9). The presence of police officers within schools leads to greater contact with law enforcement. Increased contact with law enforcement is associated with greater risk of student arrest and involvement in the criminal justice system at a younger age (Nance 2016). School Resource Officers (SROs) are a product of the partnership between CPS and the Chicago Police Department (CPD), and therefore create greater exposure to law enforcement for students (Paslov, 2020, p. 32). Past research has examined the potential connection between the future outcomes of students who have been arrested compared to those who have not (Teasley, 2014, p. 131, Wadhwa, 2015, p. 1). Police officers in schools are also correlated with greater numbers of expulsions and suspensions which push students outside of the school system and affects their academic success (Armour, 2013, p. 115, Teasley, 2014, p. 131).

One prospective solution is restorative justice practices within schools. Restorative justice practices focus on “address[ing] conflict in productive ways” rather than simply punishing negative behavior (Wadhwa 2015, p. 8). Restorative practices range from community-based discussions with students to scheduled student conferences, peer mediation, and community service (Payne and Welch 2015 p. 539). Restorative justice creates more positive, flexible environments, in which students are able to have a voice while administrators maintain authority (González, 2011, p. 46). Previous studies have found that restorative justice measures

can lead to decreases in misdemeanors, safety concerns, and suspension rates. (Wadhwa 2015 p.18, Payne and Welch, 2015, p. 541). However, previous literature focused on restorative justice has not considered the relationship of police and students within schools (Wadhwa, 2015, p. 1, Teasley, 2014, p. 131). Previous research surrounding school security in Chicago examined how police presence counterintuitively reduces students' feelings of safety but has not considered restorative justice as a solution (Burdick-Will, 2013, 358). Thus, restorative justice as a replacement for SROs within Chicago Public Schools has not been fully examined.

This study explored the question: To what extent can restorative justice be considered a viable complete replacement for SROs in terms of students' feelings of safety and school environment in all CPS high schools? Based on past literature, the hypothesis was that removing SROs would eventually lead to a better school environment and greater feelings of safety overall for students. Understanding the effects of disciplinary measures on student safety and school environment can help form comprehensive security policy. It can also inform the factors that keep students feeling safe in schools, allowing them the opportunity to focus on academics.

I examined my research question by performing interviews with experts of security within CPS, as well as interviews and surveys with parents and stakeholders of CPS. I hoped to gain insight from these interviews and surveys of the needs of students and the problems they might face within a school in relation to discipline and safety. I also examined past records of Local School Council meetings to hear the opinions of members of the community on both restorative justice practices and SROs. This meta-analysis was crucial in dissecting the relationship between discipline and student outcomes, as well as forming a better understanding of how the general welfare of students can be improved. The findings of this study revealed that SROs provide few benefits to a school environment, while restorative justice is successful in

preventing violence and safety concerns in schools. Generally, stakeholders felt that replacing SROs with restorative justice has the capacity to benefit student safety and school environment if schools are properly prepared to make the change.

Background

Since the introduction of SROs in 1953 in Flint, Michigan, and as they have become more common in the 1990s as a response to school shootings, there has been tension between school safety and student outcomes (Weiler and Cray, 2011, p. 160). In 2018, 58% of schools had an SRO at one point under the reasoning of student safety (Connery, 2020, para. 1). However, in the last 15 years, the issue of the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP) received more recognition. STPP describes how the presence of SROs, among other variables, can lead to harsher penalties and increased contact with law enforcement, as well as increased student arrests, pushing students into the prison system (Kaba and Edwards, 2012, p. 3). Sweeten et al. (2006) found that arrests during high school can reduce the likelihood of high school graduation by half, contributing to the notion of the STPP (Sweeten et al., 2006, p. 476). Additionally, Weisburst et al. (2019) found that the presence of SROs is associated with a 2.5% decrease in high school graduation (Weisburst et al, 2019, p. 1). There is clear evidence to suggest that SROs facilitate higher arrest rates, which drive down graduation rates and push students into the prison system.

Usually, SROs are funded by federal grants for three years, and are funded by local funding and school districts after these three years (Weiler and Cray, 2011, 160). In 2020, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) set aside over \$33 million to maintain their relationship with the Chicago Police Department (CPD) (Parrish, 2020, para. 3). Even with the large budget dedicated to SROs within CPS, communities have reported great dissatisfaction. For example, a survey by

CPS found that 85% of community members disagreed that SROs kept their schools safe (“School Resource Officer Update”, 2020, slide 10).

In 1989, after the Chicago School Reform Act, CPS realized a need for greater community participation in policy decisions. Local School Councils (LSCs) were formed for individual schools, made up of parents, teachers, community members, and a student representative (*Local School Councils (lscs)*, n.d., para. 10-12). In 2020, the Board of Education of Chicago left it up to each LSC to vote on whether they wanted to maintain SROs in their school (Parrish, 2020, para. 2). Forty schools voted to retain their SROs due to anticipation of school violence and fears that police would not arrive in time if they were not present at the school (Masterson, 2020, List 1, Gallardo, 2021, para. 4). However, Northside Preparatory School was the first CPS school to vote to remove SROs on July 7, 2020 by a vote of 8-0 (Rhodes, 2020, para. 19). Organizations such as CPS Alumni for Abolition saw Northside Prep’s decision to remove SROs as a precedent for other CPS schools, and 14 other schools eventually followed (Kelley, 2020, para. 4, Masterson, 2020, List 1).

As a product of these votes, restorative justice was further introduced to various CPS schools. Restorative justice had already been embraced in 2006 by the Board and had been incorporated into a guide of student discipline. However, in 2010, community organizations criticized the district for not implementing restorative justice enough, leading to the High HOPES (Healing Over the Punishment of Expulsions and Suspensions) campaign by nonprofits, which pushed for reforms in discipline. This led to reforms such as the Culture of Calm initiative in 2010, which worked to improve student safety and climate through peer mediation (Rich, 2017, p. 4-5). However, it was not until 2020, when CPS gave LSCs the opportunity to decide on the presence of SROs, that any real alternatives were truly considered and implemented.

CPS partnered with various community organizations to create safer alternatives using the budget that would originally fund more officers in schools. These recommendations included creating a safer and more welcoming environment, providing more access to mental health resources for students, and, most notably, implementing restorative justice techniques such as peace circles and de-escalation training for staff (Issa, 2022, para. 8). Restorative justice techniques that were eventually implemented in these schools focused on allowing for conversations and helping students “articulate their emotions”. However, critics assume that any results of these changes may be due to schools not reporting incidents based on biases, and that students may not be protected in reality (Karp, 2021, para. 2). Thus, examining the true effects of restorative justice on student safety and school environment is necessary in order to determine the ideal course of action for all CPS schools. Additionally, while SROs have been shown in some cases to have negative effects on school environment due to their disproportionate impact on marginalized students, and have generally faced great dissatisfaction by the public, many schools have voted to retain SROs primarily due to the perceived security benefits they offer (Masterson, 2020, List 1). Due to these differences in opinion, it is crucial to determine whether the benefits of SROs outweigh their reported harms, to determine if restorative justice could be a more beneficial approach for all students within CPS high schools.

Theoretical Framework

Stigmatizing and Reintegrative Shaming Methods

Previous literature has informed a theoretical framework in order to evaluate disciplinary policies such as restorative justice and SROs. The impact of disciplinary policies can be estimated and understood first through shaming theories. These theories were used in order to inform the methods of this study, as well as guide interview and survey questions. Sznycer et al.

(2016) identifies the evolutionary theory of shame, indicating that shame is an evolutionary adaptation that works to limit the negative opinions of others about the self. Thus, they associate shame more with being devalued by others than forming negative feelings about oneself, and associate shame with living in community (Sznycer et al., 2016, p. 2625).

Braithwaite (1989) adds to the evolutionary theory of shaming by identifying the difference between stigmatizing shaming and reintegrative shaming (Braithwaite, 1989, p., Morrison, 2005, p. 33, Ray 2010 p. 49). Stigmatizing shaming describes an aspect of punitive discipline which does not allow for a reintegration of a person back into a community; rather it often leads to successive crimes. Reintegrative shaming, on the other hand, is a product of restorative justice that allows for a person to learn from their mistakes and be welcomed back into the community (Ray, 2010, p. 50, Morrison, 2005, p. 33).

My methods for analysis were centered around questions that compared the differences between stigmatizing shaming and reintegrative shaming. Because of the connection to community, I used stigmatizing and reintegrative shaming theories in this study to analyze the effects of disciplinary policies on school environment and feelings of community. It was critical to gauge how parents, who have perhaps the greatest interest in potential changes surrounding their student's school community, feel about the various forms of shaming, in order to determine which methods had the most positive impact on their students' school environment.

Shame Management

Ahmed et al. (2001) and Ahmed and Braithwaite (2006) take Braithwaite's (1989) work on reintegrative and stigmatizing shaming one step further, through their work on shame management. While stigmatizing and reintegrative shaming methods associate shame with living in a community, shame management extends this connection to the action one takes in their

community. They found that shame displacement is a product of lack of personal accountability and consists of anger and placing blame on others, while shame acknowledgement is a product of less punitive punishment and results in “taking responsibility” and taking action to make amends (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006, p. 26, Morrison, 2005, p. 32). Ahmed et al. (2001) indicate that Braithwaite’s stigmatizing shaming is also associated with lack of accountability, while reintegrative shaming is associated with action (Ahmed et al., 2001, p. 4).

Ahmed and Braithwaite (2006) also identify “shame avoidance” in which the perpetrator ignores the problem when it is psychologically threatening in order to dismiss the outcomes (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006, p. 27). Ahmed and Braithwaite (2006) state that only shame acknowledgement will limit repeated offenses, and thus recommends shame acknowledgement to be included in any disciplinary measures (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006, p. 353). Because of its association with future offenses, shame management theory was used in this study in order to evaluate disciplinary policies and their effects on preventing misdemeanors. Furthermore, as there are three categories of shame management, I directed my interviews to decipher what stakeholders believe to be the most effective form of shame management. Therefore, in my interviews with parents and experts, I drew attention in my questions to shaming theories to facilitate the discussion around the overall impact that SROs have on students.

The Social-Discipline Window

Because of the impact of shame on accountability and reintegration in a community, the impact of discipline on shame is crucial to consider. McCold and Wachtel (2003) associate the aforementioned shame management theories with types of discipline through what they coin a “social-discipline window.” The social discipline window recognizes that there are choices involved in giving discipline. The window groups the types of disciplines by control and support

levels. Control involves how much a discipline method is “limit-setting,” while support defines how much the discipline provides encouragement and nurtures (McCold and Wachtel, 2003, p. 2). McCold and Wachtel (2003) find that disciplinary measures that involve low-support and low-control are “simply neglectful” while restorative justice involves both high support and high control, and allows the offender to confront what they did, acknowledge it was wrong, and make amends so that they can reenter society (McCold and Wachtel, 2003, p. 2). On the other hand, punitive measures have high control and low support, so offenders cannot be welcomed back into the community (McCold and Wachtel, 2003, p. 2).

McCold and Wachtel (2003) also recognize the importance of involving stakeholders in disciplinary measures. McCold and Wachtel (2003) identify the victims, who need reparation, offenders, who need to take responsibilities, and communities of care, who need to achieve reconciliations. McCold and Wachtel (2003) describe how only when all three stakeholders are involved can justice be fully restored and damage can be repaired (McCold and Wachtel, 2003, p. 3). Restorative justice is the only process which involves all three stakeholders, and thus should be considered as an alternative to punitive disciplinary measures (McCold and Wachtel, 2003, p. 3). The social-discipline windows illustrate the spectrum of possible ways to treat students in CPS. Asking parents and administrators about their opinions of the two sides of the spectrum, punitive and restorative, offered a better sense of how restorative justice measures compare to SROs.

Shame and Disciplinary Measures in Schools

Vaandering (2010) references Freire’s anti-oppressive theory to connect the impact of discipline on shame and being reintegrated into the community specifically to disciplinary measures within schools. The anti-oppressive theory focuses on the aspect of “conscientization”,

or when one realizes the causes of their actions rather than simply feeling their own needs (Vaandering, 2010, p. 117). Through these ideas, Freire develops the idea of “humanization” in which one becomes more aware of their actions and how it can change their environment (Freire, 2005, 1970, p. 43). Vaandering applies the anti-oppressive theory to education by urging teachers and school faculty to work with students who have violated minor rules in a way that aims to benefit everyone’s well-being (Vaandering, 2010, p. 34).

Vaandering (2010) offers the idea of restorative justice as a method of allowing students to become conscious of the effects of their actions on their environment. Restorative justice is considered a method to guide students on how to make amends and be welcomed back into the school community, enhancing the school environment altogether (Vaandering, 2010, p. 35). Thus, Vaandering (2010) further supports restorative justice as the preferred method of discipline. The anti-oppressive theory guided my questions towards parents and experts, with the hopes of discovering their opinions surrounding the impact of restorative justice within school environments, as well as students’ impact and involvement in the school environment. Shame management theories, in relation to disciplinary measures, indicate restorative justice’s potential within schools. In this study, those same theories influenced the methods used to determine which policies will best improve school environments and feelings of safety.

Literature Review

Safety and Disciplinary Procedures

Crouch (1995) and Burdick-Will (2013) identified the importance of effective disciplinary procedures and safe environments. For example, by examining initial data before and after the partnership between CPS and CPD, Crouch (1995) found that there was a 46% decrease in violence involving youth (Crouch, 1995, Brady et al., 2007, p. 458). Through use of

detailed crime data from the Chicago Police Department, as well as administrative records and school climate surveys from Chicago Public Schools, Burdick-Will (2013) identified that the violent crime rates and safety were “dynamic” as improvements of safety lead to “future reductions in violent crime” (Burdick-Will, 2013, p. 346). The dynamic relationship between safety and crime rates illustrate the impact of creating a safe environment on reducing violent crime. Burdick-Will (2013) identified the association of school violence with lower academic expectations and lower test scores (Burdick-Will, 2013, p. 358). Thus, there is an association between feelings of safety and student outcomes. However, their study makes use of school climate data only up to 2010, and, therefore, their findings may be dated, and likely do not take into account more recent initiatives to improve student test scores.

On the other side of the argument, studies have found that zero tolerance policies like those within CPS do not improve school safety (González, 2011, p. 15). Through analyzing the effects of CPS’ “Culture of Calm” initiative in 2009, Steinberg et al. (2011) found that positive interactions between students and adults produced the most safe-feeling environments (Steinberg, 2011, p. 2). Similarly, Burdick-Will (2013) found that, based on longitudinal data, feelings of safety are also lowered when police take over schools and there is less trust between adults and students, indicating a need for limitations on police presence (Burdick-Will, 2013, p. 344, 356). Payne and Welch (2015) also found that there is no evidence that zero tolerance policies lead to decreased crime and delinquency. Payne and Welch (2015) compared statistics on school violations after Columbine in 1999, when zero tolerance policies were implemented, and found that school crime and delinquency had already been decreasing before the introduction of zero tolerance policies (Payne and Welch, 2015, p. 558).

It is clear just by looking at these two studies alone that zero tolerance policies will not provide the safe feeling environments that will best set students up for success. Instead, schools should implement supportive environments which foster trust between students and staff. González (2011) recommends restorative justice, because it allows administrators to maintain their authority, but also gives more flexibility to solve conflicts and allows students a voice (González, 2011, p. 46). Thus, they find that restorative justice fosters a safe environment in which students also trust the staff and feel respected. While González (2011) may recommend restorative justice, my study extended these findings by analyzing the extent to which restorative justice measures alter the welfare of students at CPS. Specifically, my study emphasized parental and expert opinions surrounding the impact of disciplinary measures on students in order to determine the comparative effects of schools utilizing entirely SROs or entirely restorative justice on students' feelings of safety.

Student Outcomes and Disciplinary Practices

Using student data in Texas and a variation of funding of police through Community Oriented Police Services (COPS), Weisburst (2019) found that a three-year federal grant towards police in a school could lead to as much as a 2.5 percent decrease in high school graduation rates and a 4 percent decrease in college enrollment (Weisburst et al., 2019, p. 338) . Weisburst et al. (2019) conclude that this leads to a loss of student earnings of about \$105 million plus psychological and emotional cost (Weisburst et al., 2019, p. 362). The decline in student outcomes is a result of police negatively altering the student environment, and likely hurting the student confidence of those they discipline (Weisburst et al., 2019, p. 353). Similarly, González (2011) found that moving away from zero tolerance policies could reduce risk of “academic failure, suspension, expulsion, and dropout” (González, 2011, p. 46). However, this study only

takes into account preliminary data points from one school in order to demonstrate these effects, and thus these results may not be generalizable (González, 2011, p. 5). Studies have also shown that restorative justice can improve student academic outcomes (González, 2011, p. 46, Armour, 2013, p. 115). One study used student data and found that, after implementing restorative justice, academic achievement increased significantly (Armour, 2013, p. 115).

Bryk (2010) used survey data to identify the importance of feeling safe on student outcomes. Bryk (2010) found that it was crucial that students were able to focus on their academics rather than worry about their own safety, because safer environments “enable students to think of themselves as learners” (Burdick-Will 2013, p. 344, Bryk 2010 p. 25). Safer environments allowed for students to have the space to focus on academics, to be able to feel better supported in their academics, and to have more confidence in what they could achieve (Bryk, 2010 p. 25). Studies such as Crouch’s (1995) associated partnerships between CPD and CPS with a decrease in violence, thus impacting feelings of safety (Crouch, 1995, Brady et al., 2007, p. 458). By asking both experts and parents about the impacts of the partial implementation of restorative justice in CPS schools, my study examined whether restorative justice can still allow for feelings of safety which will foster student success in the absence of SROs in CPS schools.

Discriminatory Disciplinary Practices and the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Previous literature has also examined the discriminatory aspect of zero tolerance policies. Payne and Welch (2015) analyzed data from the National Study of Delinquency Prevention in Schools using measures surrounding predictors for school discipline (Payne and Welch, 2015, p. 545). They found that students who are in contact with zero tolerance policies are increasingly more likely to engage in delinquency later in both their school and in their community and are

also more likely to be pushed out of school into the criminal justice system (Payne & Welch, 2015, p. 541). Fabelo et al. (2011) associated zero tolerance practices with discrimination by conducting an analysis of Texas Public School records (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. x). Fabelo et al. (2011) found that African American students were 31% more likely to experience disciplinary actions compared to identical White or Hispanic students (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. x). Wadhwa (2015) associated higher suspension rates of Black students with the school-to-prison pipeline, and states that zero tolerance policies can have a negative impact on school environment and feelings of safety for students of color (Wadhwa, 2015, p. 1).

Zero tolerance policies are associated with discrimination, injustices, and the school-to-prison pipeline. In contrast to studies about the connection between SROs and the school-to-prison pipeline, Flexon (2009) emphasizes the importance in police fostering trust in youth in order to improve student outcomes and environments. They found that negative interactions with police hold more weight in student perceptions than positive interactions, and thus recommend that officers be held to a higher standard, even when they feel they have been disrespected (Flexon, 2009, p. 188). Similarly, Javdani et al. (2019) stresses the importance of limiting the roles of officers to roles in which they receive systematic training, and in which there is no confusion about the boundaries of their roles. Javdani finds that SROs are often given counselor roles, which they have minimal training in, leading to little to no prevention or accountability of use of biases in counseling roles (Javdani et al., 2019, p. 8) Javdani et al. find that the presence of SROs should not be considered inevitable, but that alternatives should also be considered (Javdani et al., 2019, p. 14). However, Javdani et al. (2019) also state that in cases in which SROs are deemed necessary, better accountability measures can reduce instances of discrimination (Javdani et al., 2019, p. 14).

While Flexon (2009) and Javdani et al. (2019) illustrate that greater accountability measures may decrease discriminatory practices, other studies have found that even minimal contact with zero tolerance policies may contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. Fabelo et al. (2011) found that suspensions lead more students to be involved with the criminal justice system later in life, and Wadhwa (2015) found that marginalized students are three times as likely to be suspended (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. 7, Wadhwa, 2015, p. 1). Because being in contact with zero tolerance policies at any level, even being suspended, contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline, and marginalized students are more likely to be suspended, Wadhwa (2015) proposes restorative justice as an alternative to SROs (Wadhwa, 2015, p. 1). Wadhwa (2015) uses narratives in order to illustrate how restorative justice can improve the school environment and feelings of safety for students of color, improve relationships between schools, teachers, and the community, and keep students out of the prison system (Wadhwa, 2015, p. 14-15).

This study built on previous research of restorative justice as a method of deterring the school-to-prison pipeline and its negative effects on marginalized students by focusing specifically on CPS schools. I also built upon previous studies by utilizing qualitative and quantitative data surrounding parent, community, and expert opinions in order to determine the viability of replacing SROs with restorative justice and its predicted effects.

Methods

Surveys

Previous literature has examined school environment and student's perceptions of safety through surveys and narrative interviews (Bryk, 2010, Burdick-Will, 2013, Steinberg et al., 2011, Wadhwa, 2015). Based on past literature, this study used qualitative semi-structured interviews and quantitative surveys in order to explore the question "To what extent can

restorative justice be considered a viable complete replacement for SROs in terms of students' feelings of safety and school environment in all CPS high schools?". Quantitative surveys were used in order to reach a general conclusion about the overall distribution of parent opinions surrounding SROs and restorative justice. Survey questions are included in Appendix A, and surrounded level of trust of teachers and SROs, perceived impact of SROs, and interest in introducing restorative justice measures to students' schools. They also explored feelings of safety of sending students to a school with both restorative justice measures and SROs versus a school with solely restorative justice measures. Open-ended questions were used to intake the demographics of participants, particularly surrounding the number of students they had in CPS, in order to determine the level of experience parents had with CPS schools. Scaled responses allowed for a general conclusion to be made about participants' opinions of various disciplinary procedures. Scaled responses also allowed for a general distribution of participant satisfaction surrounding the safety measures that schools had implemented and preferred disciplinary methods in terms of feelings of safety.

I used voluntary response sampling methods in order to reach parents. I reached out to Local School Councils randomly by email and asked to advertise a survey to their members. I chose to study Local School Councils as the parents within these councils had been involved in the decision surrounding removing or retaining SROs and were likely the most involved in the topic. However, some LSC members who were stakeholders without children were also invited to participate, as they were also heavily involved in the decision. Random sampling allowed for a variety of opinions which could be analyzed, not limiting the analysis to the opinions of a council who had decided to keep or forego SROs, or one area or demographic in Chicago. The survey also gave an option to participants to be contacted about completing an interview. These

were participants who had strong opinions about disciplinary procedures in schools, who could further elaborate the experiences that had shaped these opinions. Survey methodology correlates with the “School Resource Officer Update” conducted by CPS in 2020, in which parent perspectives were considered in order to determine the optimal method of action involving disciplinary techniques (“School Resource Officer Update”, 2020, slide 10).

Surveys were created and analyzed using the program Qualtrics. Qualtrics consolidated data and formatted the distribution of responses into graphs and charts. The consolidation of information by Qualtrics allowed for an analysis of overall comfortability of participants towards implementing restorative justice or retaining SROs. It also allowed for a general conclusion to be reached about the overall association made by participants between safety and disciplinary methods. General information provided by surveys was crucial in forming an initial understanding of the impact of restorative justice and SROs on feelings of safety for those who likely had the greatest interest in individual student needs.

Interviews

Both experts and LSC members were interviewed about their perspectives on SROs and restorative justice. The sampling procedure involved snowball sampling and purposive sampling. I reached out to Jadine Chou, the Chief of Safety and Security of CPS, and asked if she had any other recommendations for interviewees with expert opinions on the subject, given her connections in the education system. I also reached out to Todd Barnett based on his role as the Director of Partnerships for the University of Chicago Charter School and Matt Niksch as President of the Noble Network of Charter Schools to hear about these schools’ experiences with the implementation of restorative justice. I interviewed Jadine Chou, Todd Barnett, and Matt Niksch as experts on school safety, and I utilized a semi-structured interview format in order to

guide personal narratives towards desired themes for qualitative analysis. Appendix B details expert interview questions. Specifically, interviews focused on experts' positions on SROs and restorative justice from their perspectives based on their roles within these schools.

The second phase of interviews were conducted with members of Local School Councils, who were involved with the decision-making process of SROs at schools. Appendix C details parent and stakeholder interview questions. I chose to use interviews in order to analyze the experiences and knowledge surrounding disciplinary procedures of those involved in CPS schools. I also analyzed archives from past board meetings to hear parent and stakeholder narratives offered during the meetings surrounding disciplinary procedures. Narratives were necessary as the outcome being studied was feelings of safety and school environment, which were qualitative outcomes depending on the opinions and experiences of those involved. The methodology is based on the narrative interview method by Wadhwa (2015), who examined the experiences of those involved in the school system in order to determine the effects of SROs on school environments and the impact of implementing restorative justice techniques (Wadhwa, 2014, p.4).

Due to safety precautions of the pandemic, interviews were held over Zoom. Zoom interviews also allowed for participants to be able to speak in a space they were comfortable in. With the consent of the participants, interviews were also recorded. These recorded interviews were transcribed onto the program Otter.ai for qualitative analysis. I conducted a content analysis of the interview data using a coding technique. Interview transcripts were coded based on the following categories: "Feelings of Safety", "Trust in Adult Staff", "Expected Impact of Restorative Justice", and "Community Intervention". Appendix D consists of a code book with in-depth explanations of these categories. The questions asked in interviews reflected these

categories, in order to focus the responses towards determining the potential effects of replacing SROs with restorative justice on school environment and feelings of safety. Interview responses were organized and compiled according to these categories, so that conclusions could be made about school environment and feelings of safety based on the narratives and informed opinions presented.

Coding categories were based on previous literature. “Feelings of Safety” defined how students measured perceived safety in their school and was based on the work of Crouch (1995), who studied the association between police partnerships with schools and feelings of safety (Crouch, 1995, Brady et al., 2007, p. 458). “Trust in Adult Staff” referred to the level in which students believed staff would care for them appropriately, the state of relationships between staff and students, and the level of communication between the two groups. “Trust in Adult Staff” was based on the work of González (2011) who examined the impact of restorative justice on trust between students and staff (González et al., 2011, p. 40). “Expected Impact of Restorative Justice” referred to the impact restorative justice had had on decreasing safety concerns and increasing students’ feelings of safety. This code also referred to the predicted impacts on safety upon implementing restorative justice at a greater level. “Expected Impact of Restorative Justice” was based on the work of Wadhwa (2015) and Vaandering (2010) who studied the impact of restorative justice on overall school environment (Wadhwa, 2015, p.1, Vaandering, 2010, p. 35). Finally, “Community Intervention” referred to the predicted effects of outside resources on school environment. This code was based on the association made by Gonsoulin et al. (2012) of community intervention and ending the school-to-prison pipeline, and the impact of community intervention on dependency on SROs (Gonsoulin, 2012, p. 309).

Potential Biases

Potential biases should be considered with the sampling techniques involved. First, Jadine Chou was chosen based on her expert opinions, but supports restorative justice in schools, and thus her suggestions for further interviews may reflect those with similar opinions. Additionally, the voluntary response sampling will likely draw participants who are more passionate about the subject, leading to more extreme opinions being considered. Given that a greater percentage of schools have voted to remove at least one SRO, it is likely my results may be more biased towards the removal of SROs.

Additionally, my personal biases as the researcher may have had an impact on the data. Because I used a semi-structured interview format, my responses and reaction to certain questions, as well as the way I shaped my follow-up questions, may have revealed and been aligned with my own biases and skewed the responses of the interviewee. To minimize my own biases in my research, I attempted to avoid seeming enthusiastic about certain responses and questions while conducting interviews.

Findings

This section examines participant perspectives in order to consider the question: To what extent can restorative justice be considered a viable complete replacement for SROs in terms of students' feelings of safety and school environment in all CPS high schools? Participant feedback ranged broadly, including those who believed that SROs should be present in schools for the safety of students and those who strongly believed in the removal of SROs due to their perceived negative effects. Findings are organized based on the coding technique used for data analysis and according to the categories, "Feelings of Safety", "Trust in Adult Staff", "Expected Impact of Restorative Justice", and "Community Intervention". Overall, it was clear that while

SROs provided feelings of safety to some students, they did not truly increase overall safety for students and, in reality, hurt the safety of others, indicating the need for the implementation of alternative discipline methods.

Survey Results

Detailed results of the survey can be found in Appendix E. Overall, respondents felt students were somewhat safe within their school, and they trusted that teachers had the best interests of the students in mind. They somewhat trusted that SROs would keep students safe, but with high variance. They believed that, overall, SROs had a slightly more positive effect on school environment and a neutral effect on student academics. They expressed a high interest in implementing restorative justice in schools. They expressed feeling only somewhat safe sending their student to an SRO-free school, but slightly safer sending their student to a school with only restorative justice. They also expressed feeling safer sending their student to a school with both restorative justice and SROs. Overall, it is clear that parents have varying opinions surrounding SROs. They also have high interest in the introduction of restorative justice, but hesitancy in giving up SROs.

Trust is the Most Important Factor of Safety

In interviews, feelings of safety seemed to be associated with students' trust in staff. Jadine Chou stated she completed a study within CPS in which students were inquired about factors which created a safe environment for them. Ms. Chou stated this study revealed "safety is about relationships – administrators should not play favorites. It's not about quantity of security officers, but quality – [we] need to make sure the team interacts well with students". Jadine Chou emphasized that students feel safest when they are in an environment in which they feel

respected and heard by all adults present. According to Ms. Chou, the number of security officers does not impact students' feelings of safety unless there is mutual trust between both parties.

Jadine Chou also identified relationships as the most impactful method of ensuring student safety outside of the school building. Ms. Chou stated,

Nothing matters more than having a trusted relationship between an adult and a student.

The reason for that is if a student trusts you, they will share information with you if they are going through something or if they know of a situation. And that is why we like to have a situation where every student has at least one trusted adult that they have a relationship with.

Having a trusted relationship with an adult can allow for conversations about what students are experiencing outside of school, which may impact behavior and feelings of safety. Trusted relationships can also allow for conversations with a student before a safety violation has occurred, so that the necessary steps can be taken to prevent the situation.

Jadine Chou furthered her explanation of factors impacting safety by describing the importance of emotional safety. She indicated the importance of creating emotional safety by fostering trust between students and teachers. She stated that it is crucial that teachers are amiable and open, as negative interactions with a teacher can lead to a decrease in emotional safety for a student. In reference to the impact of student-teacher trust on emotional safety, she also described the effects of trauma on students. She shared CPS data that, after a traumatic incident, students are 2.5 times more likely to drop out of school. Jadine Chou also stated that 59% of students who have experienced trauma find it harder to pay attention and concentrate, resulting in greater misbehavior in classrooms and worsened school environments. Because of the impact of trauma on students, she stated,

We work to change the mindset [of teachers], not just removing zero tolerance, but the whole idea of 24-7 safety, which is what happens on the weekend, what happens at night matters. What that child has experienced when they go home, when they walk through the community matters, because it is carried with them. And if they're experiencing trauma, it's coming with them into the classroom, it will get manifested if it's triggered, and then you're going to worry about it. So, let's worry about it now, by coming up with proactive solutions and services, making sure that students are connected to the supports they need.

Jadine Chou identified students' feelings of safety as all-encompassing of a student's life. She recognized that students spend the majority of their waking hours in school, and thus schools can have an impact on addressing student trauma. Ms. Chou stated that alleviating student trauma is possible when teachers change their mindset from only teaching to also be willing to hear from the students and support their needs. Caring for students who have experienced trauma by providing them with support can prevent misbehaviors and alleviate the need for security officers. Overall, expert opinion identified trusted relationships with adults as the most important factor of students' feelings of safety. Therefore, these trusted relationships should be emphasized when determining optimal disciplinary policies.

Relationships are the Most Important Factor of the Impact of SROs on School

Environment and Students' Feelings of Safety

Because of the emphasis placed on trust in adults, the impact of SROs as members of the school community was indicated to be crucial to their presence as well. Ms. Chou stated that the schools in which SROs had a positive impact were those in which the SROs had a relationship with the students.

It's not whether you have an SRO or not, it's do you have an SRO that knows how to build relationships with students? And when we have some schools that have SROs that have amazing relationships with students, and I see the students talking to them and they enjoy and trust them, and, and that's, to me, that's a positive thing. And then we have other schools where the SROs maybe keep a little bit more to themselves, and you're not really adding to the full potential of the relationship if you're just keeping to yourself, there's a missed opportunity there to build that relationship and again, help maybe bridge some divide.

Jadine Chou emphasizes that SROs have the propensity to be a valuable addition to a school in terms of feelings of safety if the officers are willing to form trusted relationships with the students. SROs that are unwilling to interact with students may contribute to the divide between SROs and students. Therefore, SROs have the propensity to have a positive impact on school environment if they form trusted relationships with students.

Many parents and stakeholders felt that SROs had a positive impact on school environment because they believed these SROs held strong relationships with students. For example, Participant 1 stated,

“[The SROs] are kind, welcoming, encouraging, they seem to be the adults in the building, who know every single child by name by face, by birthday, when they're sick, when they're out. And so, they help to hold the children accountable, they help them feel supported, they help them feel kind of seen like that's a trusted adult for the school”

Participant 1 sees SROs as a positive presence on school environment due to the trusted relationships they have formed with students. Participants also revealed the importance of SROs in contributing to an additional number of trusted adults within a school. A parent revealed at a

Taft High Local School Council Meeting that they felt that SROs acted as another adult that students could approach if they needed to.

However, some parents and stakeholders voiced concerns surrounding SROs who had not built relationships with students. For example, at a Mather Local School Council meeting, a staff member of Mather stated that they had not seen much interaction between students and SROs. This lack of relationship led to SROs resulting in more fear than feelings of safety for students, revealing the necessity of SROs having a strong relationship with students in order for them to make an impact. In an Uplift Local School Council Meeting, one participant stated that she had seen that disconnected SROs can have negative effects at other schools, but, at Uplift, due to their relationships with students, SROs have been involved in helping a student in the midst of a mental health crisis, and steering parents away from pressing criminal charges against a student. Participant 2 felt that relationships with SROs could also be beneficial for students who do not feel comfortable around police officers.

And one of my arguments for keeping the police officers in the building is that those kids that may feel uncomfortable, this may be a way for them to get to know firsthand these officers, and maybe, you know, put their trust in what they're trying to do and make a relationship, and maybe they would understand better why they're there and who they are and so forth. So, it's important to have the right officers in the building to that are open and willing to do that.

Participant 2 believed in the importance of having the right officers in order to build relationships that could lead to greater feelings of trust and safety for students. Thus, these relationships were crucial in order for SROs to make a positive impact.

Parents and stakeholders also discussed the importance of strong relationships with SROs in the case of incidences in which the police might be called otherwise. Parent 3 stated that they were swayed by arguments made at their LSC meeting in favor of SROs, stating “If and when something happens at the school, they would rather have that direct line to the police, a known entity, rather than an unknown entity, and to have to kind of...forge relationships, as they come in a situation of duress”. Parent 3 aligns with the belief that SROs with strong relationships with the school community would be able to handle a situation differently than a police officer from outside of the school. Similarly, a member of the Wells LSC expressed doubt that school security personnel other than SROs would be capable of handling serious incidents with the propensity for violence, such as a student bringing a weapon to school. Because of this, they felt that it was inevitable that the police would be called, and that, in those cases, it was preferable to have an SRO that the school had chosen who they knew would be able to handle the situation appropriately. Participant 3 felt similarly, stating that having an extra person whose sole focus was on behavior provided structure, believing that they could handle situations with less bias, as others might from outside the school. Participant 10 also believed that SROs who had time to build relationships with students could handle a situation better than someone from outside the school. Overall, the relationships with students that SROs could form improved confidence that they could handle a situation more appropriately than another police officer.

However, not all parents and stakeholders held the same confidence that SROs could handle violent incidences appropriately. At an LSC meeting, an alum of Curie expressed doubt that SROs would be capable of handling situations differently than another police officer, as they believed that SROs are not usually trained to deescalate or provide social-emotional support. Similarly, Participant 4 believed SROs actually made violent situations and situations involving

misdemeanors worse, stating, “So safety is a big concern on the teachers talk about it all the time. But it's always been like that, right? Violence and problems don't go away because an SRO is there, they usually escalate and get worse. And accidents can happen when there's a gun in school. And I just, I don't think that SROs are effective”. Participant 4 believes that involving any police officer in a situation, even SROs, still worsens the situation because of the propensity for violence and aggression associated with SROs as police officers, therefore doubting the impact of relationships. Similarly, a parent at an Uplift LSC meeting doubted the effects of SROs on feelings of safety inside the school, as the SROs could not form the same relationships with students as other staff of the school.

When students don't know the person, they are going to be combative. At schools like Newberry or Disney are they going to put a police officer in the face of their children if there is one incident? We have security guards, AP, counselor, we shouldn't need the police officer.

Like Participant 4, this stakeholder felt that, if relationships with SROs were not formed, SROs could only have a negative effect on school environment and were not needed. This participant also felt that having police in schools with the SRO program would result in a negative effect on students, and relationships with other staff were preferable. Overall, although relationships were stated to be necessary for students’ feelings of safety, there was doubt as to whether an SRO could form these relationships differently than another police officer and without aggression. Therefore, although participants described that some SROs had succeeded in forming beneficial relationships, it was likely that relationships with other staff could prove to be more beneficial. These findings support the complete replacement of SROs by restorative justice measures which focus on these relationships.

SROs are Perceived to be Needed Primarily for Security Concerns From Outside of the School Building

While the impact of SROs on school environment was contested, some parents and stakeholders believed SROs could result in the prevention of violence and deviant behavior, especially from outside of a school. For example, Participant 5 believed that the presence of SROs could act as a deterrent to crime, as anyone considering enacting a crime would want to avoid arrest. Participant 5 also discussed the importance of SROs in preventing violence from outside the school, describing how SROs had been able to tell the security department about things happening in the community that they knew of through radio traffic, which allowed security staff to prepare. Because of these warnings, Participant 5 described SROs as an “alarm”. However, Participant 6 did not believe SROs had a true effect on safety concerns from outside of the school, stating that, while SROs were present, people had wandered into the school because “they don't actually keep track of kids going in and out particularly closely”. Therefore, parents and stakeholders disagreed surrounding the effects of SROs on crime coming into the school building.

Similarly, the effects of SROs on response time to dangerous incidents was described heavily in defense of SROs. For example, Participant 2 described the importance of SROs being police officers in case of an incident.

It's more the protection that the SROs have and being police officers. And in our neighborhood too, we have a certain amount of police officers that are supposed to be in our district. Unfortunately, there's less and less police officers working. And our police officers are pulled from our neighborhood because it's considered a safer area. They're pulled and brought to other areas where they may need more help. So, then we are down

officers. So, response time if some crazy person walks in with a weapon is much longer than it should be.

Participant 2 defends the importance of having police officers in schools and their effects on response time. Participant 2 also described the importance of these officers having training in use of weapons, as this provides them with more defense than the average security officer in the case of a violent incident. Similarly, a participant of the Wells LSC expressed the importance of having SROs, as there was no true district police station in the area. They described SROs as not being a “daily enforcer of rules” but a “fire extinguisher” in that they may never use them and hope to never have to use them, but that it is beneficial that they are present in the case of emergencies. Therefore, the presence of SROs increases feelings of safety outside of the school building for many.

At the May 6, 2021 CPS Board Meeting, Alderman Michael Scott also described the perceived positive impacts of SROs in schools.

And as you know, 54 schools voted to keep the SRO program. And the reason...is that there are different issues in different communities... And I know that there are many parents that do not feel comfortable allowing their children in and around their schools without officers...Frazier Elementary, which is a magnet program in my community. ... there are issues in and around that school each and every day. And I have the principal, as well as parents, as well as students imploring me to see if I can get more security in and around that school, because of the activity that happens. ... there have been places or times where there have been shootings, and the building has had to be locked down. And the officer has gone out and made sure that those children are safe going to and from school.

Alderman Scott recognized the impact that SROs can have on feelings of safety for the schools that have chosen to continue their use. He states that the parents and students he has spoken with express a positive correlation between feelings of safety and the presence of SROs, especially surrounding cases of violence outside of the building.

Jadine Chou expanded the idea of the impact of SROs on safety concerns outside of the school building by describing the schools who had removed SROs prematurely. While Alderman Scott indicated SROs were preferred for issues both within and outside a school, Jadine Chou believed that the root cause of the need for SROs is violence outside of the school. She described how one school which had removed SROs had an incident of violence outside of the building and asked for SROs to return after the incident. For her, this meant that they were not ready to remove the SROs. Jadine Chou's experiences with schools indicated a need for SROs until schools gradually become prepared for their removal. However, Ms. Chou stated that removing SROs is only possible if schools are prepared with a safety plan. These plans covered how to reach out to police working in the community if an incident takes place. While Alderman Scott believed some schools still felt the need for SROs due to specific problems they faced, Jadine Chou states that every school is capable of removing SROs despite their location if a safety plan is in place. At the May 6 Board Meeting, while speaking about how safety would be maintained for schools who had voted out SROs, Jadine Chou stated,

Administrators, teachers, or food service workers, everyone needs to be safe. And so even though SROs wouldn't have been there anyway, we want to make sure that the safety plans are intact, and we will continue to evolve them, as well as for all the schools by the way...the whole district. We're looking at all of our safety plans.

Jadine Chou emphasized the potential of implementing a safety plan in all schools to ensure the safety of those present. Overall, although some schools may need SROs currently, it seems feelings of safety are achievable without SROs if schools are properly prepared.

While findings in support of safety plans are limited in that the removal of SROs and the subsequent expansion of safety plans is very recent, the evidence in favor of the effects of these plans on feelings of safety cannot be ignored. Jadine Chou added that not only can these plans be reactive, but preventative, keeping students safe by stopping violent incidents from occurring. For example, the Safe Passage program is a preventative program which has been in effect since 2007, and, according to Jadine Chou, had doubled students' feelings of safety compared to students in schools which had not implemented the Safe Passage Program ("BUFI Programs". n.d., para. 1). Thus, these plans and programs indicate that it is feasible to implement alternate policies without impacting students' feelings of safety.

The Current Roles of SROs are Seen to be Undefined and Insufficient for Many Stakeholders

While some participants described a positive impact of SROs in terms of security, other participants voiced concerns surrounding the impact of SROs who had taken on disciplinary roles. While Jadine Chou recognized the positive impact of SROs on safety concerns outside of the school, she stated that limiting the responsibilities of SROs within schools was also necessary for a school's environment. At the May 6 Board Meeting, Ms. Chou stated,

Whether a school chooses to keep [the SRO], ... their role is not one of discipline, they're not disciplinary, that's not the job. That's the responsibility of administration, teachers, social workers, counselors, and I know that has, at least for me, been an important point of contention, and that arises in the data, that sometimes they are either called on or take

the initiative of engaging in disciplinary matters, that should not be their purview, or their role within schools.

Jadine Chou believed that SROs should not be involved in disciplinary procedures but rather their role should be limited to safety concerns. In an interview, Ms. Chou also questioned why schools wanted SROs, indicating that reasons such as school fights, which many schools use them for, is not the intended role of an SRO.

Stakeholders voiced concerns surrounding the involvement of SROs in disciplinary procedures as well. For example, Participant 6 described how a police officer threatened a student who was leaving the building with a gun. A participant of a Lincoln Park LSC meeting described a personal experience with an SRO involved in the discipline as a student.

I'll never forget when my friend was accused of stealing \$10 from the lunchroom and sat in a windowless police room that exists in that school. Why isn't there any windows in the school? These are children... He missed the full day of classes just because he was accused of stealing money. What if he did steal the money? He deserves to go to jail for that?... Research shows that law enforcement does not benefit our communities. Can you imagine the neighborhoods that y'all live in? Are they overly policed? Do they make you feel safer? I live on Division and Pulaski and I don't feel any safer with police surrounding my neighborhood. But when I would take the Division bus up to Halston and walk up I looked forward to seeing my teachers who I knew were going to keep me safe.

This participant felt that having police in these roles of discipline or safety could only negatively affect the school environment. Similarly, Participant 10 described how when police officers were involved in removing a student for disciplinary reasons, it left all surrounding students

traumatized. Therefore, stakeholders not only felt that involving SROs in disciplinary procedures was inappropriate, but dangerous for a student as well.

Jadine Chou stated that there was an overreliance in all schools on law enforcement and indicated the importance of reviewing protocols for involving police in a school. Ms. Chou believed that if SROs do not limit their responsibilities to security concerns, they are likely to have a negative impact on school environment. Similarly, participants voiced concerns surrounding SROs and their lack of a clear set of roles and responsibilities. A participant of an Uplift LSC meeting asked, “What is the actual reason that SROs are in school? What is their role and how are they held accountable? Most youth I know are traumatized by police outside of school so encountering them within the school doesn't promote an atmosphere of learning”. This participant recognized that unclear officer roles could lead to increases in trauma. Other participants described how the roles SROs had at the schools they were involved with varied or seemed to be unnecessary. For example, Participant 6 described how, while SROs were present at their students’ school, they were mainly used to “go around the perimeter of the school in the morning, and basically, shoo homeless people away”, a role they believed was unnecessary and “not how we should really cope with that kind of issue”. A participant of an Uplift LSC meeting stated, “I endured officers in my school but I don't want my daughter to experience that. They have a job to do and we don't even know the exact extent of what they do”. Overall, participants recognized the negative effects of SROs and their unclear roles.

Some felt that SROs could be improved with better training that clearly defined their roles. For example, in response to concerns surrounding clear roles, a stakeholder at Taft stated that the SROs now receive special training, and that not anyone can be an SRO due to the selectivity of their recruitment. Participant 2 stated they felt SROs at Taft were now much less

aggressive after this training had been implemented. Redefining SRO roles along the lines of relationships with students was also effective. A participant of a Steinmetz LSC meeting described how, after placing more focus on relationships between SROs and students, the presence of SROs was different, and they had helped students make better decisions and even connected them to job opportunities, acting as representatives of the community for students. However, even in instances in which SROs had a clearly defined role, participants felt that having police in these roles was unnecessary. A participant of an Uplift LSC meeting voiced concerns surrounding whether SROs were fit for the roles of counseling and advising.

If we are describing the SRO job as someone who is providing counseling and advising on resources, I don't understand why we would want police doing that. We should get those services from someone who is specifically trained for that role... Also, a problem with police no matter how nice an individual might be. My daughter has long since graduated (from this building), but I would tell her never talk to the police unless I am present. And when walking in the halls, be alert to their presence and say nothing they can hear. There are allegations of information being gathered from students in schools and used negatively.

Thus, participants voiced concerns that police would not be a good fit for these roles of counseling, as they could not be trusted.

Overall, the current status of SROs in schools seems to be universally recognized as insufficient. Reforming SRO presence in schools seems to be based on redefining SRO responsibilities, so that SROs have less of a disciplinary role, and more of a relationship with students. One could argue that these trainings could be successful in repairing the distrust in SROs which can lead to their negative effect on school environment. However, participants

shared evidence that even the presence of SROs as police officers could traumatize students. Thus, while the presence of SROs provides benefits such as early response time and potential positive relationships with students, the existing concerns surrounding their presence as a police officer severely limits their potential responsibilities within a school, providing evidence in support of the complete removal of SROs.

The Presence of SROs is Associated with Discrimination and the Perpetuation of the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Another concern about the presence of SROs on students' feelings of safety was the impact of SROs on students of color. In response to the school-to-prison pipeline which disproportionately affects students of color according to research such as that of Fabelo et al. (2011) and Wadhwa (2015), Jadine Chou explained that SROs have been receiving training to reduce their own biases (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. 7, Wadhwa, 2015, p. 1). At the same time, Ms. Chou also recognized data that even the presence of SROs can have effects on students of color and stated these effects are recognized in the plans CPS prepared to retrain SROs. However, in response to the data surrounding the impact of SROs on students of color, Alderman Michael Rodriguez indicated a need to keep police out of schools altogether.

One of the things that the LSC meetings told us was that CPS has a need to invest in real restorative and transformative justice. One of the things that I'm concerned about is the reforms that were shared from the Board in terms of the SROs, it just doesn't meet the need. And this is a moment to free our schools completely of police...And I think we need to heed this movement. And think about the first interaction many of our young people have with the criminal justice system and with police in a negative way and that the school-to-prison pipeline is a real thing.

Because of the effects of SROs on the school-to-prison pipeline, Alderman Rodriguez believes in a full removal of SROs in favor of restorative justice.

Many participants also recognized the disproportionate effect of SROs on students of color. Participant 6 described how the school they are involved with has a larger proportion of White students and a smaller number of low-income students than years before, because “they have pushed out students of color all together”. They stated that, with these changes, there has been less of a use of punitive practices, and they, “think the schools move to less punitive practices is partly because they were using those punitive practices on students of color”. A participant at a Mather LSC meeting described, “trauma...is being inflicted by having police officers in schools. This is adding to the school to prison pipeline. Black and Latino students are disproportionately affected by police in school”. At the same meeting, a participant described how feelings of safety of students of color are being sacrificed so that White teachers are comfortable. Another participant at the meeting described the perceived impact of police on schools on students of color who were also immigrants. A participant of the Lincoln Park LSC described how their concerns about SROs surrounded the system and not the individuals.

I will say that I had personal relationships with the two SROs that were in the building. ... this is not about the individual officers, who I recognize are often some of the few Black male role models in the school building, ... it is about the systemic ways in which policing criminalizes Black students. I saw Black students constantly be taken to the police room or arrested by black officers. That is not the kind of situation we need to be sending our students into. We need to be working on creating a positive school climate where they have Black male role models in their classrooms, and not just in a police uniform.

Thus, this participant did not believe that issues surrounding SROs and discrimination could be fixed by introducing better officers to the school. Overall, it is clear that the presence of police in schools has a disproportionate effect on students of color, and one that many participants felt could not be changed. Because there does not appear to be a solution to this injustice associated with SROs, it is clear that alternate modes of safety within schools should be considered.

The Implementation of Restorative Justice has the Propensity to Improve Students' Feelings of Safety and School Environment

As seen in the comments of Alderman Michael Rodriguez, restorative justice is considered the primary alternative option to SROs within schools. Jadine Chou described the restorative justice measures that had already been implemented in CPS. Ms. Chou stated that restorative peace circles had been primarily used in schools in order to “talk about getting to the root of the issue [of misdemeanors in schools]”. She stated that the focus on improving relationships between students and staff was also based on a restorative approach, describing how “restorative [justice] means that we are building trusted relationships and also looking at root causes, and also repairing the harm that is done when there's an incident”. Therefore, Jadine Chou sees restorative justice as mainly relationship-based and preventative.

Jadine Chou also presented metrics of the impact of restorative justice within CPS to evaluate its impact on feelings of safety and security. For example, one aspect of implementing restorative justice in CPS was a program which aimed to form relationships with students from high-risk situations and provide them with jobs. After the implementation of this program, the number of shootings had been reduced by 50%. Additionally, while the removal of SROs involved a safety plan which included contacting the police in certain circumstances, the number of police calls still decreased by 50% as restorative justice was implemented. One reason for this

decrease in calls was that an aspect of restorative justice was greater community intervention, which allowed for communities to take control of their own safety. Jadine Chou stated, “a lot of the incidents [involving SROs] are happening, not in the building, but outside the building. And so, what are some ways that we can partner other people with school communities to do that”. To illustrate the effects of community intervention on safety, Jadine Chou described the implementation of the Safe Passage program, which resulted in a 33% reduction in criminal activities. Ms. Chou stated that CPS planned to expand community intervention programs on the basis of restorative justice, in which community members can recognize incidents before they happen and work with the students involved. Overall, it seems that restorative justice resulted in decreases in violence due to its effects in preventing crime. Because some schools retained SROs as a way to mitigate violence outside of the building, the impact restorative justice has on violent incidents could lead to a decrease in reliance on SROs.

Parents and stakeholders also discussed their perceptions of the restorative justice techniques that had been implemented in CPS and described how they appreciated the less punitive results because it allowed all students a voice in their safety and discipline. Participant 7 described why they were in support of restorative justice.

Yeah, I mean, I think that there's no other way to live except to give people the benefit of the doubt. But when there is presented to you a pattern of concerns, you know, brought by different people, that's where accountability needs to happen. And there needs to be a process that is transparent, in a way that is helpful for everybody involved, including those who have been accused.... [we] don't want to go back to just restoring things, we want to make things better.

Participant 7 recognized that restorative justice allows for a system in which the perpetrator has the opportunity to change their actions. Similarly, Participant 8 described how restorative justice has led to the management of conflict in a healthier way, and “and brought voice for people who otherwise might have been left out of the conversation”.

Participants also described how restorative justice supported students’ needs. Participant 5 described how their school had begun to take a restorative approach and believed it had been successful in supporting students rather than being punitive. Participants, such as Participant 2, also described how the less punitive approach of restorative justice gave students the help they might need.

So not every kid that acts out is somebody that should, you know, should be suspended or removed, or, you know, super strict rules of somebody brings in a weapon, obviously, that's different. But to me, with some of my kids, friends, you know, there would be the kids who maybe would cut school or not be perfect students. And there's reasons for that sometimes... it's something that's going on at home, or they have some emotional issue that's going on. So, I think that with restorative justice, those kids get helped instead of just being punished when they need help. So that to me, is a huge difference.

Participant 2 see restorative justice as impactful in addressing student needs. Similarly, Participant 1 described the Multi-Tiered System of Supports their school had implemented, which provides intervention based on student needs, and provides behavioral and academic support. Participant 1 stated that this had been more effective than SROs in clearly defining necessary intervention. Therefore, participants see restorative justice as a way to understand why certain behaviors happen, move forward with both parties involved, and prevent these future

behaviors. Many believed that these aspects of restorative justice represented greater benefits than SROs offered.

While participants overall believed restorative justice to be effective, there were also concerns surrounding the level at which restorative justice had been implemented in their schools. Participant 6 described how restorative justice was a top demand for students at the school they were involved in, and that their school has been working with the Office of Social Emotional Learning at CPS in order to train teachers and a cohort of students in practices such as conflict resolution. However, they also stated that it is still not clear how this will be implemented into the larger sphere of behavioral practices at the school. Participant 9 described how restorative justice has begun to be implemented in their school, but that it has not been used due to students being out of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the inability to connect with students in a proactive way at that time. Participant 7 recognized the potential benefits of restorative justice, but also that it needed to be developed more within CPS.

[With restorative justice] You are empowered, because you have a voice to say something if something happens. But unless there are structures in place, that are put there, by people who care...and [if] they don't put resources into it, and they don't make sure make sure that those programs are running properly, then that person who has a voice will never be heard. So there needs to be an encouragement for people to actually say something, but then there needs to be a follow up with the process. And then after the process, we need to be able to tell other people, other students, other parents that, yes, see what we did, this is how we did it. And if you ever have a problem, you can go here, because we will do all of this again, and in that way, create patterns that build trust and integrity in our institutions in our process.

Participant 7 described how restorative justice necessitates resources in order for it to be effective, and for people to trust the system. Participant 3 also described how they perceived that restorative justice had had a positive effect on the school they were involved in, but also believed that “it's never going to be a one size fits all approach” in that different schools have different needs. Participant 3 voiced concerns surrounding how it could be implemented in all schools to fit their needs.

Many participants described how CPS had not fully implemented restorative justice making its effects harder to determine. Todd Barnett provided his expert opinion of the effects of restorative justice within UChicago Charter School, allowing for an understanding of the potential effects of restorative justice within CPS.

The other thing that we've done is work with students for them to come back. If there was a fight or if there was something that happened in school, allow them to figure out how to restore the peace within the building. And so sometimes that may look like volunteering at the school, providing some kind of service around the school. Sometimes it also means taking ownership in a public setting. Which definitely is a big part of our culture, for students to hold the stakes for other students to help hold them accountable, as well as staff moving forward. And that has also been very, very successful.

Todd Barnett also described how students had begun to make decisions based on restorative practices, and that restorative justice had had a positive effect on school environment. While every school has different needs, UChicago Charter School provides an example of a school system in which restorative justice has been almost fully implemented as the main form of discipline, and the positive effects it has had on school environment.

Restorative justice also proved to be beneficial in combatting discriminatory disciplinary policies. In an expert interview, Matt Niksch of the Noble Charter Network explained why restorative justice should be considered in school districts in terms of the school-to-prison pipeline. The entire Noble Charter Network had switched towards restorative justice practices, as they saw more punitive discipline to affect mainly students of color. Matt Niksch believe that even if a system worked for the majority of the students, those who were hurt by the system could not be ignored, and he is confident in the more positive effects of the restorative justice approach. Surrounding CPS schools, Jadine Chou also used metrics to illustrate that restorative justice had been effective in combatting the disproportionate targeting of students of color by disciplinary procedures. Alderman Michael Rodriguez associated SROs with the school-to-prison pipeline. According to Jadine Chou, in terms of statistics and the school-to-prison pipeline, the restorative approach was correlated with a 77% reduction in out of school suspensions, and an 80% decrease in student arrests. Based on the effects of restorative justice on suspension and arrest rates, she stated that she hopes restorative practices will end the school-to-prison pipeline in the future. Overall, because of the emphasis of restorative justice on trusted relationships, which had been associated with greater feelings of safety for students by participants, restorative justice seemed to result in greater feelings of safety than SROs for many students, including marginalized students.

Ultimately, it is clear that parents, stakeholders, and students of CPS are highly interested in the implementation of restorative justice. Restorative justice has a positive effect in preventing violence and crime and improving school environment. While some participants were confident in the effects of SROs on school safety, it is clear that restorative justice can be preventative of violent incidents. While some participants believed that SROs could form strong beneficial

relationships with students, it is also clear that the effects of SROs on students who have experienced trauma and on marginalized students is too debilitating to ignore. Restorative justice can provide a strong school environment that can better nurture and be catered towards individual student needs, and in which students can have a voice in their own safety.

Concerns surrounding the implementation of restorative justice in CPS as a replacement for SROs may arise due to the relatively limited information surrounding its implementation within some CPS schools. The effects of restorative justice will vary by school and may be affected by external factors specific to that school, making it difficult for success in one school to guarantee success for another. However, the positive effects of restorative justice exemplified by schools such as the Noble Charter Network and UChicago Charter School provide evidence in support of the removal of more punitive disciplinary measures which aligns with testimonies of participants from CPS surrounding involving students in the process at their schools. The evidence presented by Jadine Chou suggests that restorative justice has been successful within CPS as well. The observed effects of restorative justice are more just and preventative of misdemeanors than SROs and have an overall positive effect on school environment. While feelings of safety of some may initially be affected by the removal of SROs, the implementation can be gradual and has been shown to gain trust by many.

Policy Recommendations

And so, I will often say when people say, you know, SROs are good or SROs are bad, it is complex. It depends. And, you know, that's why at Chicago Public Schools, we made this decision to have the Local School Councils decide if they want to keep SROs or not, because I think it really depends on the culture of the school...the mindset of the school.

And it's not right for everybody, but it's not necessarily wrong for everybody. (Jadine Chou)

Student and parents' feelings of safety is not one-dimensional but varies based on their experiences. Overall, safety in schools is complex, and policies which optimize students' feelings of safety will likely differ based on the student population and the location of the district. Even schools in different areas of Chicago face vastly different safety concerns. This study consolidates these varied concerns into a single policy recommendation. However, policies may vary by district depending on the location of schools they include and the type of concerns their area might face.

Feelings of safety are also subjective. In order to optimize feelings of safety, the opinions of stakeholders are crucial in implementing policy. This study analyzed the data and opinions of the stakeholders of CPS. Thus, policy recommendations are specific to the CPS district, and are likely non-generalizable. It is recommended that similar data surrounding students' perceptions of safety be obtained before implementing policy in other districts.

Recommendation 1: Implement Trust Initiatives to Strengthen Relationships Between Students and Staff

Overall, I recommend that SROs gradually be removed and replaced by restorative justice in all CPS high schools. Based on the data of this study, the benefits of SROs on school environment within schools did not outweigh the cost. Many participants felt SROs did not improve students' feelings of safety within the school, but, in fact, had a more negative effect based on factors such as use of weapons and lack of relationship in many cases. However, Jadine Chou stated that, depending on the culture and mindset of the school, some schools may not be ready to manage a safety concern without SROs at this time. At the same time, interviews with

stakeholders also illustrated that SROs should only be present if they were willing to be relational with the students, as “closed off” officers risked having a negative effect on school environment. The greatest cause of concern was the likelihood of discrimination against students of color by SROs. Many participants identified the relationship between SROs and the school-to-prison pipeline and recognized that simply the presence of SROs within a school could lead students to feel unsafe.

In order to maximize students’ feelings of safety, overall trust is necessary, and, based on many students’ perceptions of police, SROs are not necessary in keeping students safe but may hurt many students’ feelings of safety. This study recommends that trust initiatives be implemented as SROs are gradually removed from CPS schools, as, according to stakeholder perspectives, SROs do not provide conclusive notable benefits inside of schools. Based on survey data, it is clear that stakeholder’s opinions surrounding students’ feelings of safety around SROs vary greatly, with many believing SROs hurt students’ feelings of safety. If SROs were to be retained, action would likely need to be taken in order to increase feelings of trust between students and SROs. Instead of retaining SROs and putting resources into improving SRO-student relationships, this study recommends that schools focus on strengthening trust between staff and students in schools, which participants, such as a member of the Steinmetz LSC, associated with a gradual reduction in the need for SROs. Participants, such as a member of the Mather LSC, stated that trusted relationships with staff who were trained to get to the root of misdemeanors were much more preferable to having SROs. It may be difficult to educate staff who are not open to these new approaches towards building trust with students, an implementation issue identified by Todd Barnett of UChicago Charter School. However, Mr. Barnett also stated that perspectives were eventually changed over time when trainings and trust initiatives were put in place. For

CPS, these trust initiatives would align with the “Culture of Calm” initiative referenced by Steinberg et al. (2011), by including mentoring, counseling, and professional development initiatives (Steinberg et al., 2011, p. 47, Levenstein et al., 2011, p. 4). A participant of the Taft LSC meeting also recommended, “professional development related to restorative practices, trauma, community building, classroom management, facilitator led lessons and activities” to build relationships between teachers and students.

Trusting relationships can allow for greater support for the student, which Jadine Chou has shown to be correlated with greater prevention of crime within schools, and participants such as Participant 9 identified as important to solving the root of misdemeanors and violence. Staff should be trained in restorative justice practices, in order to effectively handle student misdemeanors without punitive measures. Because the benefits of SROs do not outweigh the costs, SROs should be gradually replaced with restorative justice initiatives which foster trust between students and teachers. As trust is increased, perceived safety will also increase, and the perceived need for SROs will be erased.

The importance of democratic decision-making within schools should be considered in implementing restorative justice as well. Jadine Chou stated that allowing LSCs to decide on the presence of SROs was important, because it allowed for the culture and the mindset of each school to be individually considered. However, Alderman Rodriguez stated that, because of the disproportionate harm of SROs on students of color, students need to be heard in the decision-making process. As SROs are gradually removed from schools, in order for individual school needs to be addressed, students should be given the opportunity to vote on resources needed to improve students’ feelings of safety, such as mental health and community safety resources.

Parents voiced concerns at the May 6 Board Meeting, stating that every LSC should include a student representative. Based on these concerns, greater consideration for student councils as representatives of student needs should be ensured. Additionally, so that each student is represented, monthly surveys should be distributed surrounding student needs. Participant 2 described how anonymous surveys had been used to hear the opinions surrounding safety for all stakeholders and had provided insight surrounding student trust in adults in the building, such as SROs, and feelings of safety. Burdick-Will (2013) references surveys completed during odd-number years by the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) to determine subjective feelings of safety and trust (Burdick-Will, 2013, p. 348). Todd Barnett described how these surveys had been used to determine students' perceptions surrounding the effects of restorative justice in UChicago Charter School. I recommend that similar student surveys should be used regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of restorative justice in addressing student needs and feelings of safety. As restorative justice is more greatly implemented, these surveys will be administered monthly to incorporate student input as quickly and effectively as possible. Restorative justice should allow for a greater voice of students in their own safety by including democratic processes of student wellness rather than student discipline.

Recommendation 2: Implement a Safety Plan Involving Community Partnerships

While restorative justice in the absence of SROs can be successful in improving school environment through fostering trust between students and staff, the greatest concerns of the complete removal of SROs surrounded safety concerns from outside the school building. . Overall, the general consensus among experts and parents was that schools needed SROs for incidents outside of school buildings. Because of this, in order to completely replace SROs with restorative justice, I recommend that CPS gradually implement a safety plan involving

community intervention aimed at prevention of violence in the community. The importance of SROs on students' feelings of safety outside of schools impacts the consideration of safety measures beyond the use of SROs. Jadine Chou stated that the goal of the Department of Safety and Security was to eventually eradicate the need for a large safety department through the long-term goal of gradually preventing violence. At the May 6 Board Meeting, in reference to safety outside of school, Alderman Scott also stated, "I don't think this is a one size fits all model...I don't think that you can remove all officers from all schools at one time". Alderman Scott acknowledges that removing SROs is a gradual process, because different schools face different safety concerns in their geographical area, which makes one model of discipline difficult to uniformly implement.

The emphasis of a safety strategy is that prevention is achieved gradually rather than instantaneously or rapidly. Thus, CPS safety plans should implement long-term preventative solutions to crime in communities while also considering current safety concerns. To address both needs, CPS should integrate both police and community partnerships into these safety plans, as well as form a safety plan with police officers in the community that would allow for rapid response by police in the case of a violent incident outside of the school building. For schools electing to remove SROs, Jadine Chou indicated that detailed safety plans which involved contacting the police ensure an effective response when a violent incident occurs outside of the school. A detailed emergency plan involving police would allow for greater feelings of safety for those who are fearful of the geographical areas that their school might be located in. Jadine Chou described similar safety plans involving contacting the police as being preferable to having security officers stationed outside of schools, because security officers do not address the root of violence within communities.

Rather than the use of security officers outside of school buildings to prevent crime, the results of the Safe Passage program indicated that community engagement was effective in decreasing instances of violence through prevention. Jadine Chou announced in the Board meeting a partnership between a community organization and CPS to provide preventative measures to reduce crime outside of school buildings. LSC members also believed in the power of community intervention, as a participant of the Uplift LSC meeting described how, because police were only necessary for issues outside of the school, the school should focus on implementing restorative justice and, similarly, efforts should be made to “be out in the community building relationships with those who create violence”. In light of the impact of community partnerships on the prevention of crime, the CPS security plan should also work closely with community members to determine how to prevent incidents from occurring outside of the school building, in hopes that one day fewer incidents will occur and students will feel more confident about the areas in which they attend school. These preventative measures are gradual, and so they may take time to build trust towards. Because of this, this policy can be evaluated annually by analyzing levels of crime outside of the school and recording the number of violent incidents, as well as by surveying parents and students of their feelings of safety attending school in the area.

Challenges of Implementing Restorative Justice Across Schools

Although the implementation of trust initiatives and community partnerships can facilitate the implementation of restorative justice, there are potential challenges in its implementation that are important to consider. One challenge of implementing restorative justice across all schools is training staff in restorative justice techniques who may not be open to these practices. One aspect of restorative justice that participants described was that CPS staff needs to

be willing to consider less reliance on SROs. In the case of UChicago Charter School, Todd Barnett described how some teachers did not agree with using less punitive approaches, and these ideals affected the implementation of restorative justice. Jadine Chou described how teachers will call SROs for misdemeanors outside of the role of an SRO, such as school fights or even for nonviolent misdemeanors in elementary schools. Ms. Chou also described how many teachers do not realize their role encompasses responsibilities outside of teaching, such as counseling. As many teachers are not prepared to take a more relational approach to misdemeanors, leading CPS staff in taking initiative to form relationships with students and work with them in instances of misdemeanors may be a challenge in implementing restorative practices in all schools.

Additionally, budget constraints should be considered in implementing restorative justice. While most participants described the desire for SRO funding to be used in other ways, there were also limits in how this budget could be used. For example, Jadine Chou described how different departments receive different budgets. Thus, cutting the budget for SROs may not necessarily mean available funding for restorative programs.

The SRO budget was reduced from 33% to 12.1%. The money that was saved in that actually, goes back into covering the deficiencies of budget cuts that would have happened and still are happening. And we, for example, my team had a hiring freeze, we were not able to hire any of the vacancies that we had to fill. So those are savings, that money does not get reinvested somewhere else. It just goes to cover the deficit that the school district was experiencing and continues to experience.

Implementing relation-based programs will require trainings and facilitating staff, which may also require an increase in funding. Funding for new programming should be considered as

schools consider implementing restorative policies as an alternative to SROs.

Finally, a challenge repeatedly mentioned in interviews was that different schools faced different challenges, and thus the implementation of restorative justice would need to fit the specific needs of each school. In light of this, restorative justice should be continually evaluated using the aforementioned student and teacher monthly surveys to determine feelings of safety, student needs, and student-staff relationships. Crime statistics should also be gathered to determine the effectiveness of the preventative measures taken in the community and through community partnerships. Finally, committees specific to restorative justice including staff, students, and community members should be created for each school to evaluate the needs of schools as restorative justice is further implemented. These committees will be similar to the Whole-School Safety Plan committees aimed at developing alternative safety plans specific to each school's needs, including restorative justice (CPS, Community Groups, 2021, para. 5). In these ways, restorative justice in each school may be evaluated in order to determine its success and address specific challenges identified by staff, students, and community members.

Conclusion

Interviews and surveys with parents, experts, and stakeholders offered various perspectives of how disciplinary procedures impact students' feelings of safety and school environment. These interviews revealed the vast difference in perspectives and opinions regarding the presence of SROs and factors of school safety. The consolidation of these perspectives can inform a course of action regarding the presence of SROs. Overall, the benefits of SROs do not outweigh the harm they cause on students' feelings of safety. Maintaining SROs risks creating a punitive and militant environment. Due to its emphasis on trust and relationships,

restorative justice is the only way to create a positive and flexible environment in which students still have the opportunity to maintain their voice within CPS.

These findings further the literature surrounding the presence of SROs and restorative justice in schools. The findings support those of Steinberg et al. (2011) and Burdick-Will (2013) surrounding the importance of trust on students' feelings of safety (Steinberg, 2011, p. 2, Burdick-Will 2013, p. 344) While the findings support those of Crouch (1995) surrounding the positive impact of SROs on decreasing violent incidents from outside the school building, the findings also strengthen the argument of González (2011) in support of restorative justice as a replacement to zero tolerance policies by examining restorative justice in the context of SROs in CPS (Crouch, 1995, Brady et al., 2007, p. 458, González, 2011, p. 46). This study recommends that SROs be completely replaced with restorative justice, in conjunction with the implementation of trust initiatives and school safety plans.

The limitations of this study surround the small sample size and the potential biases surrounding sample selection. The number of participants interviewed was likely too small to represent all CPS high schools, and the voluntary response sampling used for follow-up interviews likely attracted participants who had more extreme opinions on the subject. Future studies should expand this research by performing a greater number of interviews with stakeholders of other schools to mitigate certain biases and better represent the greater population of CPS. The scope of this study is also limited to CPS schools. Future research should examine how students' feelings of safety vary on a broader level. It is recommended that future studies use similar methods in order to determine the specific needs of their students in terms of safety to form the optimal school environments to foster the academic and future success of their students.

Students' feelings of safety and school environment can have drastic impacts on student's ability to learn, which in turn can affect their achievement and academic opportunities.

Disciplinary procedures can affect suspension and expulsion rates, pushing students out of the school system and affecting their chance of graduation. Policies surrounding safety in schools have some of the greatest impact overall on students' potential for success. Safety policies also impact both students' lives as well as their experiences, ensuring they have the ability to grow and learn in a safe environment without fear for their lives. If action is not taken in order to implement restorative methods, students' safety and futures are at risk.

Surrounding her narrative interview with Martin Garcia, a student who was impacted by the school-to-prison pipeline, Wadhwa (2015) stated, "For students like Martin, disciplinary practices such as suspension and expulsion have the capability to reduce the chances of graduating, becoming employed and engaging with the broader community in positive ways" (Wadhwa, 2015, p. 4). Wadhwa (2015) illustrates how a student's contact with disciplinary procedures in school can drastically alter their opportunities in a community. My study also indicates that disciplinary procedures disproportionately affect feelings of safety for students of color in CPS. Because of the potential of discrimination surrounding disciplinary policies, the impact of safety policies reaches far beyond student success. Improving school discipline in terms of students' feelings of safety is not only capable of improving student outcomes, but also in creating change against inequalities in the American system and acting as a method of social mobility.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

1. What is your name and preferred method of contact (names and responses will be kept strictly confidential)?
2. How many students do you have and what are their ages?
3. How many students do you have within Chicago Public Schools High Schools?
4. How long have you been in your current school district?
5. On a scale from 1-10 with 1 being not safe and 10 being perfectly safe: how safe do you think your high school student(s) while at school in your district?
6. Using the same scale from the previous question, but this time 1 represents no trust and 10 represents complete trust: how much do you trust that the teachers at the high school(s) have the safety of your student(s) in their best interest?
7. Same scaling as the previous question, how much do you trust School Resource Officers (SROs) in protecting the safety of your high school student(s)?

Questions 7 and 8 will ask you to categorize your response into one of the following qualitative buckets: “Very Negative”, “Somewhat Negative”, “Neutral/No Effect”, “Somewhat Positive”, “Very Positive”

8. What type of impact do you think School Resource Officers have on the environment of the high school your student(s) attend?
9. What type of impact do you think School Resource Officers have on the performance of your student(s)?

Restorative Justice Practices focuses on teaching students to handle conflict in constructive ways by bringing together everyone involved for a productive conversation, offering the student a way to repair the harm, and welcoming the student back into the community. (Power-Pac 2010)

10. On a scale from 1-10, To what extent would you be interested in introducing Restorative Justice practices into the school of your student(s)?
11. On a scale from 1-10, In your opinion, with the options ranging from not safe to very safe, how safe would you feel sending your high school students to an SRO free school?
12. On a scale from 1-10, In your opinion, with the same options as the previous question, how safe would you feel sending your high school students to a school with SROs and Restorative Justice? And now just Restorative Justice?
13. Would you be interested in participating in a brief follow-up interview? (yes/no)

Appendix B: Expert Interview Questions

1. What aspects of a schools create an environment that feels safe for students and teachers?
2. Do you perceive any effects of SROs on the school environment? How would you describe the relationship between SROs and students? What are the overall benefits associated with SROs within schools in your opinion?
3. I know that you have been working on implementing restorative justice within CPS schools. I would love to hear more about this. Why did you choose to implement restorative justice?
4. Has there been any challenges implementing Restorative Justice? Have you seen any benefits?
5. I understand that many schools have voted out officers and have been given money for alternative safety, leading to the redirecting of \$3.2 million towards restorative justice and alternative discipline - what does this look like? What have the effects of this been like in schools?
6. Is Restorative Justice a viable replacement on its own? (i.e., Can restorative justice completely replace SROs).
7. I know that some schools chose to only remove one SRO and used the funding towards options in the Whole-School Safety programs, one of which was restorative justice, I also know that you collaborated with Umoja to train more than 1,300 of the security staff in de-escalation techniques, restorative justice and implicit racial bias. I'd love to hear more about this. Specifically, What has been the impact of the presence of both SROs and restorative justice in schools?
8. In April you removed SROs for the remainder of the school year. What were the effects of this, did any issues rise from this?
9. I'd love to hear more about the metrics of these changes. How do you measure success? How do you know these changes are working?

Thank you so much for your time, is there anything else you would want to mention on this subject?

I was also wondering if you think there is anyone else I should talk to that would be helpful?

Appendix C: Parent and Stakeholder Interview Questions

1. Have you ever been involved with the Local School Council's efforts of reconsidering School Resource Officers (SROs) within schools or implementing restorative justice?
2. Has your student ever had any disciplinary action taken against them?
3. Were School Resource Officers involved? If so, at which stage in the process?
4. Has your student ever expressed feeling unsafe in their school? If so, when?
5. What are your opinions on the effects of School Resource Officers within schools?
6. Would you have any concerns about implementing Restorative Justice practices in schools?
7. Would you have any concerns about removing SROs from the school(s) of your student(s)?
8. Do you have any concerns surrounding current school methods of discipline?
9. Do you have any concerns surrounding trust in teachers and their methods of discipline at the school of your student(s)?

Appendix D: Codebook

Feelings of Safety

Definition: Refers to how students measure and perceive safety in their school, and how comfortable they are in their school environment.

Aspects: Can refer to how safe a student feels outside of their school building (i.e., in their community), how safe a student feels within the building, and how safe the student feels around staff.

Origin: Based on the work of Crouch (1995), who studied the association between police partnerships with schools and feelings of safety (Crouch, 1995).

Importance: Allows for an understanding of the effects of disciplinary measures on overall security in schools for students.

Example: “One of the things we worked to do the first year is sat down with students to see what the students want to see and what they define as safety. We interviewed hundreds of students and did a video of the students to see what makes them feel safe” – Jadine Chou

Trust in Adult Staff

Definition: Refers to the level in which students believed staff would care for them appropriately, the state of relationships between staff and students, and the level of communication between the two groups.

Aspects: Can refer to the strength of relationships between students and staff and the ability of teachers to mentor, support, and council students

Origin: Based on the work of González (2011) who examined the impact of restorative justice on trust between students and staff.

Importance: Trust between students and staff was identified as having the greatest impact on feelings of safety for students

Example: “it's not whether you have, in my opinion at least, you have an SRO or not, it's do you have an SRO that knows how to build relationships with students? And when we have some schools that have SROs that have amazing relationships with students, and I see the students talking to them and they enjoy and trust them, and, and that's, to me, that's a positive thing” – Jadine Chou

Strength of Relationships Between Students and Staff

Definition: Refers to the level of closeness between students and staff. It was described as being important that students could have someone to speak with about issues, they might face or be fearful of.

Origin: First applied to an interview with Jadine Chou on November 19.

Importance: Relationships between Students and Staff was seen as necessary to prevent misdemeanors.

Example: “nothing matters more than having a trusted relationship between an adult and a student. The reason for that is if a student trusts you, they will share information with you if they are going through something or if they know of a situation” – Jadine Chou

The Ability of Teachers to Mentor, Support, and Council Students

Definition: Teachers' willingness and understanding of how to work with students and support students is important in fostering trusted relationships between students and staff.

Origin: This was an inductive code originally applied to the interview with Jadine Chou on October 30, 2019

Importance: This code is important to understand the factors that could currently be positively or negatively affecting school environment.

Example: “we work to change the mindset [of teachers], not just removing zero tolerance, but the whole idea of 24-7 safety, which is what happens on the weekend” – Jadine Chou

Expected Impact of Restorative Justice

Definition: Refers to the present impact restorative justice has had on decreasing safety concerns and increasing students’ feelings of safety and predicted impacts on safety upon implementing restorative justice at a greater level (González et al., 2011, p. 40).

Aspects: Metrics, School-to-Prison Pipeline

Origin: Based on the work of Wadhwa (2015) and Vaandering (2010) who studied the impact of restorative justice on overall school environment (Wadhwa, 2015, p.1, Vaandering, 2010, p. 35)

Importance: This code is important to understand expert and stakeholder opinions of restorative justice, and what results they expect it to bring.

Example: “Our expulsions are down somewhere around 80 to 83%. And our out of school suspensions are down, approximately 78%. Okay, and so our goal is to get all of that to zero. Our goal is to eliminate the school to prison pipeline, keeping kids in school, keeping kids in the classroom, so they can get the education that they are entitled to” – Jadine Chou

Metrics

Definition: The statistics associated with the implementation of disciplinary policies that indicate the effects of the policy.

Origin: Jadine Chou presented metrics in her interview on October 20, 2020

Importance: This code indicates authority behind expert statements.

Example: “just look at the last full year 18-19 we got our arrest data or wrestler down arrest taking place at schools are down over 80%” – Jadine Chou

School-to-Prison Pipeline

Definition: Describes how the presence of SROs, among other variables, can lead to harsher penalties and increased contact with law enforcement, as well as increased student arrests, pushing students into the prison system (Kaba and Edwards, 2012, p. 3)

Origin: Based on the work of Kaba and Edwards (2012) (Kaba and Edwards, 2012, p. 3)

Importance: Allows for an examination of the variation in effects of certain disciplinary methods on students and student outcomes.

Example: “And think about the first interaction many of our young people have with the criminal justice system and with police in a negative way and that the school to prison pipeline is a real thing” – Alderman Rodriguez

Community Intervention

Definition: Refers to the predicted effects of outside resources on school environment.

Aspects: Police and Security Outside of Schools, Community Intervention Programs

Origin: Based on the studies of Gonsoulin et al. (2012) and their association of ending the school to prison pipeline with community intervention, and its impact on the dependency on SROs (Gonsoulin, 2012, p. 309)

Importance: This code was important to examine other alternatives to SROs.

Example: “And so we are in the process of creating a process that will be inclusive, that will include community organizations, community members, to develop those strategies that, quote, reimagine safety” – Jadine Chou

Police and Security Outside of Schools

Definition: Refers to the partnership between schools and police stationed outside of schools. The intention of this partnership is that police officers can be called when there is a safety violation, rather than being stationed at the school.

Origin: This was an inductive code originally applied to Jadine Chou’s safety plan announcement at the May 6 board meeting.

Importance: This code allowed for the examination of safety options if officers were removed from school premises.

Example: “We told schools to stop calling the police unless there is imminent danger” – Jadine Chou

Community Intervention Programs

Definition: Refers to partnerships between CPS and community stakeholders which work to identify the sources of crime and violence in school areas and prevent further crime from occurring.

Origin: This was an inductive code originally applied to Jadine Chou’s safety plan announcement at the May 6 board meeting.

Importance: This code allowed for the examination of safety options if officers were removed from school premises, as well as an understanding of how to prevent crime.

Example: “actually, that's coming up a lot is the incidents are happening, not in the building, but outside the building. And so, what are some ways that we can partner to with other people with school communities to do that. So, in one case, we happen to have Safe Passage at that school. And the partnership between the community-based organization and the school is extremely strong” – Jadine Chou

Appendix E: Survey Results

On a scale from 1-10 with 1 being not safe and 10 being perfectly safe: how safe do you think your high school student(s) are while at school in your district? (If a community member: how safe do you see students being at the school you are involved with?)

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses
Level of Safety in School	1	10	8	2	4	44

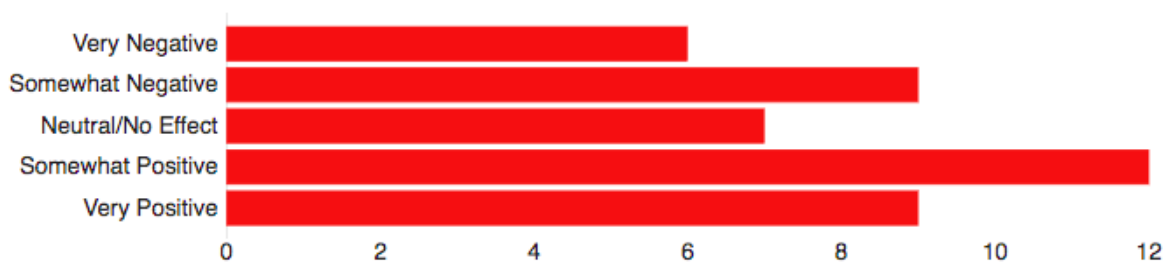
Using the same scale from the previous question, but this time 1 represents no trust and 10 represents complete trust: how much do you trust that the teachers at the high schools have the safety of students in their best interest?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses
Trust in Teachers	5	10	9	1	1	44

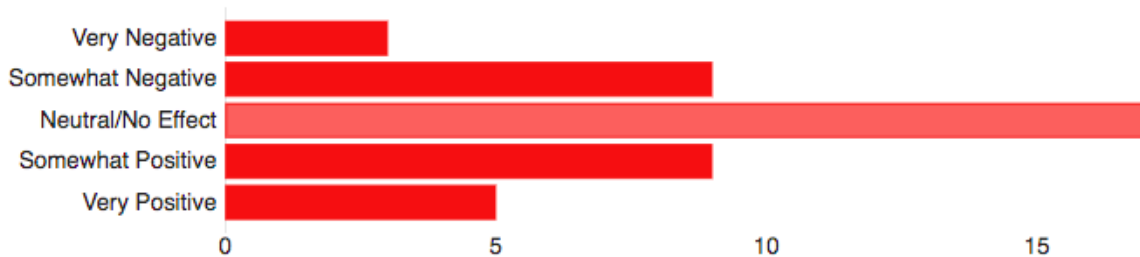
With the same scaling as the previous question, how much do you trust School Resource Officers (SROs) in protecting the safety of high school students? (If your school has voted out SROs - how much would you trust SROs in protecting the safety of high school students if they were still present in your school?)

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses
Trust in SROs	1.00	10.00	7.20	2.71	7.33	41

What type of impact do you think School Resource Officers have on the environment of the high school your student(s) attend or you are involved with? (If your school has voted out SROs - what type of impact do you believe SROs would have on the environment of the high school your student(s) attend or you are involved with if they were still present in your school?)



What type of impact do you think School Resource Officers have on the performance of your student(s) or the students at the school you are involved with? (If your school has voted out SROs - what type of impact do you believe SROs have on the performance of your student(s) or the students at the school you are involved with?)



On a scale from 1-10, To what extent are you interested in introducing Restorative Justice practices into the school of your student(s) or the school you are involved with?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses
Interest in Restorative Justice	5	10	9	1	2	44

On a scale from 1-10, In your opinion, with the options ranging from not safe to very safe, how safe would you/do you feel sending high school students to an SRO free school?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses
Safety without SROs	1	10	7	3	9	41

On a scale from 1-10, In your opinion, with the same options as the previous question, how safe would you feel sending high school students to a school with SROs and Restorative Justice?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses
Safety with SROs AND Restorative Justice	3	10	8	2	4	43

On a scale from 1-10, In your opinion, with the same options as the previous question, how safe would you feel sending high school students to a school with just Restorative Justice?

Field	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	Responses
Safety with only Restorative Justice	2	10	7	3	7	42